



DOUGLAS SUSALL/Staff photographer

Former NBA star Spencer Haywood and Farmington Hills insurance executive Richard Headlee team up to fight drug abuse.

Headlee, Haywood wage drug fight

By Casey Hane
staff writer

Oakland County business mogul and one-time gubernatorial candidate Richard Headlee said last week that the scourge of drug abuse had touched his family — a religious, close-knit group of nine children and 31 grandchildren.

"Drugs have even impacted my family," Headlee told a group of business people and politicians May 31 during an anti-drug presentation at Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. in Farmington Hills, where Headlee serves as chairman of the board, president and chief executive officer. "Fortunately, we had the family unit in order to battle that."

"Unfortunately, we have a lot of people in society who don't have that reinforcement, the family, church . . . a caring friend. That (caring friend) has to be you and I."

HEADLEE SPENT the morning encouraging businesses from across the state to get involved in an anti-drug program called "Choice of a Lifetime," designed and promoted

by onetime college and National Basketball Association great Spencer Haywood, himself a recovering cocaine addict.

Haywood plans to launch his anti-drug program into schools and companies across the country, starting with elementary schools in the city of Detroit.

Headlee backed up his plea to fellow business leaders with a \$10,000 corporate philanthropic pledge from Alexander Hamilton.

"This is a problem of a magnitude, it's going to require the efforts of all of us," Headlee said. "We're concerned about this loss of all these great young people. We're losing a lot of great potential . . . through

this devastation of drugs."

HAYWOOD WAS raised in the cottonfields of Mississippi and came to Detroit where he began his basketball career with the University of Detroit Titans. He went on to the NBA in 1969 when he became the highest paid pro player in the league. He had everything, but Haywood said it wasn't enough.

"I thought by doing cocaine it would round out my career — icing on the cake," Haywood said in a video presented May 31. "I thought I had it all under control. That I could stop anytime."

"Before you know it, you've become a prisoner to the addiction."

He has been clean of drugs for five years, and has devoted his life to the Spencer Haywood Foundation and its anti-drug programs. These include a video, basketball clinics for youths, television and radio shows, teen peer groups and a day care facility for those recovering from substance abuse.

HAYWOOD IS getting help from leaders throughout the state, including state Supreme Court Justice Dennis Archer. "It's just one small effort," said Archer, speaking at last week's breakfast. "But it is my desire to cover, in September or October, the 166 elementary schools in Detroit using Spencer's tape and program."

"If it's successful, this road map can be used in any city in the state of Michigan, or anywhere. Let Michigan be first and the other 49 states can follow."

Companies are also getting involved in the Haywood program, including Ford Motor Co., which is using it as part of the Ford/UAW Employee Assistance Program.

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MYTHS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY
THE MYTH OF THE MONTH

Jesus Christ was only a great moral teacher

What are we to make of this man? The joys and hardships of two thousand years of western history have been poured on him. Controversy has constantly surrounded his claims. Religious life in the West has been dominated by allusions to his teachings. No self-aware, intelligent person dare avoid the intriguing individual and his impact on society.

No one doubts any more that Jesus actually existed. Most people also believe that he was a great moral teacher, religious and political leaders throughout the world, including many of the great opponents of Christianity, held the moral superiority of his life. Monarchs eagerly aspired to the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount. The philosopher John Stuart Mill thought Jesus a genius and probably the greatest moral reformer who ever existed. Even Napoleon Bonaparte considered him a superior leader of men.

The New Testament documents record the radical, utopian attitude which lent power and credibility to Jesus' teachings. He has truly shed humanity in the expression of compassion and humanity, as well as in anger against evil and hypocrisy. Jesus combined a realistic understanding of human nature with an idealism for what human beings could become. His words have tested and challenged the minds and hearts of millions for centuries.

Of course, this is not the whole story. When we begin to consider Jesus' claims about his identity, the controversy begins. This is where people (including the world's religious leaders) have problems. This is where the label "moral teacher" is put to the test. It begins to seem inadequate, if not naive.

A thirty-year-old peasant carpenter turned itinerant teacher, Jesus laid claim both by word and action to be more than a mere man. He operated on the assumption that he was God himself. How do we know that? From his explicit statements and the very way he lived. His self-disclosures are interwoven in the very fabric of the New Testament. He claimed equality with God. He said he had lived before Abraham. He assumed the right to forgive sins. He accepted worship. There seems to be no escaping it.

Jesus of Nazareth could not be simply a harmless moral teacher. He cuts too deep and steps too far from the crowd of moral and philosophical teachers. We can call him a law. We might even discuss his mental imbalance, but the tag of "only a great moral teacher" doesn't stick. It was never an option in his own day. Some of his contemporaries thought him mad, others loved him. He was regarded with disdain and sometimes even hatred, or alternately with amazement and adoration. But he never received mild approval.

What is it an option for today? We have to shut him up or hear him out. What are we to make of this man? What of his moral integrity? His fulfillment of centuries of aspirations? His prediction of death and resurrection? What are we to make of his claims to be the one and only God-man of history? What are we to do with this great moral teacher who makes such impossible claims?

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