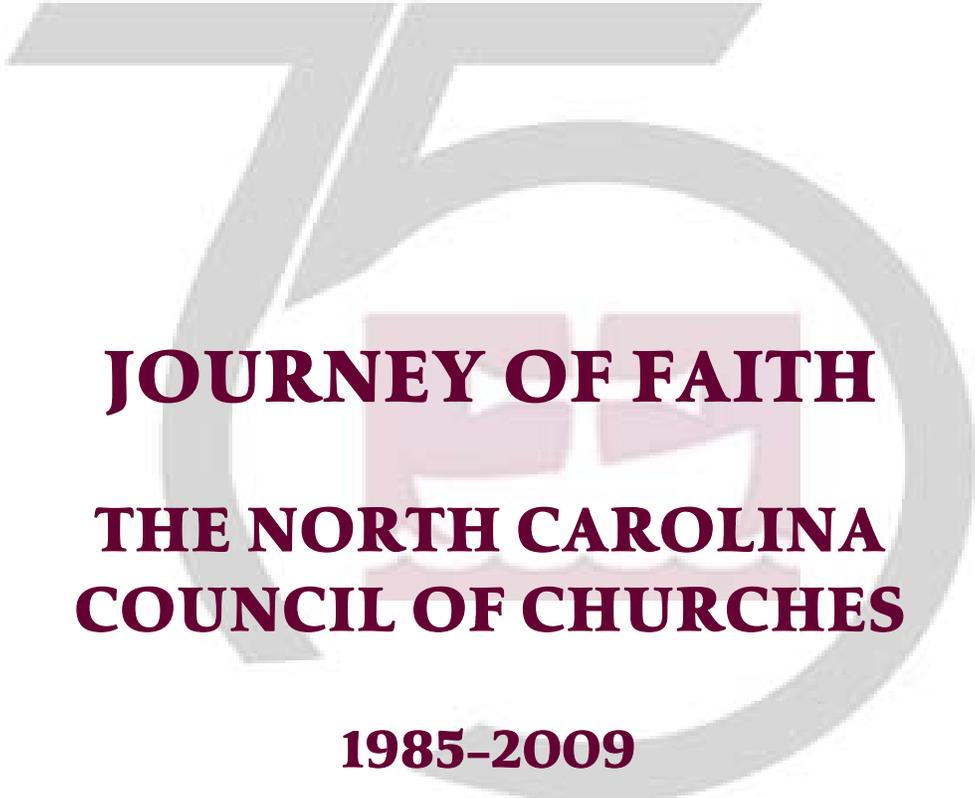


1935 - 2010



**JOURNEY OF FAITH
THE NORTH CAROLINA
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

1985-2009

North Carolina Council of Churches

By Jean Rodenbough, D.Min.

**Editors:
The Rev. George Reed
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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF SISTER EVELYN MATTERN, SFCC

A Thanksgiving

There are so many ways to say thank you, God:
thank you for the slant of sun in autumn
tilting through leaves still green,
for seasons of life in their peculiar treasures,
for joy and discontent, for pleasure and sorrow,
for memories – always for memories – reminding
us of where we were so we can go where we have not been;
for friends, of course, who speak the truth to us and to the world,
for wise women who light the way
while giving their own hearts away in love of you, and all;
for the gift of words that only poets can approach with integrity –
for Evelyn your daughter, the one who wove words of faith
into line and meaning that sing truth in poetry of spirit.
Without her life has been diminished,
malnourished in spirit and in truth.
With her we had courage to hope for the impossible.
With her we knew the beatitudes of life.
Yet with her we have been led so that we can lead.
Her gift continues in each of us touched by her courage,
strengthened by her intensity, made more complete
by her life of justice for the least ones.
She is etched in permanence upon our faith.
Thank you, God, for Evelyn,
now and always – now and always songs of thanksgiving
for what she shared in her love made abundant through you.

--- Jean Rodenbough

**NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES:
THE JOURNEY OF FAITH CONTINUES
1985-2009**

Foreword

The introduction to *We Come Together by Working Together: The First Fifty Years of the North Carolina Council of Churches*, by Sister Evelyn Mattern, SFCC (May 1985) states that the story of those first fifty years “is the story of persons, religious leaders struggling to respond in faith to the signs of their times. Sometimes the signs could be clearly read; at other times, they had to be discerned through a glass darkly. The records show that the leaders would prefer to be measured in terms of the full-heartedness of their responses, rather than the accuracy of their discernment, in terms of their deeds rather than their words.” The standards named in that statement continue to be valid today, 25 years later.

Introductory comments to a study by the Council’s Strategic Planning Committee, formed in 2008, provide additional thoughts: “Is this a time of seeing clearly or a time of looking through a glass darkly? The world and the state of North Carolina are different entities than they were nearly 75 years ago when the Council was created. Since our founding in 1935, the Council’s twin foci have been to encourage ecumenism (or Christian unity) and to work together on issues of justice, especially racial, gender, and economic justice. From efforts on behalf of farmworkers, to encouraging the protection of God’s earth, to exposing racism within the criminal justice system, the North Carolina Council of Churches is at the forefront of progressive social issues that go to the heart of whom God would have us to be. By drawing together members of 16 Christian denominations in this work, the Council also serves our other key focus, Christian unity.”

In seeking to capture the essence of the past 25 years, this history brings the Council’s story up to the present as we celebrate 75 years of ecumenical service in the cause of justice and peace. Nothing has changed in the basic purposes of the Council. However, the manner in which these ministries have taken place shows a keen awareness of the changing times and the need to be current in the most effective ways to address the issues of the day in our witness to the people of this state.

The divisions of the history will be by the year, with reflections from former staff members inserted at times. A section of photos is also included, to remind us of the faces and the good works of those who have labored with and supported the North Carolina Council of Churches.

THE STORY CONTINUES . . .

1985

With the celebration in 1985 of the 50th anniversary of the Council, that moment provided both a backward and a forward look. Observances of the anniversary at various gatherings included reflections by staff and members of the judicatory bodies on accomplishments and also on what were yet unreached goals. Articles in the *Church Council Bulletin* featured issues of the day in addition to reflections on the journey since 1935. Some anniversary events would carry over into the next year, under the theme *Toward the 21st Century – God’s Instrument for Unity, Justice, and Peace*.

In May of that year, the House of Delegates met at St. Paul’s Christian Church in Raleigh to signal the beginning of the year’s formal observances. A worship service, led by Father George Kloster, opened the meeting celebrating the first 50 years, and expressing optimism for the next 50. The prayer for the Council was written years before by H. Shelton Smith, the “prime mover” and first Executive Director. Two sermons were delivered that day: Council President the Rev. James Ferree reminded the delegates of their call “to be instruments of change” as instructed by Jesus in his sermon in Luke 4:18-19. His hope was also a charge, that the Council be a faithful witness in “speaking forthrightly to the church and the world” on current issues. In naming some of those concerns, he stressed that the role of the church was “to change society” through our commitment to Jesus Christ, to be “ambassadors for transformation of our world.”

The Rev. Rollin Russell, Conference Minister for the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ and later a President of the Council, also preached at the meeting. In referring to the story of Jesus’ healing of the ten lepers, he pointed out that Jesus “puts the religious establishment on notice: no more outcasts, thus dismantling the structures of oppression.” This understanding then became a charge to the Council as a vision taking priority for its members. Russell pointed to “the ultimate promise: God’s holy purpose will be fulfilled; there will be unity in Jesus Christ.”

Sister Evelyn Mattern, Program Associate, lobbyist, and editor of the *Church Council Bulletin*, compiled a history of the Council’s first 50 years, which was made available to the Delegates, *We Come Together by Working Together: The First Fifty Years of the North Carolina Council of Churches*. Sister Evelyn described Council activities during that period. Among those were efforts to promote peace and justice; support of women in church and society; ecumenical endeavors; structural concerns; issues of race, education, and criminal justice; farmworker concerns; health care; actions by the NC Legislature; and related matters.

More anniversary celebrations took place on November 24, 1985, with a gala service at Shiloh Baptist Church in Greensboro. Banners carried by representative members of the Council’s member bodies entered the church to the music of the Greensboro Moravian Band, and greetings by Council President Ferree. The Greensboro Oratorio Society sang *All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name*, ushering in the procession. Participants in the worship service included church leaders of their respective judicatories. The sermon, by Dr. Eugene Owens from Myers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, pointed to the Council’s heritage of the unconditional embrace of the least in society. He

celebrated the “outspokenness” of the Council members in daring to speak up “when many chose anonymity.” Referring to troubles of the day as related to those listed in the Book of Isaiah, the evil days when justice seemed to be absent, he said “the movement toward Christian unity will never die.” He noted that this was the promise of H. Shelton Smith in his vision for the Council at the beginning of the first 50 years, reminding those present of their call to bear the light of Christ which is the charge to each Christian: “One by one, God’s work is done.” The celebration continued with the Declaration of Faith formulated by the Presbyterian Church in South Africa. Following the service, reports, and announcements, those in attendance gathered over refreshments as a fitting way to conclude the commemoration.

Other issues on the Council’s agenda that year included opposition to US involvement in Central America, concerns over the international arms race, the regulation of handguns, and general matters of importance to bring about a just society. Earlier that year, the Council honored its commitment to ecumenism through a conference related to that of the World Council of Churches on *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*. Nearly 100 attendees from 11 denominations took part in the conversations, echoing the different views set forth by the WCC conference. The NC Council’s support of women’s church leadership actually was stronger than that expressed by the World Council, where some traditions opposed full leadership by women, a controversial matter at that time. In fact, the NC Council was ahead of many church councils, having established a committee in the early 1980's working to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in North Carolina, chaired by the Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte. Even though the Legislature did not approve the amendment in the 1982 vote, the Equal Rights Committee continued its work for nearly 20 years, advocating for women in church and society across North Carolina. The women on that committee, who had been an example to many for their long-term commitment to and effective actions on behalf of women and children, were honored for their service in 1996.

Two additional recognitions took place during the year. The Faith Active in Public Life Award went to Judge Willis P. Whichard at the beginning of the 1985 session of the NC General Assembly. The Most Rev. Michael Begley received the Distinguished Service Award later in the year at the House of Delegates meeting. Both recipients were recognized for their many contributions to the Council as well as to the people of North Carolina.

