THE COUNCIL IS REBORN

The Committee of 15
appointed Feb. 11, 1974 by President
Rev. Bruce Roberts
Portland
Rev. Carl Geores
Leds
Rev. Robert Howes
Kennebunkport
Mrs. Alice Sanborn
Sabattus
Mr. Charles Barter
North Leeds
Mr. Clifford Davis
Sanford
Rev. Davis Bilberry
Cornish
Rev. Kenneth Brookes
Augusta
Rev. Richard Hasty
Portland
Rev. Clement Thibodeau
Alfred
Miss Rachel Harlan
Augusta
Mrs. Lucy Thompson
Calais
Ms. Ruth Ayers
Gorham
Mary Jane Cummings
Portland
Mr. Louis Marsteller
Freeport

1973

- September 30, 1973: MCC President Bruce Roberts receives a telephone call stating that Mrs. Elsie Libby has died and that the Maine Council of Churches is named as the sole beneficiary of her estate.

1974

- January 7, 1974: Council votes to rescind its action of February 18, 1970, and a “Committee of 15” is authorized to “consider the proper use of the Libby property and resources and make recommendations...."

- May 9, 1974: Committee of 15 reports to the Executive Committee.

1975

- Grants Committee is established. “Grants are to be used as a stimulus to encourage ecumenical cooperation and to meet a broad range of concerns of the church community.”

- The Libby Estate is settled.

1976

- A Communications Committee is organized by Rev. S. Clifton Ives to survey religious programming on radio and television.

- MCC co-sponsors a Rural Church Conference in Leeds and Fairbanks. Other sponsors include the Synod of the Northeast, Rural Community Action Ministry (RCAM), and the United Methodist Church Economic Ministry.

1977

- “That Your Light May Shine!” communications workshops for congregations are held in Waterville and Portland.


- In response to the strong urging of Rev. Lynne Josselyn, Denise Ewell, and Rev. Susan Turley-Moore, a Social Concerns Department is created that will address issues of social justice from an ecumenical perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS of the Committee of 15

Goal 1
Encourage sharing of what God is doing within each of the churches.

Goal 2
Develop and use creative ways of speaking to the world, pointing out human needs and lifting up Judeo-Christian values.

Goal 3
Support cooperative human service projects where two or more local churches are working together.

Goal 4
Support adjudicators who work together in areas of human service.

Goal 5
Provide scholarships for individual clergy and lay leaders who desire additional education and spiritual renewal.

Rev. Bruce Roberts
MCC President

SEEKING COMMON GROUND. WORKING FOR THE COMMON GOOD.
MAINE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AS GRANTOR

1978

- The Episcopal Diocese of Maine joins the Maine Council of Churches.
- "Insights" (hosted by William Stubbs) airs on WGAN-TV, 6:30-7:00 am three days a week.

1979

- Immanuel Baptist Church, Portland, is welcomed as an Associate Member.
- Faiths in Action Together (F.I.A.T.) is organized to help lead the effort in the United States Congress to raise the level of support for mothers receiving funds from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).
- The Marion Ulmer Fund is authorized, making possible a generation of Seeds of Promise religious education events.

In 1978, unbeknownst to her sister, Miss Madelyn Ulmer wrote to Rev. William Chamberlain, suggesting that Marion Ulmer be honored for many years of service to the Maine Council of Churches.

Among the MCC Grantees 1975-1980

Mission at the Eastward (East Summer Ecumenical Ministry) $10,500
Mt. Abram Cooperative Education Project, Salem $1,200
Protestant Hospital Chaplaincy, Portland $3,000
Somerset Organization for Mutual Assistance $2,500
Indian Program, AFSC $750
Farmington Clergy Association Counseling Training $600
New Testament Oral Tradition Network $500
Central Maine Indian Association $2,000
Abused Women's Advocacy Project $1,000
Castine Interchurch Parish Chaplaincy $1,000
Capehart Community Center, Bangor $1,000

Rev. Carl Geores
MCC President 1977-1978

Rev. William Chamberlain
MCC President 1979-1980
Southern District Supt.
Maine Conference UMC

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THE COUNCIL IN THE EIGHTIES

1981
- MCC opposes Question 4, a DOC referendum authorizing 138 more beds at the Maine State Prison. Instead, the Council urges creation of a Maine Sentencing Guidelines Commission.
- MCC sponsors "Parole: YES or NO," a forum at Woodfords Congregational Church.

