



**The Initiative for
More Effective Communication,
Coordination and Collaboration:
A Status Report and Recommendations for the
National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.**

Preface and Executive Summary

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PREFACE

The Convention's separately incorporated bodies, auxiliaries, commissions and ministries are undertaking this Initiative to create a structure and processes for better communication, coordination of effort and resources and collaboration in planning and implementing our work. **We want to build a foundation for becoming more responsive, efficient and effective in meeting the needs of our members and fulfilling the purpose of the Convention in the 21st century.** This initiative is an outgrowth of the Ecumenical Journey of 2007 and approval of its recommendations at the 2007 Annual Session, from subsequent meetings involving all of the entities of the Convention, and affirmation of progress reports delivered during the 2008-9 Annual Sessions, Mid Winter Board Meetings, and Congress Sessions.

The initial statement of needs and goals for this undertaking reported during the 2007 Annual Session have served as the guiding framework for all subsequent work and are as follows:

There is a need for realigning the organizational structure of the Convention to:

- become more operationally efficient and effective
 - international/global
 - national
 - state
 - local
- better meet the needs of its members;
- formulate and carry out its mission in a way that is relevant and speaks to the needs and culture of our current times; and
- provide a foundation for growth and long term success of the Convention.

The Council Structure

Central to the success of this initiative is the Council structure. The Councils are working groups organized around six major areas of function of the Convention. Each of the Councils is made up of representatives from all of the Convention entities with missions and goals pertaining to the focus of the Council. Within each Council, several key processes will take place: 1) sharing information; 2) identifying areas of overlap and gaps in service; and 3) planning the implementation of activities together to achieve the most effective and efficient use of the Convention's resources. The Councils do not replace the governing structures of the Convention's separately incorporated bodies, auxiliaries, commissions and ministries, but instead serve as the method to bring them together. The Councils are as follows:

Faith & Works *"...faith, if it has no works, is dead..."* (James 2:17, NAS) The focus of this council is on the demonstration of our faith in the work we do in our churches. This council is particularly concerned about the support and guidance we provide to our member churches, districts and state conventions in the areas of pastoring, ministry, worship, church administration, etc.

Education, Training & Certification *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* (2Timothy 2:15, NKJV) Identifying a process by which biblical studies, theological education, and certification of teachers can better meet our learning needs are the foci of this Council.

Media & Publications *"Go now, write it on a tablet for them, inscribe it on a scroll, that for the days to come it may be an everlasting witness."* (Isaiah 30:8, NIV) This council's focus is on improving the production, sales and distribution of Convention media, including print publications, music, video, and other works of art and religious expression.

Global, National and Local Missions *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in..."* (Matthew 25:35, NIV) This council's focus is on the mission work of the Convention including work that is performed on local, national and international levels, and interdenominational-interfaith community relations.

Communications, Marketing & Technology *"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light."* (Luke 8:16, NIV) The focus of this council is on using current technologies to communicate with our membership, the media, and our world and to equip our member churches, districts and state conventions to do the same.

Stewardship, Management & Budget *"...Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"* (Matthew 25:21, NIV) Developing and managing our resources responsibly—including budgets/ money, human resources, real estate, and other tangible assets—is the focus of this Council.

This report documents our progress toward more effective communication, coordination and collaboration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is intended to provide the leadership of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. with a comprehensive, consolidated status report of the major activities of the separately incorporated bodies, boards, auxiliaries and ministries. Moreover, representatives of these entities have come together in agreement to offer some recommendations to become more effective in achieving the overarching goals of the Convention and establishing a structure and processes for achieving the specific goals of the current administration.

Chronology

The general timeline of events leading up to this report are as follows:

- 2007 Annual Session: A report of the 2007 Ecumenical Journey that recommended a restructuring of the Convention to better position it for achieving its mission and goals was approved. The major thrust of the restructuring was intended to improve communication across entity lines and encourage working together to achieve common goals.
- August 2008: Leadership Meeting in Nashville. The purpose of this meeting was to begin the dialogue across the Convention entities and to begin to envision the structural and procedural changes needed.
- 2008 Annual Session: Report of the Organizational Structure Committee recommending the Council structure was given and approved.
- 2009 Mid Winter Board Session. Report of the Realignment Committee (name was changed to better reflect our efforts at that time) was delivered and approved. This report further defined the structure and purposes of the Councils.
- 2009 Regional Meetings and Survey. Informational presentations were made during the 4 Regional Meetings (Midwest, Southwest, Southeast and Northeast) and surveys were distributed. The survey was also made available online. The survey was intended to provide the membership of the Convention with an opportunity to comment on the realignment activities and offer their perspectives and feedback.
- 2009 Congress Annual Session. A progress report and plans for activities leading up to the Annual Session were communicated. The name was changed to “The Initiative for More Effective Communication, Coordination and Collaboration” to de-emphasize organizational structure impact and emphasize the need for structured dialogue.
- 2009 Annual Session. A progress report was made that focused on the recommendations of the six councils.