The year was also eventful for the Council in other ways. One of the most controversial issues at the time was tobacco: its cultivation, sale, and use. The Council developed a study, *Moral Dimensions of Tobacco*, on what was a sensitive issue in the state. Produced after a year of hearings and research, the study drew two conclusions about the moral issues related to tobacco. First, there were serious health implications related to the use of this product which was of great financial importance to the state. Second, there would be serious financial and societal implications, especially in rural North Carolina, as the production of tobacco declined. While today those two conclusions seem self-evident, in 1984, the first one was big news nationally because the Council was the first statewide, non-medical organization to acknowledge what most of the rest of the country already knew: that there were harmful health effects from tobacco use. The study also raised questions about marketing techniques employed to increase tobacco usage in Third World countries. Sister Evelyn Mattern, Program Associate, recruited volunteers to help lobby state legislators on the critical issues involved in tobacco farming and sales. The year ended with concerted efforts to

appeal to state legislators in matters affecting the livelihood of the state's farmers.

1986

The Council participated in a major event early in 1986 when Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa led worship at Duke Chapel. Jointly sponsored by the Council, the NC Diocese of the Episcopal Church, and Duke University Chapel, some 25 representatives of the Council took part in the opening procession of church leaders. Bishop Tutu's moving sermon on the active and loving justice of God was witnessed by those present and those watching the event on television. More than \$21,000 filled the offering plates to support the South African Council of Churches, where Bishop Tutu had formerly served as General Secretary. Continuing in this vein of reaching beyond the familiar bounds of church participation, the very next day the Council held its observance of the first Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, in accordance with events across the nation.

Observances of the Council's 50th anniversary continued during that year, with a conference on religion and politics in February, and concluding with the House of Delegates' meeting in May. The thrust of the anniversary theme, *Toward the 21st Century – God's Instrument for Unity, Justice and Peace*, was evidenced in the issues of concern noted by the Delegates. They decided to: monitor issues such as low-income housing and alternatives to prison; work on curtailing the efforts of the KKK and on promoting Good Samaritan laws; study policies on work to welfare and back; and study the dangers of hazardous waste to the environment and to people. During the meeting, Estelle Hillman received the Distinguished Service Award for her commitment to the goals of the Council. The challenging tasks listed by the Delegates would continue for some time as part of the Council's emphasis on peace and justice under the principles of Christian unity. As one illustration of that emphasis, the Council agreed to purchase farmland near Smithfield for possible housing for migrant workers. The Delegates elected the Rev. George Kloster as President, succeeding the Rev. Jim Ferree.

1987

Advocacy for women remained a key program, and in the spring of 1987, the Council co-sponsored its third annual conference with the Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South, an organization directed by the Rev. Jeanette Stokes. The event, *Women, Faith, and Economic Justice*, included visits to state legislators, attending committee hearings, speaking with lobbyists, and coming up with theological reflections about the issues before the Legislature. That year the Faith Active in Public Life Award was given to Bertha "B" Holt for her efforts in the NC House of Representatives on behalf of justice issues. The Distinguished Service Award went to the Rev. Charles Mulholland for his many contributions of time and energy on behalf of the Council's ministries.

The Council's efforts to abolish the death penalty continued. Episcopal Bishop Robert Estill addressed a judiciary committee of the Legislature concerning the issue, and the General Assembly made a beginning step by abolishing the death penalty for those 17 and under. A new project began

that year, The Caring Program for Children. The Council joined with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina to establish the program, directed internally by Kathy Carpenter of Greensboro. Church groups and individuals were able to contribute to health insurance for children of low- and moderate-income working parents.

1988

The death of the Rev. Sam Wiley in April 1988, was a sad moment for the Council and evoked many tributes from his colleagues. The Executive Director of the Council from 1964-1979, this Presbyterian minister was referred to as “Mr. Ecumenism of North Carolina.” He worked diligently to strengthen ecumenical causes and provide leadership in the name of justice even when such efforts were unpopular with many in the state. He modeled the role of prophet for church leaders in speaking truth to power and confronting resistance to the role of the Council in legislative affairs. Executive Director Collins Kilburn noted that the House of Delegates adopted a strong and heartfelt tribute to the work that Wiley undertook, expressing appreciation for his sense of calling in ecumenical matters and in working for justice through his commitment to social, economic and political ministries. He commented that Wiley’s quick wit and compassion combined to strengthen his later efforts with the farmworker ministry and world hunger issues. His dedication to ecumenism was a vision which, Kilburn stated, that “he shared . . . with grace among us.”

The Council was involved indirectly in international activities that year. Sister Evelyn Mattern spent a portion of her sabbatical year in Central America, with her account published in the *Bulletin*. Also that year saw a significant moment in reaching out to the church and those suffering under apartheid in South Africa. A Consultation on the Church Struggle in South Africa took place in October in Raleigh, with keynote speaker Dr. Bonganjalo Goba, theologian, author, and church leader in his country. Executive Director Kilburn reported on his visit to the USSR. He led a pilgrimage in coordination with the National Council of Churches for the celebration of the 1000-year-old Russian Orthodox Church. The trip took place during the period of *Glasnost*, when doors to the West were opening up gradually as a result of *perestroika*. Kilburn’s report illustrated what he learned from church leaders and others about the current state of religious practices in that country. He concluded his report with the observation that “the time is surely ripe for bringing the Cold War to an end, if our leaders in the US will seize the opportunity.”

A few highlights of the year, as listed in the July *Bulletin*, indicate a variety of ministries and concerns addressed by conferences and other gatherings. Noted were:

- The conference on racism held at Bennett College in Greensboro
- A study of women and health care as the Equal Rights Committee and the Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South presented information and discussion of central issues surrounding women’s health
- Presentations on relationships with the Orthodox Church in Russia and the Central America peace process as referred to above
- International issues on peace and security
- A retreat organized by the Commission on Christian Unity to study Pentecostalism and

Fundamentalism, as well as other studies developed around Christian unity

- The birth of a Rural Crisis Committee to address conditions in rural NC
- A conference on ecumenical efforts to provide homeless shelters
- Studies and proposed legislation pertaining to immigration law by the Farmworker Ministry Committee
- The work of the Council's Housing Development Corporation
- News of the Caring Program for Children as it considered becoming a separate entity dealing with health for children in the state.

In addition, a conference on rural crises took place, housing for farmworkers was studied, and local ecumenical ministries were promoted. One other issue before the Council in 1988 related to farmworkers and their exposure to toxic pesticides. An organization in NC participated in a fast, in sympathy with Cesar Chavez' fast for the United Farm Workers.

Actions by the House of Delegates included Distinguished Service Awards presented to Dr. Joy Joseph Johnson and Catharine Vick for their leadership in both church and community, a policy statement on the rural crisis in the state, advocacy for benefits to be provided in the Peace Corps, and election of the Rev. Thomas Law as President of the Council.

1989

When the Legislative Seminar was held to address issues scheduled to come before the NC General Assembly, the Faith Active in Public Life Award was given to Ferrel Guillory to recognize his work as an editor at the [Raleigh] *News & Observer*, the only journalist to be so recognized by the Council. Later, at the May 1989 House of Delegates meeting in Apex, Kathy Gramley received the Council's Distinguished Service Award in recognition of her advocacy work for economic justice and her participation in the Witness for Peace Program. At the meeting the Delegates passed a resolution on ministry to persons with AIDS, which was followed up by a task force to facilitate this ministry. The Delegates elected Bishop Robert Estill President of the Council.

Later in the year, the Rev. Bobbie Armstrong organized efforts against the death penalty. She began coordinating the Council's efforts with other organizations. A new organization, People of Faith Against the Death Penalty, was formed initially under the wings of the Council, until it could operate independently.

A December statement by the Executive Board deplored recent killings in El Salvador as well as persecution of churches in that country. Judicatory representatives met with Senator Terry Sanford in February of the next year, with Council Vice-President Cally Rogers-Witte moderating the meeting. Other statements by church leaders to Senator Sanford voiced concern for the violence and injustices taking place in Central America.

1990

In 1990, the Council set its sights on programs and projects for the year, including another conference on *Women, Faith, and Economic Justice* in March, a Pilgrimage for Peace in Central America, advocacy for the needs of children, and a rally by the newly-organized People of Faith Against the Death Penalty, which was scheduled for the opening day of the General Assembly's short session. Concerns for adequate housing and wider ecumenical understandings also kept the Council on top of issues of the day. The fall session of the House of Delegates adopted policy statements on five issues: health care for the underserved, criminal justice, AIDS ministries, sustainable farming practices, and affordable housing. The Rev. Dr. William Smith received the Council's Distinguished Service Award.

Matters beyond the state influenced actions by the Peace Committee, which set as its primary focus issues in the Middle East. This was a time when the country was preparing for military action in Kuwait and Iraq, action strongly opposed by national church bodies. Sister Evelyn Mattern reported on her trip to Iraq with a peace mission sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

The Commission on Christian Unity, chaired by Dr. Belton Joyner, offered a conference on Islam in March at Salisbury's First UCC. The need for North Carolinians to learn more about the theological and cultural contributions of Islam was underlined as the nation became more involved in Middle Eastern affairs and the faith of that region. Muslim leaders and other scholars of Islam led sessions during the day, including discussions on the role of women under Islam. The hope was to move beyond the stereotypes of Muslims that prevailed in this country and find avenues for interfaith relationships.

A report by Executive Director Collins Kilburn described his impressions after going on a travel seminar to Mexico. He learned first hand of the poverty there and experienced a session with a house church where liberation theology was applied to a contemporary reading of scripture.

Health care concerns were always on the agenda. The Caring Program for Children, begun in 1987, continued to be a strong program under Director Karen Mortimer and a board of church leaders. Another program was the Council's AIDS Ministry Task Force. Ongoing issues before the Council focused on the costs of the health care system, the lack of availability of care, and lack of health insurance for those unable to afford it. The Council addressed the inability for all to have health insurance as matters of faith, justice, and equity.