1982
- The Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland is welcomed as a member of the Maine Council of Churches.
- Church Women United is received as an Associate Member.
- "Report on Prison Ministries" press conferences in Portland and Bangor, covered by three TV stations and the Associated Press, urge alternatives to imprisonment before investing in costly prison construction.
- 87 acres of land is sold to the US Fish & Wildlife Service to extend the Rachel Carson Preserve.
- A workshop, "A Wholistic Approach to Social Action," is held at Clark Memorial United Methodist Church, Portland.

1983
- The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches is received as an MCC Member.
- The Swedenborgian Community (Church of the New Jerusalem) is received as an Associate Member.
- Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church is received as an Associate Member.
- The first Seeds of Promise Religious Education Event, funded by the Marion Ulmer Fund, is held at Woodfords Congregational Church. Keynoters: Thomas Groome, Sharon Daloz Parks, Walter Brueggeman. 440 in attendance. MCC publishes "To Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly: An Agenda for Ministers" (featuring the keynote addresses). The book is still in print.

Keynoters: Sharon Daloz Parks, Thomas Groome, and Walter Brueggeman
- MCC endorses "Campaign for Peace with Justice in Central America."
- Donna Gilbeau is hired as a paid lobbyist for the Maine Council of Churches.
1984

- Grace Lutheran Church, Auburn, is received as an Associate Member.

- Annual Assembly votes unanimously to endorse ratification of the Maine Equal Rights Amendment.

- MCC sponsors "Prison Overcrowding: The Lawmakers' Dilemma" workshop.

1985

- Resolution on Central America calls for "peaceful, negotiated settlement of conflicts in the region," commended El Salvadoran President Napoleon Duarte, and urges US President Ronald Reagan to pursue peace without military intervention.

- An MCC Board resolution calls for the U.S. Dept of Immigration and Naturalization to review cases where Cambodians have been refused refugee status, so that families in the US can sponsor their close relatives in Khao I Dang or in border camps.

- MCC campaigns for a holiday marking the birth of Civil Rights pioneer Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

MCC Grantees 1981-1985
(a partial list)

- Pastoral Care and Counseling Service
  $1,000

- Cumberland County Bail Project
  $1,000

- Hospice of Western Maine
  $750

- Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Falmouth
  $1,000

- Coastal Family Hospice
  $1,000

- Rural Community Action Ministry
  $6,500

- Womankind, Inc.
  $1,500

- Abused Women's Advocacy Project
  $1,000

- Clergy and Laity Concerned, Bangor
  $8,550

- Aroostook Medical Center Pastoral Care
  $2,500

- Interfaith Low-Income Awareness Project
  $3,000

- Portland Area Displaced Homemakers
  $2,500

- Religious Institutions for Family Life Education
  $7,500

- Woodfords/Deering Afterschool Program
  $2,500

- Tikkun Olam
  $3,000

- Economic Justice for Poor Women
  $2,350

- Criminal Justice Education Project
  $3,000

- Good Shepherd Food Bank
  $6,000

- Alliance for the Mentally Ill
  $1,000

- Elder Circle Transition Program
  $2,500

- Celebration of Peace Concert Series
  $2,000

- Long Timers Group, Inc., Thomaston
  $2,500

- Habitat for Humanity, Portland
  $2,500

MCC President, Rev. Lynne Joselyn leads a meeting of the Maine Council of Churches. To her right: Arthur Duffett. To her left: Executive Secretary "Ray" Bolger.

SEEKING COMMON GROUND. WORKING FOR THE COMMON GOOD.
1986

- The First Radio Parish Church of America is received as an Associate Member.
- Tom Ewell is hired as the Council's full-time Executive Director, and the Council office moves to Clark Memorial United Methodist Church, Portland.
- MCC becomes a founding member of Mainers Against the Death Penalty.

1987

- In response to the floods of 1987, MCC creates the Maine Interfaith Flood Recovery Agency, a 501(c)3 corporation. In one year, through donations from denominations and individuals, the Agency provides $193,000 in direct emergency aid to flood victims.
- MCC co-sponsors rallies in Rumford, Portland, Bangor, Augusta, and Lewiston-Auburn against a KKK presence in Maine. Co-sponsors: Jewish Federation of Southern Maine, Maine Chapter NAACP, Christian Civic League of Maine, NOW, and the AFL-CIO.
- An MCC Criminal Justice Committee is created.
- The Council's newsletter, Crosspoint, begins publication.