Report Sections

Section One of the report offers a consolidated view of the current mission, objectives, leadership, and contact information for the separately incorporated bodies, boards, auxiliaries and ministries of the Convention. This information does not exist in this form in any other document and was current as of September 1, 2009.

Section Two of the report provides a comprehensive listing of the activities of the Convention categorized by the Council groupings. Viewing our activities using the lens of the Councils more clearly shows areas of overlap, projects where multiple entities are working together and opportunities for better coordination and collaboration of our efforts. As with the information in Section One, this information does not exist in this form in any other document and was current as of September 1, 2009.

Section Three of the report details the recommendations made by the Councils, resulting from meetings that were held during July and August of 2009. Recommendations came out of this series of meetings for assuring the overall success of the Councils, and priorities for the specific work of the Councils. A summary of the major recommendations follow.

Major Recommendations

Council Structure and Processes Needed for Success

1. Incorporate the Council structure into the strategic planning processes of the Convention.
2. Establish a tri-annual schedule of Council meetings for sharing information, identifying opportunities for coordination and sharing responsibility for achieving goals.
3. Share progress on the Council goals with the Convention on a tri-annual basis at the time of the Mid Winter Board Session, Congress Meeting and Annual Session.
4. Develop qualifications and processes for the selection and appointment of Council members and leaders.
5. Include substantive participation of a representative cross-section of the Convention membership in the work of the Councils. A special emphasis will be placed on ensuring that younger pastors and leaders (40 and under) are represented and actively involved with opportunities for hands-on development of leadership skills.
6. Identify recommendations for organizational re-alignment and/or structural changes needed to continue making progress beyond 2010.

Faith & Works Council Priorities

1. Develop a support system and information clearinghouse for our pastors and clergy leaders, district associations and state conventions; special emphasis will be placed on supporting and embracing our young pastors and clergy.
2. Develop print and online resources for general guidelines and model policies and procedures for church administration, policy & polity; ministry; worship; Christian education; evangelism; technology/computing; and community interaction/support.
3. Conduct a survey of our member churches, district associations and state conventions to determine the type and nature of support they need/want from the Convention.

Commentary: The work of this Council has the potential to be instrumental in assisting the Scruggs' Administration with its priorities for strengthening relationships with all auxiliaries, ministries and departments and establishing a model on a national level that our churches, districts and state conventions will desire to emulate; and specifically providing resources and support to our pastors and clergy with special emphasis on our young pastors and ministry leaders.

Local, National and Global Missions Council Priorities

1. Establish a central clearinghouse for the mission work of our membership that is designed to capture the fullness of our collective endeavors, recruit support for missions work and Convention membership, provide resources & technical support and serve as a means of communication, coordination, networking and evangelism.
2. Increase the effectiveness of our mission work by establishing strategic and long-term partnerships and exchanging best practices with national and international organizations of faith that are aligned with our mission priorities (such as):
 - World Council of Churches
 - National Council of Churches
 - All Africa Conference of Churches
 - Church World Service
 - Christian Churches Together
 - Gamaliel Foundation
 - Other denominations and interdenominational groups
3. Develop and promote a systematic public policy and advocacy agenda that will inform and inspire the totality of the Convention to act as agents of change.
4. Train leadership for Disaster Relief at state and regional levels and implement training at local levels so that our churches are prepared to respond to disasters in

their local communities; identify and secure external funding to under gird our efforts.

5. Establish a formal health and wellness agenda and capacity development that is coordinated across all Convention entities.

Commentary: The work of this Council has the potential to be particularly instrumental in assisting the Scruggs' Administration with several priorities, such as leveraging a stronger and more viable voice regarding public policy by engaging in dialogue and developing a public policy agenda that addresses local, national and global concerns. The emphasis on supporting our Foreign and Home Missions and re-tooling our work in Africa might also be supported through working together with ecumenical and Christian organizations concerned with missions and evangelism work.

Education, Training & Certification Council Priorities

1. Establish the following as the primary roles for this Council (ABC, Congress and SSPB):
 - certification of teachers and schools;
 - revision and expansion of curriculum;
 - tracking student progress; and
 - resourcing the schools.
2. Establish a central administration that certifies both courses and instructors to allow for an easy flow of credits between the multiple educational entities of the Convention.
3. Establish a formal and mandatory leadership training program for those who wish to serve in national leadership positions for the NBC, USA, Inc. Future leaders would acquire a full orientation to the Convention's history, mission, current goals, organizational structure, procedures, planning processes and their accountabilities as leaders.

