

NACCC STRATEGIC PLAN

Purpose: In order to live out the mission statement of the NACCC: *“Bringing together Congregational Christian Churches for mutual care and outreach to our world in the name of Jesus Christ”* the NA must create an environment that allows the Congregational Way to thrive in the 21st century. We trust in God to establish for us a renewed vision that encourages a different way of delivering services to our beloved churches as well establishing stronger communication between our congregations. In the book of Habakkuk, the prophet questions God’s justice towards those with less power and authority. He wonders how to remain faithful to God’s vision of a just world when the world seems dictated by human reaction (and ultimately, human violence). God commands Habakkuk to be faithful and observant – searching diligently for the grace of God in the midst of difficulty. God instructs the prophet towards observation so that he might *“write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time...”* (Habakkuk 2: 2-3) The Strategic Planning team believes that this is the appointed time for a new vision and new action by the NACCC so that our churches can be the beacons of hope, justice and peaceful community for which the prophet so longs. **This document will serve to make plain that vision, so all may understand.**

Plan Overview: While there are three primary components to the strategic plan, the plan will function best when worked cohesively. It is structured so that all components interact and overlap. The plan’s primary objective is how to best serve and empower the local churches of the NA.

Plan Components: The three components of the strategic plan are Structure Reorganization, Service Delivery, and Year Round Delegates.

STRUCTURE REORGANIZATION

Our present organization dates back to our founding 50 years ago and it reflects needs of that time. Since then the NA has matured, gained experience, adapted to new technologies, and responded to emerging challenges. Through an examination of our current services, the team identified three primary key functions of the NACCC. A re-organization around these key functions (**Growth, Vitality, and Outreach**) would enhance our ability to coordinate our skills, talents, activities, and service. **Administration** is an additional key function that supports the work of the entire NA team.

Congregational Church Growth	Congregational Church Vitality	Congregational Church Outreach	Administration
Planting churches Youth Inquiring churches Identity	Leadership Conflict Management Pastoral search Revitalization	Missions ICF WCRC (World Christian Relations Commission)	Annual meeting Financial services Communications Technical services Fundraising &

	Stewardship Worship Technology Strategic planning		donor development services
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Advisory Teams (3-5 persons) would be created for each key function. Advisory Teams would be elected positions with term limits voted upon at Annual Meeting. For 2011-2012, transitional Advisory Teams will be appointed by the Executive Committee. Advisory Teams could be comprised of existing Division members as well as members at large of the NACCC. Consideration shall be given to those who have gifts and abilities central to the key function. These teams would set policy, determine priorities, and vet actions, thus providing advice and support for programs, activities, and actions. Advisory teams would incorporate the work of the present divisions working with them at the outset.

The present divisions of the NA (CCD, CFTS, DFM, and Missions) would be eliminated.

The work of current divisions would be blended into the key functions:

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH GROWTH would involve the work of planting new churches, Congregational history, polity and identity, assisting inquiring churches into membership in the NA, equipping and empowering our youth into leadership within the Congregational Way.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH VITALITY would include the work of ministry development and support, the pastoral search process, conflict management, revitalization, stewardship, worship, technology development and assisting in strategic planning with the local churches.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OUTREACH would tend to local, national, and international missions and wider religious organization relationships through advocacy, fiduciary validation, and sharing of resources.

ADMINISTRATION would assume responsibility for the general support of the NA team including the Annual Meeting, financial services, communications, technical services, and, with the Congregational Foundation, fundraising and donor development.

Organizing around key functions drives shared development of plans, programs, budgets and activities all in support of needs expressed by our churches. Programs that strengthen churches and empower leadership will be developed and delivered through our Leadership Center. Organizing around functions also facilitates the delivery of services with and through regional associations. For example, programs that deal with conflict may require the expertise of church development as well as the educational and training capabilities of the Center.

As we focus on key functions in response to local church needs we begin to share our resources. Planning involves everyone. Skills and talents move within the NA to support the work of others. Budgets are developed to be mutually supportive. We begin to accomplish our goals more effectively and efficiently. As divisions are eliminated, administrative costs will diminish without affecting the level of services provided to member churches.

SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Service delivery is the primary focus of the NACCC. When a congregation has a need for resources and materials, a guide through the search process, questions about Congregational polity or history, or assistance with conflict or other troubling situation, the NA responds to the best of its ability. Currently, NA services are most often delivered by the NA staff. The strategic plan identifies a new model for service delivery, in which only selective and specialized services are delivered by NA staff. This model is expected to reduce travel costs, better match delivery to staff capacity as well as allowing staff more time to engage in the other duties of their office.

The strategic plan engages a **consultant- based service delivery model**.

Educated, trained, and empowered clergy and lay personnel from member NA churches would deliver desired services to NA congregations whenever appropriate. Service examples would include (but are not limited to): leadership training, strategies for revitalization, worship, technology assistance. Because of the availability of expertise within given areas and by expanding the talent pool, needs would be met in a timely way locally, effectively, efficiently, and – as a bonus – at lower cost..

A consultant-based service delivery model would also build partnership relationships with regional associations wherein service delivery could be planned and developed together, limiting duplication and maximizing the strengths of both national and regional expertise and leadership.

A consultant-based service delivery model will provide:

- More effective use of staff time
- Local church people empowered to act locally whenever appropriate
- Reduced travel costs
- Greater ability to serve more people and churches
- Increased local church participation
- Improved program impact.
- Stronger partnerships with regional associations
- Greater freedom for NA Staff to concentrate on programs that address long-term needs

A consultant-based service delivery model will result in better response time for churches, more personalized delivery of requested services and brings out the best of a congregational model, equipping people and lifting up the Body of Christ. The strength of the NACCC is in its network, which can be tapped to find resources rather than in the development of materials.

The NACCC cannot and should not deliver *every* service that a member church requests and must make judicious decisions on which services to develop and fund. This includes knowing what to leave to the open commercial Christian market, and exploring efficiencies with existing groups outside of the NACCC. Those services we prioritize should contribute to vitalities that are identified as traits of healthy churches. These traits (as identified by natural church development, and chroniclers Diana Butler Bass and Stephen Macchia and others) are:

- God's empowering presence
- God exalting worship
- Spiritual discipline (passionate spirituality)
- Learning and growing in community
- Commitment to loving and caring relationships
- Servant Leadership
- Outward focus
- Wise administration and accountability with functional structures
- Networking with the body of Christ
- A culture of stewardship and generosity
- Hospitality

With this in mind, the NACCC should focus service development and delivery in the following areas:

- Worship: style and form and the shape of worship in the 21st century
- Conflict management
- Pastoral Search
- Stewardship education: promoting a culture of generosity and hospitality; not primarily programs
- Governance: a structure that works
- Identity: Congregational polity and practice
- Leadership training
- Technology uses
- Vision and strategic planning within local churches
- Mission Outreach
- Inquiring churches

The four key functions identified in the Reorganization addresses each of these service delivery options.

We envision service providers, no matter where they are located, as part of the “Faculty of the Center for Congregational Leadership” or some similar designation. Any service deliver model must make quality and accountability a priority.

Vetting: Identified or interested service providers will be able to demonstrate training, experience, expertise and aptitude for the services they deliver on behalf of member churches and under the auspices of the NACCC. Their credentials must be placed on record, their applications reviewed and a determination of acceptance or rejection made.

Obligations: Accepted services providers will sign a service agreement with the NACCC, administrated through the Center for Congregational Leadership. This agreement will be specific about training, engagement, and accountability.

Accountability: Each faculty person and his/her work will be subject to review by the Center.

Churches Requesting Services: Churches wishing to engage any of the services offered by the NACCC must apply to the Center with a simple request form that includes a means test for payment. Using a sliding scale, churches must make some financial investment in the process.

Closing a Consulting Relationship: When the consulting/teaching relationship between consultant and church closes, each party will file a summary report with the Center.

Budget implications are examined elsewhere in this document. Monies will be necessary to support training, travel, consultant compensation and church subsidies. These might come from a variety of sources, including the NACCC, state or regional associations, requesting churches, scholarships, sponsors, a donation from the consultant or other sources.

YEAR ROUND DELEGATES

As we position our Association to deliver more effective and timely services to our churches, excellent communication between the NA and our member churches is crucial. The third component of the Strategic Plan is to have member churches establish a **Year Round Delegate** who will be the primary contact person for the NACCC.