MCC Grantees 1986-1988
(a partial list)

- Maine Association of Handicapped Persons
  $2,000
- Birthline, Bangor
  $2,000
- Craft Catalog Economic Project, UMC
  $2,400
- Center for Vision and Policy
  $3,000
- Project for the Advancement of Sexual Health and Safety, Maine State Prison
  $2,600
- The AIDS Project
  $1,400
- Presque Isle Student Ministries
  $1,000
- Brunswick Area Church Shelter
  $1,200
- Bread of Life Ministries Emergency Shelter
  $1,200
- Farmington Area Ecumenical Ministry
  $2,000
- Family Planning Association of Maine
  $1,000
- Maine Peace Mission
  $2,500
- Rural Community Action Ministry
  $2,000
- Sentencing Options
  $3,500

and others totaling more than $30,000.

The KKK gets chilly reception in Maine

SEEKING COMMON GROUND. WORKING FOR THE COMMON GOOD.
1988

- Annual Assembly adopts a resolution on AIDS, calling for education, pastoral and housing support, political protection, use of church facilities and volunteers to address the concern.

- MCC receives an $80,000 grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to assist the Criminal Justice Committee. The grant allows the Council to hire a Public Policy Research Director to support the Committee.

- A Fair Share Plan for annual contributions is adopted by the Council's member denominations.

1989

- The Council's first Ecumenical Thanksgiving worship, held in Lewston, draws 800 worshipers.

- Seeds of Promise IV features "Religion and the Arts," including a performance by the Choral Arts Society.

- Maine Council of Churches leads the successful campaign to defeat a $35,000,000 prison bond referendum that would have funded a maximum security prison in Warren.

1990

- On behalf of the Council, Criminal Justice Committee chair Dr. Craig McEwen and MCC executive director Tom Ewell meet with Governor John McKernan to offer assistance in the development of "a long-range plan for corrections and a step-by-step strategy for how we should get there."

- MCC's Sally Campbell receives a Golden Arrow Award from the Maine Public Relations Council for her work on the prison bond campaign in 1989.

- December 29, 1990: Seven judicatory leaders meet with Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell concerning the impending Gulf War, "to personally express appreciation for [his] leadership in this very difficult time" and "to share with [him] the positions our denominations hold regarding the Persian Gulf Crisis." (In attendance: Rev. Otto Sommer, Bishop Edward Chalfant, Rev. Clifton Ives, Bishop Joseph Gerry, Bishop Amadee Proulx, Rev. Glenn Turner, and MCC executive director Tom Ewell.)

SEEKING COMMON GROUND. WORKING FOR THE COMMON GOOD.
THE EWELL YEARS

1991

- MCC’s “An Ethic for Economic Justice: Raising Up the Voices of Those who May Not Be Heard” calls upon state legislators to attend to the needs of the poor.

1992

- The Council receives the Presidential Award from the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance (MLGPA) “for dedication to justice and equality for Maine’s Lesbian and Gay citizens.”
- Blanket America Project (with Church World Service and Good Shepherd Food Bank) distributes 15,500 blankets.

1993

- An Edna McConnell Clark Foundation grant allows MCC to help plan a Sentencing Institute for 300 judges and corrections officials.

- MCC-produced Public Service Announcements air on WCSH Radio.

RADIO SPOT #4

“Get Into Practice”
30 seconds

Little girl: “Grandpa, how come you never play your piano?”

Grandpa: “Oh, I’ve gotten out of practice. I ain’t played in years. I used to play in a dance band years ago. I even played in church?”

Little girl: “You did?”

Grandpa: “Ayuh. When I was a boy, I used to play for the Sunday night service.”

Little girl: “Maybe you need to start practicing again.”

Grandpa: “Naw, I’ve been away from the piano too long to take it up again.”

Little girl: “I meant going to church!”

Announcer: “Something to think about, from the Maine Council of Churches.”

Vote YES on #6!
The Maine Council of Churches urges your support for the $20.25 million prison bond.

- By including a variety of correctional facilities, this bond shows a balanced approach to meeting Maine’s needs.
- By including facilities built in a variety of areas throughout the state, this bond does not burden one section with a large prison population.
- By including alternatives to prison, this bond gives judges several choices for placement when sentencing offenders and should diminish future need for building prisons.

All of this adds up to a wide variety of correctional spaces at a reasonable cost to the citizens of Maine.

Sally Campbell
Communications Director
1987-1995

Evelyn Hanneman
Criminal Justice and Development Director
1988-1998

SEEKING COMMON GROUND. WORKING FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

32