Other issues for the Council included a needed response on energy policies, ways to work with other church bodies regarding the growing tensions in Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait, and a response to US intervention in Middle East events through embargos and heightened military preparedness for action in the Persian Gulf area. Sister Evelyn Mattern took leave of the Council after 10 years on staff. She would be returning to serve again within a few years, but used the time away for travel, teaching, writing, and contemplation.

1991

The Gulf War began near the start of 1991, affecting the priority of issues before the Council. The House of Delegates took action at their meeting in Raleigh that May with a statement of sorrow and regret over the role of the US during the Gulf War. Executive Director Collins Kilburn noted that other church councils, national and world-wide, also spoke out in opposition to

the US role in that war. Kilburn raised several questions in this regard, responding to the strong protests by church leadership across the country. He voiced the concern that political leadership as well as local congregations seemed to pay little heed to these protests, instead supporting the military action led by the US in the Middle East. At that meeting, Father George Kloster, former President of the Council and active with the Council's Caring Program for Children, received the Distinguished Service Award for his service to the Council and to concerns of peace and justice. Recipient of the Faith Active in Public Life Award, given during the Legislative Seminar, was the Honorable Dan Blue, Speaker of the House in the NC General Assembly. The House of Delegates elected the Rev. Raymon Hunt as President.

The Rev. Jimmy Creech joined Council staff, taking on a number of ministries involving health care for all, campaign finance, ending the death penalty, and advocacy for children through the Covenant with NC's Children. His work included additional advocacy in the area of gay and lesbian issues, including ways to minister to those with HIV/AIDS. His staff support of the Equal Rights Committee guided their work in advocacy issues. When a delegation from the Council went to Israel and the "occupied territories" of Palestine in November to observe relationships between the two areas, Creech accompanied the group, reporting on the experience upon his return. A second trip was planned for the next year so that North Carolinians could have a better understanding of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the efforts for peace that were taking place.

1992

As 1992 began, the Council intensified ministries which would improve life for the children of NC. Citing statistics that showed children in the US fared worse than in other wealthy nations, the Council determined to address those shortcomings in our state. A Child Advocacy Committee was formed, chaired by the Rev. Rufus Stark, to work with other groups across the state to provide for needs of children across social and economic lines. One such group already active was the Caring Program for Children under the sponsorship of the Council.

In February, a conference on *Faith and the Land* was held in Durham to study the plight of farmers as seen through the perspective of faith. Clergy were joined by farmers, agricultural workers, and others concerned about rural justice issues. Participating in the discussions was the Council's Seeds of Hope Project, led by its Director Charlie Thompson, who was working with churches to organize markets for the farmers' crops. Another issue addressed that year by the Council followed the terrible fire at the Hamlet packing plant, in which many workers died or suffered severe injuries. A Workplace Safety and Reform Project was developed to prevent more such tragedies from taking place.

Events that spring included a retreat for the Equal Rights Committee in order to plan for *Women, Faith, and Economic Justice*, and to strengthen group support and spiritual growth. The Executive Board worked on two strong policy statements to be presented to the House of Delegates: *Conditions for US Aid to Israel*, and *Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination against Gay Men and Lesbians*. During that year the Metropolitan Community Church sought membership in the Council and was approved the following year.

The House of Delegates met in Thomasville in April and voted on major emphases for the

next five years: justice in health care, racial matters and economic issues, and child advocacy. Additional priorities were reclaiming scripture and dealing with violence related to sexual orientation. Sister Evelyn Mattern received the Distinguished Service Award for her service on Council staff from 1981 to 1990, emphasizing her work with farmworkers, prisoners, women and children in poverty, and the poor in Central America. Collins Kilburn stated that Evelyn's ". . . combination of spirituality and activism, of deep piety and concern for the world" incarnated the Council's ideals.

The fall meeting of the House of Delegates adopted an ambitious legislative program, addressing such issues as health care, children, farmworkers, and criminal justice. There was a call for the NC General Assembly to establish some form of universal health care until such a program would be created nationwide. The Farmworker Ministry Committee published a thorough report on the conditions and experiences of farmworkers in NC, such as the seasonal or migrant workers in the fields during harvest times.

Violence was of particular concern. Recognizing its effect upon children and women, as well as in other ways, the Council sought to address the means of prevention and alternatives to violence in all its forms. Committees planned agendas around lowering the levels of violence in domestic disputes, monitoring the kinds of toys sold to children, and demonstrating the connection of violence to acts of racism. A new committee on racism was organized to address such acts of violence and to aid understanding how issues of poverty, unemployment and poor job opportunities, low wages, and other matters affect black and minority communities.

In December, the Triangle AIDS Interfaith Network (TRAIN) became one of the Council's programs. The purpose was to educate faith communities about AIDS and develop care teams to provide support for those with HIV/AIDS. Regional versions of this program were added across the state.

1993

The February 1993 Legislative Seminar attracted more than 200 attendees to study issues expected to come up in the session of the NC General Assembly that year. Workshops focused on criminal justice, health care, women's issues, children, farmworkers, workers' compensation, family issues, and poverty. The Rev. Jimmy Creech led a workshop on how citizens can relate to the legislative process, and Executive Director Collins Kilburn led one on biblical faith and political action. The keynote address by Rep. Anne Barnes discussed turning points in her life that led toward her awareness of injustice and deprivation. She received the Council's Faith Active in Public Life Award.

A March conference on *Women, Faith, & Violence* was jointly offered by the Equal Rights Committee and the Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South. Featured speaker, the Rev. Marie Fortune, Director of the Seattle-based Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, addressed the large gathering about recognizing and preventing such occurrences. A number of workshops provided opportunities to learn from the experiences of others, how congregations can help, and how to form support groups.

Through a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Susan Vickery and Gaines Steer were able to continue organizing farmers' markets throughout the state, working with the Rural Crisis

Committee. Initiated the year before, the Seeds of Hope Market enabled farmers and consumers of fresh produce to come together for the benefit of both groups.

At their May meeting of the House of Delegates in Greensboro, the Council officially received as members the Gulf Lower Atlantic District of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, an international denomination made up primarily of people who are gay or lesbian and their families. Opponents of admitting the UFMCC into full membership argued that to do so was to accept its beliefs and practices regarding homosexuality. Proponents countered that membership in the Council was based in the organization's constitution on two points: belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior and a desire to work ecumenically through the Council; the Council does not evaluate the beliefs and practices of other member bodies. Proponents emerged as the majority, and the Council admitted the MCC as a full member, one of the first state councils of churches to do so. The decision was not without fallout as one member body withdrew from membership and another withheld its budget support for the following ten years.

The Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte, pastor of Community UCC in Raleigh, was elected President. A leader in the UCC, she also served on the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches. The Rt. Rev. Robert Estill, Bishop of the NC Diocese of the Episcopal Church, received the Distinguished Service Award at the meeting. He was a former President of the Council and had been instrumental in bringing Bishop Desmond Tutu to Duke Chapel in 1986.

In further action, Delegates adopted a position paper on handgun control. They also continued their focus on justice matters surrounding farmworkers, many of whom were migrants and temporary workers. In doing so, the Council brought attention to the injustices perpetrated upon farmworkers in spite of state agencies charged with fair and just oversight in such matters. Natural disasters prompted support in various ways by the Council, including through their response when Hurricane Emily hit the Outer Banks.

1994

Welfare reform was a recurring issue, and in 1994 the Council again took on the challenges involved in addressing the need for reform and countering arguments against providing welfare assistance to those in need. The Council led the challenge by noting that reforming welfare programs should be for the purpose of providing equity and hope for those underserved in the economy of the state, rather than through criticisms for misuse of current regulations.

Other continuing issues that came up within Council committees and leadership included opposition to the death penalty, continued sponsorship of the AIDS Interfaith Network for the Triangle area, the needs of children in terms of day care and access to adequate health care, meeting the needs of farmworkers with regard to housing and adequate nutrition, and combating racism in its various forms.

Council committees recognized that violence had a part in many of the injustices evident in the lives of those identified as needing advocates. Death Row inmates, for example, were facing death by the State, perpetuating the violence already experienced in the lives of the prisoners. Women in abusive relationships lived in fear of violence against them and their children, a subject addressed in conferences by the Equal Rights Committee and other state organizations. Gun

violence was a strongly debated issue, and Director Collins Kilburn spoke to various audiences about the great need for gun control, advocating stricter legislation by the state Legislature.

At the October 1994 meeting of the House of Delegates, four position statements were adopted on the following issues:

- Campaign finance reform
- Juvenile justice guidelines that called for compassion, restoration and crime prevention
- Welfare reform with corresponding reforms to child care, job training, better pay scales, and other matters
- Greater gun control legislation to tighten the requirements for purchase of weapons and making guns less accessible to individuals, calling for licensing gun ownership with required safety training courses

The Council also sought ways to reduce violence among juveniles through involvement with churches across the state. The Rev. Dr. Jim Ferree received the Distinguished Service Award. His commitment to the mission of the Council was recognized in the presentation of the Award.

The first Director of People of Faith Against the Death Penalty, Leigh Eason, began her work on Council staff in November. She brought with her experience in community organizing, especially through church-based networking and coalition building. Prior to coming to North Carolina she was founder and director of Vision, Inc., the ecumenical eco-justice organization for Alabama, and was Executive Administrator of the Alabama Conservancy.

1995

During the January 1995 Legislative Seminar, many of the issues discussed the previous year were taken up along with additional ones. Robin Britt, Secretary of the NC Department of Human Resources, was keynote speaker and received the Faith Active in Public Life Award. Workshop topics for the day included gun violence and control, campaign finance reform, welfare reform, children and family support and preservation, juvenile justice, domestic violence, and health care. Some of the workshops reflected action following the Council's policy statements adopted by the 1994 House of Delegates. A useful workshop was on the legislative process itself and how to take citizen action.

The House of Delegates met in May at Elon College. One issue addressed was the large corporate hog operations in the state. The environmental damage and potential economic disruption for local hog farmers were among the concerns. The Delegates noted that a concerted effort by local churches, government officials, and other citizens was necessary to insure continued viability of smaller operations by individual farmers. The statement of this concern and subsequent resolution made a strong case for the value of small family farms and the need for maintaining them. Tibbie Roberts and the Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte, outgoing Council President, received Distinguished Service Awards for their efforts in support of women's rights and the cause of Christian unity. The Delegates elected the Rev. Joe Mann as the next President of the Council.