Many of our churches presently elect delegates to attend either state and regional associations and our National Association’s Annual Meeting and conferences. This plan encourages the election of delegates for the entire year. Information from the NACCC would continue to be sent to churches, but duplicate information would be sent to year-round delegates. Delegates would be charged with sharing this information with

their congregations, and keeping the church up to date on events, happenings and services provided from the NA.

As a Congregational Association we need to keep in mind our primary clients are the members within our congregations. Empowering laity to participate in the wider fellowship enhances the growth, development, and future of Congregationalism as a whole and the National Association in particular.

As we work to develop creative resources for communication between our churches (through WebEx, Go to Meeting and other on-line services), we shrink the geographical distance between member churches. Those churches with limited financial resources who are unable to send a delegate to the Annual Meeting will have more opportunities to be in communication with the wider church.

By employing a Year Round Delegate model, we strengthen our connection between the NA and the local church by giving our congregations a consistent voice in NA happenings.

This component opens up the possibility of holding bi-annual meetings and conferences, instead of annual ones; using the alternate years for promotion of local or state association gatherings; asking year round delegates to be the Association's representatives to these meetings.

Please see attachment # 1 for a job description of the Year Round Delegate.

Budget Implications: (TBD by NACCC staff)

Conclusion: God has gifted us with a vision for strengthening and supporting the ministries of the NACCC. This Strategic Plan utilizes the best of our history and Congregational Way while creatively engaging new technology, new structures, new ways of providing services that will benefit and strengthen our NA churches. The NACCC exists to create a network of vital church congregations. Now is the appointed time to take action so this vision becomes a vibrant reality.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Beth A. Faeth and James Waechter

On behalf of the Strategic Planning Task Force:

Bob Carlson, Michael Chittum, Beth Faeth, Cheryl Holmes, Jim Hopkins, Barbara Mullen, Jim Waechter (Chair), John Carson (Staff), Betsey Mauro (Staff) Tom Richard (Staff)

Attachment List:

1. Year Round Delegate Job Description
2. Strategic Plan Timeline

Attachment # 1

YEAR ROUND DELEGATES

Job Description

Year-round delegates will help deliver more effective and timely communications to and from member Churches of the National Association. The delegates at the 2010 Annual Meeting and Conference in Anchorage Alaska affirmed the benefit of this communication tool to our Churches.

We recommend that your Church choose a year-round delegate as soon as possible and communicate his or her name and contact information using the options listed below.

In choosing your delegate, please consider these important qualifications::

1. A person willing to be one of your church's primary representatives to the National Association (the year-round delegate **does not have to be** the delegate your church sends to the Annual Meeting and Conference).
2. A person elected by your church to be a third contact person from//to the Association (in addition to the minister and moderator of the Church)
3. A person prepared to share the opinions, concerns, suggestions of their congregation as they relate to programs and plans of the Association.
4. A person willing to distribute information from the Association to appropriate leaders of your church.
5. A person who is computer literate and internet connected. (desirable, but not required)

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Year-Round Delegate Contact Information

Name

Member of (Church)

Preference for Mail (email or regular mail)

Other contact information? (optional)

Please return to the NACCC office Box 288 Oak Creek, WI 53154 or email to naccc@naccc.org. Have questions? Call 1-800-262-1620

Attachment #2

STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE

Dated: Feb 15, 2011

Feb 2011	Present updated Strategic Plan to EC, Feb 3	EC accepts plan and implements YR delegate portion of plan	Work begins on Constitution & by-laws	
Mar 2011	Strategic Plan docs sent to Leadership Team	Strategic Plan docs prepared for churches and Annual Meeting Q&A	Identify key players that team needs to educate/inform	Send plan to entire Leadership Team by Mar 5 including Q&A
Apr 2011	Leadership Team conference call on Strategic Plan scheduled for Sat, Apr 16, 11:00 a.m. CST, set date for an additional call with Leadership Team	Speak individually with key players (non-leadership team) to educate/inform		
May 2011	Speak at Minister's convocation regarding Strategic Plan	Present to EC recommendation regarding transition to implement Strategic Plan by May 6	EC to review Constitution & by-law changes and determine timetable for approval by churches	
Jun 2011	Annual Meeting delegate's vote held on NACCC Strategic Plan	Following delegate vote Executive Committee appoints transition team to implement Strategic Plan	Annual Meeting workshop presented on "Role of Year-round Delegate"	By-laws changes proposed to delegates for vote at 2012 Annual Meeting
Jul 2011	NACCC website announces Strategic Plan and transition team, Jul 7			
Sep 2011	Congregationalist article on Strategic Plan	New leadership team members orientation held, Sep 8	National conference call on Strategic Plan held with all churches, Sat, Sep 17, 11:00 CST, set date for	