Commentary: The work of this Council has the potential to be instrumental in assisting the Scruggs' Administration with its priorities for developing a more comprehensive and collaborative relationship in our Christian Education thrust with the American Baptist College, Congress of Christian Education and Sunday School Publishing Board; planning and generating support for the student life center and Master's degree in Pastoral Counseling at American Baptist College; and strengthening Christian education in general.

Communications, Marketing & Technology Council Priorities

1. Develop and implement a Convention-wide plan to centralize, standardize and secure the management of our data. We specifically want to address issues of accessibility, data integrity, security, and standardization of software and hardware. Currently, our data “lives” on scores of desktops throughout the country and we are unable to make secure, access, analyze and communicate information efficiently.
2. Develop a public relations (marketing) plan that increases the visibility of the Convention’s work for our current members, enhances media relations and positive press in the general media, and supports membership development.
3. Implement a plan for enhanced use of technology for communications within the Convention that supports and expands upon our goals, including:
 - Coordinating and keeping our websites up to date, user friendly, and attractive with consistency in message;
 - Integrating the use of social networking technologies, such as a Convention brand of Facebook or MySpace; and the creation of Convention sections on networking sites such as LinkedIn and Plaxo; and
 - Enabling the Convention and its members to use effective cost and time saving methods of technology-based communication, education, and administration including websites, online meeting and education technologies, and state of the art software and hardware.
4. Implement a program at the church level designed to link technologically savvy people with technologically-challenged people in an effort to increase their comfort level with using computer and Internet technologies.
5. Conduct a survey of our membership (in conjunction with Faith & Works) to determine what we need to do to attract new members and supporters.
6. Stay informed of make the best technology resources available to our churches, districts and state conventions that improve communications, efficiency and effectiveness.

Commentary: The work of this Council has the potential to be instrumental in assisting the Scruggs’ Administration with its priorities for increasing the Convention’s membership and revenues, serving as the medium through which the Convention’s messages can reach its membership, broader audiences and media outlets; improving cost-efficiency and effectiveness in the Convention’s management of technology; and establishing a public image of the Convention as a premier institution that is achieving the Great Commission.

Media & Publications Council Priorities

1. Establish an Editorial Council that will:
 - Give guidance for publications to be biblically, theologically and doctrinally sound;
 - Ensure clarity and uniformity in style and substance;

- Recommend publications for development;
 - Grant official designation for Convention documents and publications and use of the Convention's official seal;
 - Establish guidelines and technical support for publications developed by local host committees; and
 - Identify relevant future trends and innovations and incorporate those into the planning processes.
2. Update all Convention manuals, periodicals and forms using a consistent format that represents the Convention "brand" in a professional manner.
 3. Consolidate publications, especially periodicals, produced by the various auxiliaries and organizations to centralize the source of the Convention's message (e.g., The National Baptist Voice).
 4. Identify a standard writing style for Convention publications (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style).
 5. Establish a translation (or parallel translations) of the Bible as the standard for Convention publications.
 6. Conduct training sessions for writers of material used by the Convention.
 7. Evaluate audio and visual recording of Convention sessions for quality, selection, effectiveness and cost efficiency; and evaluate methods used for making the media available to the Convention and general public.

Commentary: The work of this Council has the potential to be instrumental in assisting the Scruggs' Administration with its priorities for enhancing not only SSPB but all literature and media produced by the Convention and greatly enhancing the Convention's public profile; generating revenues; and decreasing costs associated with publications and media.

Stewardship, Management & Budget Council Priorities

1. Develop, implement and monitor an annual unified planning and budgeting process for all entities of the Convention.
2. Establish standards and oversight for the planning, fiscal management and operating integrity of our Conventions & Meetings.
3. Establish an agenda and operating plan for member registration, development and ongoing management of member benefits and services.

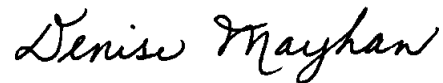
Commentary: The work of this Council has the potential to be instrumental in assisting the Scruggs' Administration with its priorities for membership and revenue growth; and maximizing the effective use of available resources and personnel.

Summary

This initiative has the potential to be the impetus that sparks great improvements in the underlying structures and processes the Convention uses to work toward its mission of preaching, teaching and healing. The representative structure of the Councils assures that all Convention entities are engaged in dialogue for more effective communication, coordination and collaboration.

The Initiative Committee is appreciative of the support we have received from the Convention leadership and members in general as evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive survey results and anecdotal commentary. A big question on the minds of many is, "Where do we go from here?" The foundation has been laid over these past two years and we stand ready to continue in service.

On behalf of the entire Committee on The Initiative for More Effective, Communication, Coordination and Collaboration,



Denise Mayhan, PhD
Committee Co-Chair

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