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PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

Republican presidential candidate Alan Keyes still hammers his point about America's moral decline despite disappointing campaign results. Keyes, a former ambassador and college president, spoke in Rock Hill last week.

Keyes presses on despite poor showings

Message is to attack moral crises

By Thomie Moses
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

ROCK HILL — Presidential candidate Alan Keyes may not be among the most popular in the Republican presidential primaries, but his message about the nation's moral crisis is getting people's attention.

"I think it's the perfect message," said Rock Hill City Council member Kevin Sutton.

"It's a very good economic and social message for the country and family unity is stressed," he said.

The former U.S. diplomat has not been shy about rousing Republican audiences by drawing attention to what he perceives as the nation's moral crisis. Keyes, who is especially respected by the most fervent wing of the anti-abortion movement, believes that empowering families, particularly parents, is what everyone should be concerned about.

"All of our problems stem from the breakdown of the family and the decline of morals," Keyes said during a recent visit to the Rock Hill area.

"We have become a people who worship a licentious and corrupt concept of freedom," he said. "We've been told that freedom even includes the right to reach into the womb and murder unborn children, subject to no more than the whim of a mother."

Previously unknown to the nation, Keyes, a former president at historically-black Alabama A&M University, has

drawn a great deal of attention by protesting his recent exclusion from a debate held in Columbia, S.C. by starting a hunger strike. He was also excluded from an Atlanta debate where he was handcuffed for trying to participate. He was later released without being charged by police, but pledged to fight the system that excluded him from the debates.

Keyes has used his presidential campaign to gain statue in Republican circles and to get his message out.

"It's a message we need," Sutton said.

Local supporter Bill Hopper said Keyes is an eloquent speaker and describes him as "presidential material." He is disappointed, however, that more people are not in support of Keyes. Fewer than 200 people showed up for two Keyes appearances in Rock Hill.

Carmen Coleman, a junior at Winthrop University said Keyes "made me think," after hearing some of his views on issues ranging from affirmative action to abortion.

Despite his recent exclusion from the debates, many York County Republicans believe Keyes has an important message and they want people to hear it. York County Republican Chairman Duane Hansen says Keyes has done pretty good for himself in terms of gaining recognition for his candidacy despite several poor showings in the primaries.

S.C. turns out for state's version of Washington rally

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA — About 500 people attended a rally here Saturday as South Carolina blacks tried to bring home the message of the Million Man March in October.

"It's sort of like a continuation of the Million Man March. It expounds on the same things the Million Man March focused on," said Carl Nunally of Columbia, who attended the Washington, D.C., event.

The Million Man March was led by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. It was a call for black men to take responsibility for their lives and families and to dedicate themselves to fighting drugs, violence and unemployment.

The National Park Service said 400,000 black men attended the national march. Independent sources have put the figure at more than 800,000.

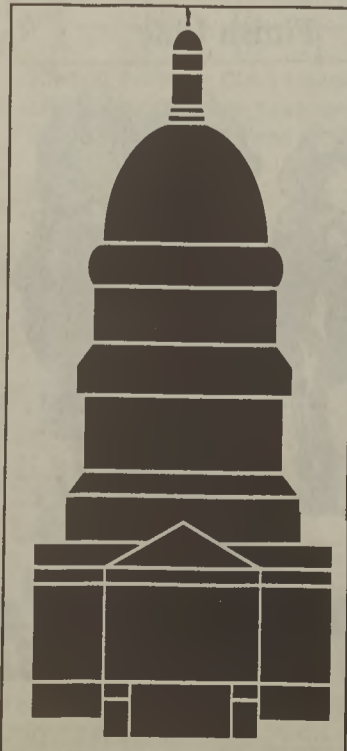
Nunally said black men should join social or fraternal organizations or become involved with their local church to improve relations throughout the black community.

He also criticized Republican candidates, who were holding their South Carolina primary

Saturday, for not attending the event.

"If any of their candidates wanted to come here today and address the crowd — I don't see any," he said. "They're not recruiting African-Americans into their area."

Michael Williams of Saluda also attended the Million Man March. He brought a banner to Saturday's rally that read: "Injustice upon minorities anywhere is a threat to justice for everyone everywhere."



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

About 500 South Carolinians participated in a scaled-down version of the Million Man March (pictured). The South Carolina rally was held in Columbia, the state capital.

Program puts students on Fast Track to success

By Carol Meeks
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

SALISBURY — A program at North Rowan Middle School helps students get a chance to recover from academic mistakes.

In 1990, North Rowan educators designed the Fast Track Program under the leadership of former principal Harold Thomas to help students who have had academic problems. Thanks to the initial funding of the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. and subsequent funding by the school system, the program gives students the chance to make up a failed grade in one calendar year.

Statistics show that more than half the students who completed the program actually fast-tracked or skipped one grade level. According to guidance counselor Sue Peele, "Students get the chance to skip a grade by completing the program, thus enhancing their self esteem as well as helping to develop within themselves a sense of success and accomplishment."

Fast Track is a comprehensive dropout-prevention program designed to motivate, educate and meet the needs of middle school students who have been unable to succeed in a traditional school setting. It is based on the school-within-a-school concept, and puts a different twist to the year-round school concept. Sixty seventh- and eighth-grade students who have been retained one or more years take course work in communication skills, social studies, math and science. They are mainstreamed for exploratory and health/physical education, lunch and extracurricular activities.

The program is known for its other unique assets as well. The staff includes four teachers, one guidance counselor, a computer specialist and a secretary. Peele and Pattie Secreast, the team leader, share the administrative duties under the leadership of I. Jerome Heggins, the school's principal. Special program components include computer-assisted instruction; frequent motivational speakers; cooperative (group) and experimental teaching/learning activities; group, individual and family counseling; parent education; in-home visits made by the counselor, and parent support groups. Some students even serve as tutors for younger students even serve as tutors for younger students.

Fast Track is an intensive program, and the majority of the students complete it successfully. With a Governor's Award for Excellence visible near the principal's office, the fruits of the

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