

FAITH, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE REPORT

Charles Mock

As we move closer to the 2012 election for the President of the United States perhaps this is a good time to be challenged by the commitments that came out of the Faith, Family and Community Empowerment Conference. This 11/2011 conference was co-sponsored by the Home Mission Board, the NAACP, the Foreign Mission and Evangelism Boards of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. Please consult the January, 2012 Mercy & Might Journal for the entire report.

Faith, Family and Community Empowerment Conference
November 10-12, 2011 - The Millennium Hotel St. Louis
A cooperative partnership of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. and the NAACP

Speakers Include:
Rev. Roslyn McCalister Brock | Dr. Oliver K. Patterson | Rev. Nelson B. Rivers III | Rev. Telley L. Gadson
Dr. William B. Moore | Rev. Charles E. Mock | Dr. Benjamin Todd Jealous | Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith

The leadership of the above mentioned conference felt like one usually does following a church revival. The real revival takes place after the revival by inspired action. Revivals provide a fresh wakeup call to sleeping saints and an infusion of new inspiration to get on with the real work of the church—evangelism and missions. The closing question of the conference was where do we go from here?

With this in mind we would like to hear from those who attended what you have done in the first area of challenge and commitments, “building sustainable relationships.”

Building Sustainable Relationships.

It was suggested that churches seek out faith-based congregational and leadership development institutions that can enhance its ministry readiness and relevancy both in the church and the community. For example, with health care and public education as twin issues

of deep concern, what have you done to prepare your leaders to increase the effectiveness of their voice in these heated debates? Secondly, who is new at your ministry table whose voice and resources can assist your church in its mission development, goals and objectives?

The Home Mission Board, the Evangelism board and the NBC, USA, Inc. Laymen's Auxiliary are presently engaged in building new relationships with the leadership of Second Chance Shelter in St. Louis around the restoration of a shelter for the homeless. This entails our working with pastors and churches of the New Salem District Baptist Association of St. Louis. The Home Mission Board is committed to providing \$5,000 (\$2,000.00 for Habitat and \$3,000 for the Second Chance Shelter in East St. Louis, IL) during the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education session.

Dr. O. K. Patterson, by working in a team effort with the Home Mission Board, is making good on its conference commitment to holistic discipleship: tying the message of salvation to the soul to the social needs of the body. In Dr. Patterson's own words, ***"a holistic approach requires us to see discipleship as a tactic and not an objective."***

The Conference challenged the NBC, USA, Inc. and the Home Mission Board to be more strategic in its relationship with the NAACP. Toward this end, the Home Mission Board, through its Micah Ministry of Justice, continues to play a mediating role in President Scruggs' deep concerns about national justice, fairness, incarceration, healthcare, education, income disparities and our common ground with the NAACP's goals in these areas. Through a systematic and coordinated strategy new relationships are being restored and in some cases repaired between national Baptist convention churches and local branches of the NAACP.

The conference challenged us to promote the ***"prophetic"*** element of the Pastor's job description. The Home Mission Board is strategizing to identify a core group of state pastors with an interest in developing and promoting the prophetic role of the Shepherd.

The Home Mission Board is also being more intentional about drawing on the rich resources of the Gamaliel Foundation, an international, faith-based organization dedicated to providing a social justice tool kit that enhances pastoral and congregational leadership development. This effort speaks to the conference challenge of developing and supporting communal ecclesiological conversations around Justice.

Presidential 2012 Election

A second area of challenge very much related to the above has to do with the 2012 Presidential election. The 2012 election is a *kairos* moment. How do we rapidly reach pastors now to help mobilize our communities and congregations for the election?

Voter Empowerment Strategic Plan

We are identifying State Convention Presidents and Pastors that are organizing Get Out to Vote Initiatives to increase voter education and participation. This information is being made available on the NBC website as a resource of ideas for others to draw on as needed.

President Scruggs is providing convention leadership and direction in this effort as an important follow up to the Faith, Family and Community Empowerment Conference challenges and commitments.

National Baptist Congress of Christian Education.

We are seeking leadership support from the Congress of Christian Education in building solidarity for the 2012 election. The NAACP and the Home Mission Board are working with the Congress's leaders on the appropriate time and place for announcing the, **This Is My Vote 2012** Campaign strategy of the NAACP and NBC, USA, Inc.



National Baptist Action Plan

A third area of commitment stemming from the F. F. C. E. Conference has to do with developing a national Baptist convention plan of action that could lead to greater resourcing of local churches dealing with social ills in their community.

Representatives from the Faith, Family and Community Empowerment Conference Boards and the NAACP are encouraged to work with the Convention liaisons to the Faith-based and Community Partnership Offices to put together a working-plan. This plan will lead to the implementation of the goals and objectives outlined by our President. There has been a conversation between President Scruggs, Dr. Bush-chair of the Board of Directors-and the Home Mission Board executive secretary. No action has yet taken place.

So this is what we are doing to advance the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. We want to know what you are doing, whoever you may be. Please send what you are doing to our national Baptist convention website address: webmanager@nationalbaptist.com