The National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. and the American Red Cross are celebrating the one year anniversary of their joint national partnership with the continued goal of uplifting communities by focusing on the importance of healthy lifestyles, volunteer service and disaster readiness & capacity building. To commemorate our first year in partnership with the American Red Cross, we are happy to announce our “Gift of Life” Blood Legacy Campaign which allows National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. to sponsor blood drives across our nation. As our President Dr. Scruggs has stated, “This Gift of Life campaign is our opportunity to minister to the world.”

This partnership will launch the “Gift of Life” Blood Legacy Campaign at the National Baptist Convention, USA, Annual Session in to be held in Kansas City, Missouri during the week of September 6 – 10, 2010. The American Red Cross together with honorary chair, Mrs. Josephine Scruggs, the wife of Dr. Julius R. Scruggs, president of the National Baptist Convention, USA, will host this historical event. The kick-off will be from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m., September 8th at the Kansas City Convention Center, 301 W. 13th Street, Kansas City, Missouri.
By combining our efforts, the NBC and the ARC will be working through the Charles Drew Community Blood Program to help increase awareness of the need for “like” blood donors. In particular, those affected by diseases such as Sickle Cell Anemia, are better serviced when they are matched with a more compatible blood donor. It should be noted that there is a great disparity between blood donors and blood recipients in the African-American community which is now a major national concern. This concern is being addressed by our commitment to this program. As the largest African-American church body, our convention is in a position to bring this life saving campaign to the nation through awareness, education and active participation.

The statistical facts that bring this issue to the forefront of this much needed campaign are as follows:

- More than 3.5 million people in the U.S. have sickle cell traits.
- Sickle cell disease is the most common genetic disease in African –Americans, affecting 1 in 400 babies
- Over 70,000 people in the U.S. are affected by sickle cell disease.
- Types O and B are often in high demand and are the first to run out during a shortage. The African-American, Asian American and Latin American populations carry a high percentage of types O and B blood.
- About 70% of African Americans have O or B type blood.
- Rare blood types are often found in African American populations.
- In addition to the common ABO blood types, some extremely rare blood proteins are found exclusively in the African American population.