During the year, the NC Civil Liberties Union recognized Executive Director Collins Kilburn for his efforts in the cause of abolishing the death penalty with their award. In accepting the

honor, he cited the supportive efforts of those on the Council staff who had worked diligently with him on this issue. Also that spring, the Equal Rights Committee sponsored another conference on domestic and sexual violence, a major advocacy concern of the committee.

A significant action by the Executive Board was addressed through the policy statement: *Regarding the Budget Impact upon the Poor*. It referred to Congressional budget proposals which would “inflict serious damage on the vulnerable, especially upon children and disadvantaged women.” The Board stated that it joined with national church bodies such as the National Council of Churches and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in protesting such a harmful measure for the poor of the country. Those churches which are part of the Council were urged to be engaged in this struggle against national and state policies which bring harm to the poor, and “to work for a renewal of our political culture.”

1996

A major moment in the life of the Council in 1996 was the recognition of eleven women who had worked on behalf of the Equal Rights Amendment, but also gave of their time to continuing issues as advocates of women in NC. With a grant from the NC Humanities Council, the program honored these women with a display of items from the days of the Equal Rights struggle, a sharing of memories with friends and families, and a panel interview of the women led by Dr. Donald Mathews from UNC. Those honored were Mildred Fry, Bett Hargrave, Becky Hackler Houghton, the Rev. Fran Lindsey, Sheila Nader, Libby New, the Rev. Jeanette Stokes, Tibbie Roberts, Catharine Vick, Catherine Watson, and the Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte. Unfortunately, not all were able to be present. In addition, recognition was given to Sister Evelyn Mattern for staffing the committee much of the time, to the Rev. Maria Bliss, and to Beth McAllister. Executive Director Collins Kilburn cited not only their work on behalf of the Equal Rights Amendment, but also their ongoing support and advocacy for women in NC. The women had been interviewed by Jean Rodenbough, Jeanette Stokes, and Amelia Stinson-Wesley, clergywomen serving on the Equal Rights Committee, and then recorded for use with the *Ears to Hear* project developed by Sister Evelyn. This would be the first of a series of Sunday School texts from recorded conversations of Council committees. The women’s discussion text was completed in 1998, and later performed at a meeting of the House of Delegates in 2003.

Another issue the Council addressed that year dealt with the needs of children. Staff member the Rev. Jimmy Creech chaired the Covenant with North Carolina’s Children, a coalition of 20 child advocacy groups. He wrote an article about the Annual National Conference for the Children’s Defense Fund, meeting in Charlotte in February. The Council regretfully learned that Creech would be leaving his post in July to answer the call to serve a parish in Omaha, Nebraska.

The House of Delegates met in October in Raleigh to set priorities for the coming year, when the General Assembly would be in session. They developed and adopted policy statements on four subjects: welfare, health care, children and the sale of tobacco to minors. Objecting to the recent welfare reform measures undertaken by national and state governments, the Delegates noted that these actions violated biblical principles of justice, with increased numbers of children in

poverty. They recommended a safety net, maintaining the current national level of support at least, with the state Legislature allocating additional funds for a variety of supports to families trying to enter the workforce. And they called on local churches to become more involved with support on the county level. The Council reaffirmed its support of universal health care, recognizing that such a goal was not yet possible to reach, and called upon lawmakers to continue present levels of Medicaid funding while expanding their outreach efforts. Other points in the policy statements covered increased access to Smart Start and subsidies for child care, funding for low-wealth school districts and the Family Preservation Program. The Delegates also called for laws prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to minors. These statements were to be included for study at the 1997 Legislative Seminar. Other action included the welcoming of Knollwood Baptist Church in Winston-Salem into Council membership. That year's Distinguished Service Award went to Wilton Hartzler.

Joining the Council staff at the end of 1996 were Sister Evelyn Mattern, returning after leaving the staff to teach, write, and work for justice in other fields, and the Rev. George Reed, who had served on Council program committees in the past. Sister Evelyn was asked to staff some committees as well as work on spiritual and social concerns. She also edited the *Church Council Bulletin*. Rev. Reed agreed to work with legislative and political action concerns that were important to the Council's mission.

1997

The Legislative Seminar held in January scheduled workshops on critical issues anticipated to come before the Legislature. Among them were welfare and campaign finance reforms; criminal justice; gun control; children and families and related health care concern; the inter-connection between religion and politics; and other issues. At the Seminar, Rep. Ruth Easterling received the Council's Faith Active in Public Life Award for her strong advocacy for policies promoting "issues that affect the human spirit." She had been effective in legislation on day care regulation, Smart Start, efforts to oppose capital punishment, and many other actions focused on compassion and care for all who live in NC. The Rev. David Forbes delivered the keynote address.

The House of Delegates, meeting in Greensboro in May, included in its program an address by Dr. Warren A. Nord from UNC-Chapel Hill, on *Religious Dimensions of the Cultural Wars*, followed by a panel response from church leaders. Mrs. Janie Speaks and Dr. Jack Crum received Distinguished Service Awards. Both had served the Council on the Board and provided leadership in social action agendas, and Dr. Crum had also served on Council staff. Outgoing President the Rev. Joe Mann passed the gavel to his successor, Dr. Rollin Russell, who also served as Conference Minister for the Southern Conference of the UCC. In his closing address Mann stressed the need for an ecumenical presence with the growing Hispanic population. He also noted the need for ongoing support of effective and useful welfare reform which should be addressed by the state Legislature.

Looking ahead to the year 2000, viewed by church groups across the country as the Jubilee Year when economic justice and related issues would be a major priority, the Council entered into a partnership with the JUBILEE Project, directed by Barbara Zelter. The first JUBILEE Project began in Wilson County, where local churches coordinated efforts with social services to work under the guidelines of WorkFirst, which was developed in the welfare reform programs legislated by national

and state governments. Other counties were to be added to the project, depending on the amount of funding available. A resource center provided information on welfare policies and examples of responses from churches and other organizations. Grants from the Duke Endowment and Lilly Foundation were initial sources for funding, with more foundational support to follow.

A new director for People of Faith Against the Death Penalty, Stephen Dear, was called to serve after Leigh Eason, the founding director, resigned to continue her work by leading national events for the cause. The organization opened an office in Chapel Hill and continued to be sponsored by the Council.

An evaluation of the Legislature's actions on issues of interest to the Council showed some progress toward fulfilling objectives outlined by the House of Delegates. Legislative action on youth and tobacco use, health care, and children's programs provided some degree of attention to pressing needs. Welfare reform was only partially successful in terms of legislation enacted to improve benefits for the poor. Other issues produced some hopeful results, in large part because of the work of grassroots activists.

Ecumenical developments showed promise locally and worldwide. There was support for the future creation of a universal church council including all Christian bodies, with the hope of beginning such a process by 2000. The Lutherans (ELCA) approved a Concordant of Agreement providing for full communion with bodies in the Reformed tradition: PC(USA), RCA, and UCC. The Christian Unity Committee had coordinated several meetings of those traditions for discussions and observations during the years prior to the final agreement.

In response to the Council's commitment to peacemaking, the Rev. Jim Lewis was commissioned to write a challenge to church bodies to be leaders in conflict resolution. The charge was to involve families or neighborhoods and congregations with the wider issue of world-wide conflicts. The result was *The Gulf War, the Churches, and Peacemaking*. The context addressed the Gulf War which began in 1990, and then explored the principal of "just war" and alternatives to violence of all kinds. Within that framework, congregations and communities were invited to study practical agendas for peacemaking in specific situations.

Stephen Dear Reflections

Recently, Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*, wrote in a message to her followers on Twitter that North Carolina is "a hotbed of activity in the struggle to end the death penalty." When you compare the milestone and model reforms to the death penalty that the state of North Carolina has passed with the anemic state of reform of the death penalty elsewhere in the South, you see the evidence of the successes that the abolition movement here has had, and the legacy of the leadership of the NC Council of Churches. The Council served as People of Faith Against the Death Penalty's fiscal sponsor for PFADP's first decade, through 2004. I was drawn to work with PFADP in 1997 after years of being inspired by people affiliated with the Council.

I will never forget the evening of June 14, 1994, when PFADP co-founder and Council Program Associate Jimmy Creech walked from Central Prison in Raleigh across Western Boulevard

after witnessing David Lawson being gassed to death. In front of probably 150 people or more Jimmy was deeply distraught, crying at what he had witnessed. We had been praying for David, for his victim, Wayne Shinn, and their families. Jimmy had been David's pastor. He baptized David and served him the Eucharist in the hours before David was killed. Jimmy later buried David in Kannapolis. David died yelling his last words, "I am a human being, I am not a monster, I am a human being." In his grief and anger, Jimmy told the crowd that he regretted not taking a chair and smashing the window of the execution chamber in order to stop the execution.

Jimmy had been working with a subcommittee of the Council's Criminal Justice Committee that included the Rev. Jim Lewis, the Rev. David Forbes, Father Charlie Mulholland, the Rev. Mahan Siler, Bishop Robert Estill, Mike Roark, Tye Hunter, Sister Joan Jurski, Julia Elsee, Ann Thompson, the Rev. Robert Seymour and others in building what became People of Faith Against the Death Penalty. With the help of some fundraising events with Sister Prejean, they were able to hire PFADP's first director, Leigh Eason, who was my predecessor at PFADP. Leigh set a high bar of inspiring eloquence and a passion for creative and compassionate advocacy for witnessing for abolishing the death penalty.

Sister Evelyn Mattern succeeded Jimmy Creech as the Council's program associate, and she served on PFADP's executive committee. Her fire for action and intolerance of injustice were always a boon. Sister Evelyn offered a wide range of help to PFADP. She made time for meetings when she had other important work before her. She shared her creativity. Her presence added a spiritual grounding whenever we came together. She was always a step ahead, leading the leaders. She, like the Council, led the church community in North Carolina into greater relationship with the poor, with each other, and with our world. She created community. She shepherded new relationships with our brothers and sisters who toil on our farms -- and thereby into deeper relationship with Jesus. She educated church leaders on the need for a new relationship between our congregations and our environment -- and fostered a deeper collective relationship with God through honoring our covenant with God. She was not afraid to take risks to speak out to the powerful. She called for nonviolence in a world of unnecessary poverty, guns, murders, executions, and our empire's war-making. Her idea of a vacation was going to Iraq or Central America or some other place where our brothers' and sisters' lives were endangered in part by our government's policies. She challenged the church to face the "elephant in the courtroom" of racial bias, and that is a just one example of her collaborations with others seeking to remove the inequities and iniquities of our court system. Sister Evelyn lived "the upside-down Gospel" and through her example offered a great and terrible challenge to those of us to follow.