			an additional call with churches	
Oct 2011	Corporate Board of Directors votes to change structure			
Nov 2011	2012-2013 budget planning process includes new structure			
Jun 2012	Annual Meeting delegate's vote held on by-law changes			

March 31st, 2011

Questions and Answers on the 2011 Strategic Plan
For Member Churches and Leaders
of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

Introduction

In order to live out the mission statement of the National Association: *Bringing together Congregational Christian Churches for mutual care and outreach to our world, in the name of Jesus Christ*: the Association must create an environment that allows the Congregational Way to thrive in the 21st century. We trust God to establish for us a renewed vision that encourages a differing way of delivering services to our beloved churches as well as establishing stronger communications among our congregations.

1. What changes are being made?

We are changing from a structure created over a half century ago which was by necessity relatively inflexible in order to protect the Congregational Way to a structure that demands flexibility and agility in order to respond to 21st century needs of our churches. The new structure is organized around core functions of our services to the churches.

2. Why do we need to make these changes now?

The NA has matured, gained experience, and adapted to new technologies, which make it possible to serve our churches more effectively and be more responsive to their needs.

3. Why haven't we acted upon this before?

Leaders of the Association in the past have proposed changes that would help us focus, not on our structure, but on our mission. There are many reasons why previous bold moves and plans were not enacted. Personalities, fear, and comfortableness probably cover them all. The Strategic Planning Team believes this is our time. We believe that God is leading our Association to adapt to the changing landscape and create an organization that more effectively serves the needs of our churches.

4. What does this plan do to our present structure?

This plan will reduce the number of people in our present leadership structure, including both leadership team members and staff.

5. How does this plan affect the number of people involved in our Association's programs and ministries?

This plan will allow for a larger number of persons from our churches around the country to be involved as part of "ministry teams" and "task forces" that have a specific purpose and are time-limited. We believe that this effort will attract more persons with a passion for a specific part of our ministry. There are already newly appointed teams at work, which increases the number and variety of leaders from our churches

6. What are the budgetary implications of this plan?

We anticipate a substantial budgetary in the areas of administrative expenses and in the cost of maintaining advisory teams. These savings will result in additional funds becoming available for the delivery of core services and, as importantly, help eliminate deficit spending.

7. What about those presently serving on divisions?

We envision a natural attrition of present leadership team members, not replacing those whose terms are completed.

8. What happens to the commissions and committees of the Association?

As the plan unfolds, the implementation team will have suggestions to address standing committees and commissions. The plan calls for re-structuring the entire leadership team, so changes would occur in these areas of our work as well.

9. What changes will occur in the nomination process?

Until the delegates in Scottsdale ratify the Executive Committee's support of the plan, the nomination process of both the Association's nominations committee and the Executive Committee's Appointments committee will continue. However, in all fairness to those nominated next year, we would certainly prepare them for the changes that will occur.

10. There are details missing from this Plan. Should we not wait until they are worked out? When should we ask questions about them?

As in any major Plan in any company, business, Church, or organization strategic plans deal with strategic issues. We realize there are details still to be worked out. Support of this plan gives us reason to deal with those things that have yet to be determined. We should not wait. We are always working out the most effective ways to do what we do. You are invited to share your questions or concerns at any time in this process.

11. What about the monies which are in endowments, restricted or donor-designated?

Those funds were and are entrusted to the NACCC for specific purposes. Those funds will not be re-directed or co-mingled in any way, but used in the areas of ministry for which they were given.

12. What's next?

Once the plan is ratified, a transition team will be put in place to begin the implementation process.