I remember the first time I organized a meeting with the Governor and a group of religious leaders calling for clemency in January 1998, pleading for the life of Ricky Sanderson. I remember the moment when Sister Evelyn was saying something to the Governor, trying to offer him a way of granting clemency and not have it hurt him politically. At that moment I realized that we were the last people the Governor would hear telling him the execution would be gravely wrong. We were, in one temporal sense, the last hope for Ricky. Sister Evelyn told the Governor that he held the power to show mercy in this case, and that his power of clemency was created as part of the criminal justice system in order to instill mercy into the system. I remember thinking how powerful her words were, and how necessary, and feeling deep gratitude for her being there and being so strong.

When an execution was scheduled, all of our proactive work would be eclipsed by trying to help stop the impending execution. With a thousand and one tasks to accomplish around organizing multiple vigils, a clemency hearing with ministers and the Governor, media interviews, mailings, and the like, by the time of the eve of the execution it was always a great relief on the occasions when Sister Evelyn would offer to lead the prayer service at a Taize service of forgiveness and reconciliation. She brought centering and calm during a whirlwind of work trying to save someone's life and stand for life and justice. Her services were about the only thing to look forward to on the nights of executions. I took great comfort from those services and her words.

As the years went by I greatly benefited from Council Executive Director Collins Kilburn's evergreen good cheer, wisdom, and compassion and the kindness and meticulousness of Audrey Hornaday, who handled the Council's and PFADP's books. It has been heartening to see all of the initiatives the Council has undertaken under the leadership of George Reed.

I have always thought that both the people of North Carolina and the leaders of its churches, whatever their political and social groundings, have never fully appreciated the jewel in their midst, the NC Council of Churches. I am grateful to have been able to stand near the moral giants who have led the Council over the past two decades, and to learn from them, and to share the journey with them and you.

1998

A new project was underway by the spring of 1998, with *Ears to Hear*, developed by Sister Evelyn Mattern. The plan was to present materials focusing on ecumenical spirituality, using guided conversations from Council committees in the form of essays to be used by congregations as study materials. As noted previously, the first such study evolved from a series of interviews with about 10 members of the Equal Rights Committee, who had devoted many years to the cause of justice and equality. After the interviews were recorded by several members of that committee, Sister Evelyn then used portions of the conversations for a discussion text available for congregational study. Later, from that publication, she created a readers' theater, presented to the 2003 House of Delegates meeting featuring these women. The women had also been recognized at a special event in 1996, celebrating their faithfulness to the causes of women's leadership in the church and the state.

During that year the Council regretfully acknowledged the retirement of Shirley Johnston, administrative assistant. She had been with the Council for the longest period of time.

When the House of Delegates met that spring, Dr. Robert Seymour, retired pastor of Binkley Baptist Church in Chapel Hill, challenged delegates to prepare for a new millennium by noting the divisions existing within faith communities and in society. Economic disparities were of particular concern between the "haves" and "have nots." Social and cultural divisions also threatened to divide church and society, and Seymour charged the Council with taking on a "new vision . . . for a new age."

A step in that direction was action taken by the Delegates to endorse the *New Consensus*, a report delivered by chair Dr. Patricia Page and Dr. Warren Nord, members of the Committee on Religion and Public Education. Citing controversies in religious practices and public education, the report affirmed the importance of religious liberty. Noting that a national consensus was present

about this issue, the writers proposed the *New Consensus* as the version for the House of Delegates to endorse. In taking this action, Delegates authorized the committee to work with implementation of the *New Consensus*. At that meeting, Dr. Belton Joyner received the Council's Distinguished Service Award, noting his commitment to the work of the Christian Unity Committee.

Poverty and the plight of farmworkers were two issues on the agendas of Council committees. The Farmworker Ministry Committee, working in partnership with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), initiated support for equity in pay and improved living and working conditions for NC farmworkers. Efforts centered on convincing Mt. Olive Pickle Company to negotiate a contract between growers and the farmworkers' union. Churches and unions met members and supporters of FLOC as they marched from Mt. Olive to Raleigh to publicize efforts for the contract.

The Council and Greensboro Urban Ministry co-sponsored a retreat at Camp New Hope to address the crisis of poverty in local communities. Representing the Council were Executive Director Collins Kilburn, Barbara Zelter, and Sister Evelyn, joined by Urban Ministry chaplain Frank Dew. After examining how the state's systems worked against the poor, the participants studied ways for the current economy to resolve the discrepancies and inequities experienced by clients of agencies helping those in need.

Shirley Johnston Reflections

I joined the North Carolina Council of Churches in October 1968, as secretary to Jack Crum, the Director of Social Ministries. The office was a small, closet-like room in the Phillips Building on the corner of Oberlin Road and Clark Avenue in Raleigh. Jack's commitment to create an Office of Social Ministries was so great that he contributed personal funds to help underwrite the costs of the office.

Jack's involvement with racial equality issues was both exciting and scary. He attend KKK meetings where his car was searched, and he was escorted from the meeting sites by hooded Klansmen. From time to time, threatening messages were left on the office door.

Jack's decision to attend graduate school in New England "decimated" the Council's staff to 2.5 persons: Dr. Sam Wiley and his secretary, Jean Vickers, both located at Duke University, and me, part-time in Raleigh. Before Jack left, he dictated reams of pages of shorthand so that I had work to do while keeping the Raleigh office open awaiting the appointment of a new Director.

Finally, after many months, the Office of Social Ministries had a new Director: Collins Kilburn. As Jack was the right person at the right time for the Council, so was Collins the right person for the next 30 years. Collins expanded the programs of the Office of Social Ministries and recruited committed people to carry out the programs. Upon Sam Wiley's retirement, Collins became the Executive Director of the Council and the Council office moved to Raleigh, eventually ending up in the Methodist Building.

I particularly admired Collins' ability to recruit people and instill in them his enthusiasm for various interests and causes. Such a wonderful potpourri of people with whom we worked, including

staff members Evelyn Mattern and Jimmy Creech. Other staff ably assisting in the office work over the years were Judy Mathews, Patricia Nedwidek Watts, Cindy Chew, Elouise England, and Audrey Hornaday. These ladies were devoted to the work of the Council and contributed greatly to it.

While ensuring (hopefully) that the office ran smoothly was my job, I was also influenced by the enthusiasm both Jack Crum and Collins Kilburn had for tackling issues of social justice. The concern for these issues became paramount in my years with the Council and continued to my retirement in May 1998.

1999

In 1999, a number of awards were presented. Council staff Collins Kilburn was honored with the W.W. Finlator Award by the Wake County ACLU, and Sister Evelyn Mattern was honored by the NC Human Rights Coalition. During the spring Legislative Seminar, the Faith Active in Public Life Award went to Senator Leslie Winner. Sen. Winner, who is Jewish, became the first recipient of the award from a faith other than Christianity. In her response she encouraged actions that benefit “the good of the whole,” pointing out three areas to be aware of: human rights for gays and lesbians, decent treatment of working people, and a better plan for school integration. She noted that congregations of faith are essential to promote strong communities who reach out to the least and the abused in society. Distinguished Service Awards, given at the spring meeting of the House of Delegates, went to the Rev. W.W. Finlator, Pastor Emeritus of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, and Joan Preiss, a member of the Farmworker Ministry Committee, for their “distinguished service in the cause of justice, peace, and unity.” At that same meeting, the Cuthbert E. Allen Award was given to Collins Kilburn for his contributions to ecumenism. It was presented by the Ecumenical Institute of Wake Forest University and Belmont Abbey College.

Workshops presented at the Legislative Seminar focused on current issues before the Legislature: health care, campaign finance reform, juvenile justice, care for older adults, welfare issues, children’s needs, gun violence, and opposition to a state lottery. The proclamation, delivered by the Rev. Joe Brown, AME Zion pastor, was considered by those attending as the high point of the day. He stated that the purpose of those present was “to be the voice of the voiceless, who live two blocks from our church, or who are suffering in the unvisited rooms we pass by on the way to visit our parishioners.”

At the House of Delegates, two significant changes were noted: one was the passing of the gavel by outgoing President Rollin Russell to the next President, Bridget Johnson; the other was the announcement by Executive Director Collins Kilburn of his planned retirement the coming year, after 30 years on the Council staff. At the same meeting delegates engaged in a lively debate centered around the call for a boycott of Mt. Olive Pickle Company by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), because of the company’s refusal to use its influence to help those who harvest cucumbers achieve unionization. The Rev. Baldemar Velasquez, president of FLOC, and Bill Bryan, president of Mt. Olive, both addressed the issues involved from their particular positions. The delegates were deeply interested in the matter, but their first vote resulted in a tie. No final vote was taken because a quorum call revealed the lack of a quorum. Until the boycott was resolved in a way favorable to FLOC in 2004, the Council was in the peculiar position of having its Farmworker Ministry

Committee endorsing the boycott while the House of Delegates remained neutral.

The Council supported efforts by church bodies throughout the state after the onslaught of Hurricane Floyd in eastern counties. An ecumenical affiliate body of the Council, NC Interfaith Disaster Response led by the Rev. Denis Levin, suggested that churches could best help with monetary offerings which could then be spent according to specific needs.

Kilburn and Sister Evelyn found significant religious experiences in their summer travels. Kilburn spent time with the Iona Community off the coast of Scotland, learning of the ecumenical practices of worship, study, peace work, and addressing political events affecting employment, urbanization, economic equity and other issues. After returning home he spoke to the General Assembly in opposition to a tobacco bill which provided tax breaks for companies selling their products overseas.

The travels of Sister Evelyn that summer led her to another part of the world, Kenya. She visited one of the Sisters of her religious community ministering with Somali pastoralists, who had been in that country for many generations. The experience left an indelible impression upon Sister Evelyn as she witnessed the hardships and the results of violence, hunger, and disease among the Somalis in that part of Kenya.

With the coming of a new millennium, the Jubilee movement began implementation. The Council participated jointly with other religious groups to advocate for the forgiveness of debts for poor nations, amounting to more than \$350 billion. The debts came from interest on loans from international lending institutions and were crippling countries in the Third World.

2000

Jubilee Year 2000 arrived with attention directed to new ecumenical opportunities. Some efforts were aimed at reducing debts in poor nations, and some at advocating for the poor here in NC, as the number of people living in poverty neared a quarter of the state's residents. Religious leaders in the state sent out a Pastoral Letter stating the urgency to relieve those oppressed by economic circumstances. Addressing the inadequacies of welfare reform, it was noted that among those numbers struggling to survive were the "working poor," whose jobs did not pay enough to cover daily living expenses. Citing the biblical purpose of Jubilee, to undo economic inequities, the letter pointed out disparities in earnings, where minorities suffered from wages which were less than those of their white counterparts. Women also received less pay for their work than men, another discrepancy. The letter charged all Christians to take responsibility for reducing the economic injustices evident in North Carolina. Communities were called to work together to raise all to a sustainable income level, as a necessary principle in the Year of Jubilee.

Out of this principle, the JUBILEE Project was developed by staff member Barbara Zelter. She edited a study guide, *Welfare, Work, and Poverty*, to be distributed to churches. A thoroughly researched piece, the guide could be used to educate members about the poverty situation in NC. Stories from pastors and participants were included along with facts dealing with welfare conditions in the state, examples of ministries responding to the needs of those affected by poverty, and resources for action.

The Council joined with the Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America and other

organizations for a Holy Week pilgrimage where needs for justice and peace were visible. Beginning in Greensboro, the group walked through cities on the way to Raleigh in time for a Good Friday service at their destination. Other goals for the pilgrims were debt freedom for impoverished countries, support for farmworkers' organizations, and closing the School of the Americas.

A landmark moment came in June, with the retirement of the Rev. Collins Kilburn as Executive Director of the Council after more than 30 years of working and leading the Council in active ministries of justice and peace. In April, he was recognized with the Distinguished Service Award during the House of Delegates meeting. In May, a gala lunch was held in Raleigh, hosted by Council President Bridget Johnson. Two hundred attended the event, which featured tributes in song, poetry, and speech. Kilburn received a rocking chair for his retirement, with the general expectation that he would have little free time to spend rocking.

The Council's Search Committee, after seriously considering several applicants for the position of Executive Director, unanimously agreed to select the Rev. George Reed, at that time serving on Council's staff.

Even with a change in leadership during 2000, no time was lost engaging in ongoing and new issues facing the Council. The concerns surrounding a changing climate with rising temperatures across the world were addressed by the Council through its Interfaith Climate Change Project. The Council was invited to join with 15 other states as a project of the National Council of Churches to bring the issues home to local congregations. One avenue for this developed by the ICCP was to hold a training event for religious and spiritual leaders across the state.

Another part of the Council's ongoing work dealt with racism through the Task Group on Racism and Criminal Justice. In the fall of 2000, the task group published the policy paper, *The Elephant in the Courtroom: Racism and Criminal Justice in North Carolina*. A study curriculum based on the paper was developed to be available to member congregations of the Council.

In looking at the problems facing health care in North Carolina, a study guide was prepared by the Rural Life Committee and funded by The Duke Endowment, providing facts, resources, and suggestions for resolving such issues. With continuing efforts to bring an end to the death penalty in NC, the Council's sponsorship of People of Faith Against the Death Penalty gained national recognition when Stephen Dear received an award for his grassroots organizing from a national convention of opponents to the death penalty.

2001

The Legislative Seminar in February 2001 outlined the Council's focus for the year. Workshops dealt with gun violence, a living wage, health care, campaign finance reform, tax justice, the death penalty, mental health, substance abuse, housing, the state lottery, hog lagoons, and other issues before the Legislature for that term.

Ecumenical news of other church bodies provided information on state, national, and worldwide events. Some projected continued conversations on unity among the different Christian bodies while others struck a jarring note with statements which seemed to raise old barriers to ecumenism. The Council continued its own efforts to welcome other denominations into its fold in order to increase diversity among its members.

In keeping with that ecumenical spirit, the May House of Delegates met in Greensboro, where they heard an address by AME Zion Bishop George E. Battle, citing Christian unity to be the key to a strong future. Unity of purpose was determined to be necessary in the face of political ideologies and divisive opinions in society, so that purpose, strength, and progress might work together to bring about a unity of faith. The hope was for the church to be enabled thus to grow and touch the hearts of many, rather than cause more divisions in the Body of Christ. The Faith Active in Public Life Award went to Senator William Martin for his long support of legislation in keeping with the Council's mission. The Rev. Joseph Brown was elected to serve as President.

The new Executive Director, George Reed, reinforced Bishop Battle's comments at the meeting by describing his attendance in Fayetteville at the Celebration of Shared Heritage and Unity. Methodists from many branches came together to speak of unity: AME, AME Zion, CME, and UMC (North Carolina Conference) met at an AME Zion church, with a similar service held days later at Lake Junaluska. Within that week, another ecumenical gathering involved the NC Synod of the ELCA and the two Catholic dioceses of Charlotte and Raleigh. Although these events were not initiated by the Council, their occurrence demonstrated one of the mission emphases of the Council: promoting and modeling Christian unity.

Other activities for the Council included effective results of the Jubilee Project in targeted counties through a Families First program. A new publication, *Manna*, was added to the communication resources of the Council, edited by staff member Aleta Payne, who came to the Council in March.

The tragic events of September 11 stunned the nation and changed life for those in this state in many ways. To address the shock and pain of the 9/11 attacks, the Council and other groups co-sponsored the *Healing & Hope Interfaith Memorial Service*. More than 1,500 gathered in Raleigh from across the state to remember the ones who died in the attack and to pray for peace and reconciliation. As the Council reviewed the year, the dramatic impact of Sept. 11 caused changed perspectives on some priorities, but overall the Council projects continued on course.

Aleta Payne Reflections

When I first joined the Council in March 2001, the office wasn't much of one in terms of space. I worked from home in part because there simply wasn't enough room for one more body, let alone one more desk. Generously, it could have been called cozy. But a lot of exciting work was conducted there – proof that you don't need grand accommodations to accomplish great things. Our eventual move down the hall to more spacious accommodations allowed us to do more. In particular, we expanded our work with interns – wonderful, bright, enthusiastic young people, some of whom stayed to become staff members, others of whom went on to advocacy work elsewhere. And it expanded our space for staff meetings which we always began with a quiet time of centering. I've never worked anywhere else where peaceful reflection and communal prayer started off a period of comparing calendars and discussing logistics, but it has become my favorite way to start a meeting!

Working for the Council, I have frequently been reminded that being on the side of justice

isn't always the popular place to be. One of the most striking memories I have is in the period leading up to the Iraq War when the leadership of the Council repeatedly called for peaceful negotiation over a pre-emptive strike. We were harshly criticized for that position, but looking back now, with public opinion overwhelmingly opposed to U.S. action, I am reminded that Jesus blessed the peacemakers. I am glad that we were on the side of the peacemakers at a time when many others were determined to wage war.

The Council has also introduced me to some of the most extraordinary people imaginable. I've met and worked with folks of enormous faith and incredible kindness who also almost universally share a marvelous sense of humor that makes being around them both inspiring and joyful. I have been impressed by their willingness to listen, not only to stories that are sometimes painful and sad, but also to differing viewpoints. It's easy to be respectful of those who believe as you do, but to listen thoughtfully to those who have substantially different perspectives and may not be respectful toward you takes a special kind of grace.

And I can't mention grace without mentioning Evelyn. I worked with her for less than two years, but I think if I'd known Evelyn for two days, the impression she left would still be profound. She was someone to whom every single person mattered. Simple as that. And those whom society most neglected were the focus of her advocacy because, for her, we were all equal in the eyes of God and worthy of care and respect.

Evelyn used to refer to my boys as the blessed trinity. Note she never called them the *holy* trinity. She knew better than that. But when they dropped by the office to visit, she invariably produced some whimsical trinket or kid-friendly snack, as if she'd been expecting them all along. Children mattered to her.

I don't think Evelyn saw much of the work that was so dear to her heart as being for her and her peers or even for me or mine. She saw it as being for all our children – including her great-nieces. She was building the kingdom, preparing a better world, as much for them as for those in need now. It is so appropriate that her beloved Beatitudes are also such a church school basic. A social justice primer that children understand and embrace even if some adults just don't get it.

To this day, one of the cards from her memorial service sits between my computer keyboard and monitor. If I glance down from the screen, I'm looking directly into her face. Whatever I am working on, whatever I'm typing about, Evelyn stares back, with a wise and gentle smile. It is only one way she is still with me, and I know she is still with the work of the Council.

2002

Following the tragedy of 9/11, goals for 2002 included reactivating the Racial Justice Committee, continuing peace advocacy, and addressing economic justice through the inaugural Critical Issues Seminar to be held later that spring. The Rev. Denise Cumbee Long joined the staff to work with development issues, resources and program committees. A change involving the work of Council staff was to approve the request of JUBILEE to become an independent organization. Executive Director George Reed emphasized two principal reasons for the Council's existence: to help Christians recognize our similarities and be enriched by our differences; and to apply our faith teachings to contemporary life. Efforts for a moratorium on the death penalty increased and the

Council co-sponsored, with the Common Sense Foundation, a study on the relationship between race and capital punishment.

The Critical Issues Seminar in April offered a variety of topics to explore: the global implications of wealth and poverty; gaps in academic achievement and in criminal justice; farmworkers and farm ownership; children and poverty; corporate taxes and a living income; eco-justice and environmental issues; community building; and US policy toward third world countries, particularly as it relates to world hunger.

That spring, the House of Delegates met in Winston-Salem, with an opening sermon by the Rev. Dr. Jill Crainshaw, Associate Dean of Wake Forest Divinity School. A discussion at the close of the meeting on the Christian response to war and terrorism was led by Bishop Tom Stockton and Elder Carrie Bolton, speaking on just war and nonviolent action as two ways to address these issues.

Program Associate Long guided the formation of a new committee, Race, Culture and Privilege, which began its work with regional workshops on antiracism and diversity training. FaithWorks, a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, was created to focus on building homes in rural NC. Habitat founder Millard Fuller spoke to a group of religious leaders and affordable housing advocates to explain and encourage participation in the project. As talk of war against Iraq was being discussed, the Council felt it necessary to protest unilateral military action against Iraq by the US. Sister Evelyn gathered signatures of state religious leader to send to President Bush. In addition, George Reed joined other colleagues across the nation to urge the President to work for a peaceful solution in Iraq instead of war.

In other work, the effort to defeat the lottery in North Carolina proved successful as the Council worked in partnership with other organizations and also spoke against budget cuts that would affect the state's most vulnerable residents. In preparation for the coming year's mission, a newly designed and updated website along with other publicity materials were developed to spread the word about Council ministries throughout the state.

2003

At the beginning of 2003, Barbara Zelter rejoined the Council staff, working on issues of economic justice. She led the Economic Justice Committee that produced a book with guidelines for pastors whose parishioners had lost jobs. Her responsibilities included the addition of work on peace issues as well. Another staff member, attorney Steve Smith, joined as a volunteer program associate to work with health care and issues related to homosexuality. In developing a community forum program, Smith provided a venue for Council staff to meet with churches in discussions of justice issues.

The Legislative Seminar in April offered workshops on a variety of subjects which would be coming before the NC Legislature that year. Among them were workshops on mental health, campaign finance reform, tax justice, living wage, the death penalty, criminal justice, Latino issues, the lottery, housing, and other legislative concerns. During the Seminar, State Senator Ellie Kinnaird received the Faith Active in Public Life Award.

In May the House of Delegates met in Greensboro, with Barbara Volk beginning her term as President. Julia Elsee received the Council's Distinguished Service Award, for her longtime support

of the work of the Council and service on the Executive Board. A closing event for the meeting was the first presentation of the readers' theater performance of *The Women's Coffeeshouse of the Spirit*, written by Sister Evelyn Mattern. The featured women had been honored in 1996 for their persistent advocacy for women and their service to the Council and to the religious life of NC. The readings were drawn from interviews of the women made in 1996, relating some 40 years of changing roles for women in NC congregations.

The Economic Justice Committee took part in the Rally for Justice held by the NC Alliance for Economic Justice, a partner organization. The committee also worked with the organization Faith Link to hold a summit gathering in Hendersonville to form work groups for education, health care, affordable housing, and job training, designed to achieve living incomes for NC families.

In increasing Council ministries with particular groups, Program Associate Aleta Payne worked with youth activists and the African-American community. Students and campus ministers were encouraged to understand and to participate in Council projects. She also worked to form an advisory committee which would strengthen the contributions of African-Americans to the mission of Council. The Rev. Denise Cumbee Long was program staff support for a new resource *Latino 101*, aimed at helping non-Latino churches reach out to the Latino population. Another related resource was undertaken, to be implemented by spring, developed by the Farmworker Committee.

A sorrowful time for Council was the death in November of Sister Evelyn Mattern from cancer. In addition to a service for her in Philadelphia, where she was under hospice care, a memorial service was held in January 2004 at the United Church of Chapel Hill.

Denise Cumbee Long Reflections

I served as Program Associate for the Council from November of 2001 until June of 2007. I did this on a part-time basis, 15 hours per week, while also directing a statewide loan repayment assistance program for public interest attorneys. I was most active with three initiatives: 1) the Farmworker Ministry Committee's work, particularly in regard to supporting the boycott against Mt. Olive Pickle Company and helping create a faith-based curriculum for churches; 2) conceiving and planning the *Latino 101* workshops that were held at various congregations across the state; and 3) initiating, coordinating, and editing the lectionary based resource, *Acts of Faith*.

One of the highlights of my time with the Council was attending the press conference in September 2004 at Community UCC in Raleigh marking the end of the Mt. Olive Pickle boycott and celebrating the historic three-way agreement between FLOC (Farm Labor Organizing Committee), Mt. Olive Pickle, and the North Carolina Growers Association. Three national staff members from FLOC had driven down from Toledo, Ohio, for the event and spent the night before at our house. Members of the Council's Farmworker Ministry Committee were especially delighted at this hard-won victory, as they had worked for years to support the boycott. We especially remembered Sister Evelyn Mattern, who had been indefatigable in her efforts to support farmworkers, and felt she was with us in spirit. However, along with this moment of triumph were moments of tragedy, as we remembered farmworkers who died in the summer heat in North Carolina fields, and also held a vigil

for one FLOC worker who was murdered in Monterey, Mexico.

During my time with the Council, the Farmworker Ministry Committee helped sponsor a statewide Farmworker Summit, the first event of its kind which provided resources and workshops for a host of farmworker advocacy and service organizations. We also supported the National Farmworker Ministry's efforts in linking congregations to labor camps through Project Solidarity and later helped FLOC recruit church members to drive farmworkers to monthly union meetings. The Committee was a member organization of FAN, the Farmworker Advocacy Network, which was a coalition of farmworker advocacy groups working together on a common legislative agenda. Finally, the Committee successfully submitted a grant proposal to The Duke Endowment which enabled members of the committee to travel to a variety of congregations and schools and offer educational presentations about farmworkers and Latino immigrants.

Latino 101 was a three-hour workshop conceived, designed and led by Methodist pastor Alice Kunka, NC Council of Church's board member Enrique Palacio, and myself. In response to the 400% growth rate of the Latino population in North Carolina and the growing anti-immigrant sentiment that also was evident, the Council offered this bridge-building workshop to congregations across the state, from Wilmington to Asheville. Participants especially enjoyed playing *The Labyrinth*, a game invented by Alice Kunka which simulated the experience of Latino immigrants coming to the United States in pursuit of the "American Dream." This workshop was much in demand as congregations expressed great desire to know more about their Latino neighbors and how to reach out to them.

My final main body of work with the Council involved initiating and editing *Acts of Faith*, a lectionary-based worship resource for pastors, religious leaders and laypersons. The project was conceived at one of our annual staff retreats. I worked with George Reed and three Duke Divinity School interns, Jason Jenkins, Chris Beers, and Betty Morton, to select scripture readings and themes, and collect worship and informational resources. I enjoyed recruiting pastors and religious leaders for scripture analysis and pastoral reflections. The beauty of *Acts of Faith* is its unique North Carolina focus and the wonderful combination of liturgical and informative materials that center on a variety of social and environmental justice topics. We heard from many pastors that it was extremely helpful to them in sermon planning and preparation.

2004

The 2004 Critical Issues Seminar in May, *Family Values for All God's Family*, was held jointly with the House of Delegates in Greensboro. Issues included family violence, racism, health, employment, education, housing, the environment, criminal justice, gay and lesbian issues, and interfaith dialogue. Leading worship was the Right Rev. Michael Curry, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of NC.

House of Delegates members met while others attended the Seminar and considered such matters as the effect of the American media upon families, Latino issues, and health care. The Distinguished Service Award was presented jointly to Bridget Johnson and the Rev. Joe Brown, both former Council presidents. The Rev. Rollin Russell, former Council President, returned to the Council after a sojourn of teaching in Pennsylvania, to serve as a volunteer staff member in the

general area of ecumenical concerns. A boycott of Mt. Olive Pickle Co. was resolved in September after years of efforts to reach an agreement. The event was in part a tribute to the work that Sister Evelyn Mattern had undertaken, through her persistence in working for justice for farmworkers. At the time of the agreement, Program Associate Denise Cumbee Long staffed the Farmworker Ministry Committee, which had a leading role in the effort to reach agreement. That committee also produced an adult curriculum on the needs of farmworkers, *Hands of Harvest, Hearts of Justice*.

Participating in a nationwide effort addressing poverty, *Let Justice Roll: Faith and Community Voices against Poverty*, the Council coordinated an event for NC led by Program Associate Barbara Zelter, involving more than 50 organizations throughout the state. Initiated jointly by the National Council of Churches and the Center for Community Change, the goal was to challenge those in the political arena, especially presidential candidates, to make poverty issues a top priority. Leading up to a September rally, local groups conducted teach-ins on issues surrounding poverty. The rally was held in Wilson, bringing busloads from across the state to speak up and be heard on matters affecting the poor in NC.

2005

In 2005 the Council was active in efforts at peacemaking and related concerns. Of interest was the endorsement by the Executive Board of statements opposing the use of torture as an instrument of war and opposing the war in Iraq. A peace rally in Fayetteville, sponsored by the Council in March, was on a potential “threat list” by the Pentagon, but later deemed not to be a threat to national security after all. More than 4,000 persons took part in the rally. Later, a two-day conference, *Seek Peace and Pursue It*, took place in Fayetteville, co-sponsored by the Council and Quaker House. Participants considered the biblical imperative for peace through conversations, workshops, and presentations. During the Legislative Seminar, meeting before the General Assembly session began, Representatives Verla Insko and Martha Alexander received the Faith Active in Public Life Award for their work in promoting legislation that was in accord with the Council’s efforts for justice.

The House of Delegates met in Winston-Salem in May, electing the Rev. Mike Cogsdale as Council President. The Distinguished Service Award went to the Rev. Joseph Mann, who had served actively with the Council as President and on several committees. As Director of the Rural Church Division of the Duke Endowment, he was a vital part of many ministries which connect congregations to foundational supports and to new mission projects. At that meeting, Wake Forest Baptist Church in Winston-Salem was approved as a member of the Council.

In another of the Council’s projects, grants from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and others made possible increased efforts to address energy and other environmental issues. The funds would be instrumental in increasing the Council’s work with faith communities and the environment by addressing ways to reduce energy consumption and developing resources on caring for creation.

The Rev. Rollin Russell worked with the Christian Unity Committee to develop a seminar on the subject of Christian anthropology. Representatives from the various Christian traditions present in the Council’s membership took part, and it was hoped that there would be follow-up

gatherings on the same general subjects in the next few years. Another ecumenical moment took place at Wake Forest University Divinity School, co-sponsored by the Council and the Ecumenical Institute of the Carolinas. Presentations and panel discussions centered on the ecumenical legacy of Pope John Paul II.

Under the guidance of staff member Denise Cumbee Long, the Council published the first in a series of ecumenical lectionary resources, *Acts of Faith*. Themes focused on prophetic social justice in North Carolina, with resources for worship, suggestions for hymns, related statistics, and biblical exegeses.

At year's end, the Rev. Collins Kilburn was honored with the title of Executive Director Emeritus. His thirty years of service to the Council, as Director of Social Ministries and Executive Director, spanned a crucial period in the Council's history.

Barbara Zelter Reflections

Here are a few snapshots and reflections – which I hope might be of some use beyond reminiscence – from someone with years of involvement with the Council in these capacities:

- § Started out as a member of the Council's statewide committee on health care in 1992 while working as a community organizer for NC Fair Share; then
- § Responded to Collins Kilburn's request to represent the NCCC (as a volunteer) on a statewide task force on Welfare Reform in 1995; then
- § Took Sister Evelyn's cue to turn this work with churches on welfare and economic justice into an auxiliary project of the Council—which the Executive Board approved to become JUBILEE, a five-year (6/97-12/03) statewide initiative; and finally:
- § Served from January 2003 to June 2008 as Program Staff for Peace and Economic Justice out of the Raleigh NCCC office.

THE VALUE OF “TAPPING”

Everyone is an organizer. We all hope and try to make things work well in our personal and family lives, on the job, in our workplaces and communities, and sometimes even in the broader world. This takes enlisting others to help achieve our myriad goals in all these arenas. Let me assert here the value of “tapping.” Tapping is when we look around, find those with talents, aspirations, hopes, and potentials that might flower by working with us for common visions, and say: “We need you now, for this particular thing, and we trust that you will be a blessing to this cause.” Or something like that. It is about seeing people as valuable contributors, and calling out the gifts in them so they might grow and our cause might be advanced by their contributions. Did you not join this or that group, church, or cause because someone inspired you and asked you for your particular help, or welcomed you personally? Personal touch counts. Here is the story of how I came into the NCCC.

START SMALL, THEN STEP UP

The magnificent Jimmy Creech was program staff at NCCC in 1992, and he led a statewide program committee on health care. I was then a fresh Master's of Social Work graduate at age 41 and was on fire to win a system of national health care in the United States. The statewide grassroots advocacy organization, NC Fair Share, an NCCC ally, hired me on to help with that daunting task, in addition to other local ones across the state. Through this role, Jimmy asked me to serve on his NCCC committee. I did. I entered the world of the NCCC and learned more about collaborations across disciplines and organizations. I entered the NCCC family, and also became a lifelong advocate for health care reform. Later, Jimmy also asked me to write to a prisoner on Death Row at Central Prison in Raleigh and to send him a little check for art supplies. I did. Phillip Ingle and I became friends. I stood outside Central Prison when he was executed, with Jimmy inside the building as his chaplain. I hugged his sister outside the prison after the execution. She killed herself shortly thereafter, from mortification and grief. I became a death penalty abolitionist. Such is the power of simple invitation to help with a small thing.

RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS

Over 10 years of running a statewide nonprofit, JUBILEE, around churches and welfare, and then working with valiant NCCC folk for things like:

- § The united union/community effort to unionize the world's largest hog plant in Tar Heel, NC (we won!);
- § Raising the minimum wage (after 9 years of advocacy, NC raised it a dollar; still half of the more realistic "living wage");
- § Pushing for peace against the American rush to war after 9/11; and witnessing against U.S. use of torture by going to jail in the name of the Council as part of the NC Stop Torture Now persistence in exposing CIA "torture taxi" flights out of Johnston County.

I learned that big efforts are all about friendship. Not about policy expertise, media savvy, or technological competency, although all those things come in handy for advocates of God's peace and justice. Here is one scene about this truth of organizing. The National Council of Churches had a nationwide campaign before the 2004 elections to raise the voice of faith communities against poverty, to make elected officials hear that people of faith care about wages, health care, economic justice—not just abortion and homosexuality, as the public image then indicated. The campaign was called *Let Justice Roll*. In several states, faith and advocacy groups joined to challenge candidates around these issues of human dignity. The Council coordinated one of the only events for *Let Justice Roll* in the South. On the day of the event, at St. John's AME Zion Church in Wilson, NC, where Senatorial Candidate Erskine Bowles and Congressman G. K. Butterfield were the only candidates who responded to the request from 42 statewide groups to come and hear our concerns, it was a vision of the Beloved Community. Muslim women in head scarves sat next to men in red shirts from the NC Latino Coalition advocating for the Dream Act that would allow immigrants to go to NC colleges; Black Workers for Justice was there to talk about wages and unionizing, and women without health care were there to ask why this rich nation does not have a way to provide health coverage for us all. As I looked out at this gorgeous, colorful vision of the varieties of peoples in the

kingdom of God, I realized that each person there, on a stormy day when all had other things to do, came because of personal relationships with organizers of the event. We all have choices how to spend our time, and with whom. So let's make friends across every kind of line, so we can make snapshots like the one in Wilson that day in 2004. Thy Kingdom Come, I think, starts with simple stuff like conversations, invitations to dinner, listening, then standing together when the time for witness comes. It's nothing fancy. We all can do this.

2006

A letter went out to each state legislator in May 2006 signed by NC religious leaders concerning fair wages for workers. The purpose was to urge the Legislature to raise the minimum wage to at least \$7 an hour, with an automatic cost of living adjustment each year following that. The letter noted the biblical basis for paying fair wages, stating that the minimum wage "should be a fair, just, and living wage." Partially successful in that effort, the bill that was passed raised the minimum wage to \$6.15, a dollar higher than previously. A joint conference held by the Council and the NC Chapter of the NAACP took place in Fayetteville. *Empowering Congregations for School Partnerships* focused on strengthening relationships between churches and public schools. President of the state NAACP chapter, the Rev. Dr. William Barber, delivered the keynote address.

Two new members of the Council were the Congregation at Duke University Chapel and the NC Alliance of Baptists, bringing total membership to 33 judicatories and congregations. At the House of Delegates meeting, Bishop Joseph Gossman received the Distinguished Service Award.

The 2006 Critical Issues Seminar, *Partners in Wholeness: Congregations and Health Care*, took place in September in two locations, Asheville and Durham. Workshops were planned around the many issues included under the topic of health care, led by experts from church and institutions involved in matters of health.

Other activities by the Council during the year included showings of *The Ground Truth* on the war in Iraq and *An Inconvenient Truth* on global warming. Continuing efforts to raise the minimum wage resulted in the resource *A Living Wage for NC: An Introduction*, which provides a biblically-based examination of what constitutes a "living wage." Parallel to that project was work supporting the labor organizing work of UE 150 and Justice@Smithfield, along with other efforts to provide aid to farmworkers through various organizations. The Council co-sponsored an interfaith prayer service which focused on Middle East healing and understanding, which was held in Raleigh in August. During George Reed's sabbatical, Steve Smith served as the Interim Executive Director. A new staff member, Mark Ginsberg, began work in the fall to implement programs of North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light. At the December retreat for the Executive Board, two policy statements were approved, calling for reforms in immigration policies and in matters related to elections and lobbying.

2007

The Legislative Issues Seminar held in March 2007 addressed current issues facing the State Legislature. More than 200 attended, the largest number in recent years. Rep. Alma Adams from

Greensboro received the Faith Active in Public Life Award for her advocacy of fair wages for NC workers. The House of Delegates met in May, electing the Rev. Sèkinah Hamlin as President. During the meeting, Barbara Zelter was honored for her work with the Council, receiving the Distinguished Service Award. Her many projects as a staff member focused on peace, justice and poverty issues. Plans were announced for a luncheon in August to acknowledge the 37 years of service to the Council by the Rev. Jim Ferree. In addition to serving as Council President, he was Council Treasurer for many years.

Other matters addressed by Council committees during the year included encouraging congregations to recognize those in their communities employed in the school systems and members of Boards of Education; workshops on global warming and clean energy led by NC Interfaith Power & Light; developing support for farmworkers through a number of projects; promoting participation in the Justice@Smithfield campaign; and working with others against the extraordinary rendition flights administered by the CIA which originated in North Carolina.

The Council was active in others ways as well. A three-day training session addressing peacemaking and immigration issues was held in Chapel Hill at the Church of Reconciliation. Regional conferences, *Come to the Table: Food, Faith, and Farms*, drew more than 300 participants across the state. The partnership with Habitat for Humanity continued building homes in rural areas of the state. A march by social justice advocates, Historic Thousands on Jones Street (HK on J), was co-sponsored by the Council with the state NAACP. Another in the ecumenical gatherings offered through the Committee on Christian Unity was a day-long theological discussion on the doctrine of humanity as it relates to the concept of the common good. Shalom Witness 2007 was designed as a series of events to bring together people of faith to pray together for peace. Many publications were developed dealing with the various ministries of the Council as ongoing efforts for providing curriculum and resources for member bodies. The Public Education Committee called on religious bodies across the state to set aside a day of worship focused on public education.

Several changes in staff took place that year. Aleta Payne left her staff position but continued editing the Council's newsletters and other tasks. She would return as a Program Associate in 2009. Spencer Bradford became Program Associate for peace issues, and Richard Spell was called as Director of Development. Former intern Chris Liu Beers came on staff, along with Jocleen McCall, as a volunteer staff member. Rose Gurkin increased her staff duties to become Program Associate for Administration.

Rose Gurkin Reflections

I began my work with the Council in September of 2001; yes, just 10 days before 9/11. So I will never forget my anniversary! The staff at that time included George Reed, Sister Evelyn Mattern, Audrey Hornaday, Aleta Payne and me. My role in the Council's work has been an evolution. I came on staff as an office assistant and was tasked with creating a workable database for the Council and being a help to our Office Manager, Audrey. The work of the Council has grown through the years that I have been on staff. And the staff has grown as well. I have had the privilege of seeing many of Sister Evelyn's dreams for the work of the Council come to life: care of creation,

peace, the involvement of interns, and interfaith dialogue. Her influence continues to be strong as we continue the important work of relating faith to issues. In my time at the Council, North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light took form under the leadership of Alice Loyd. Spencer Bradford took up the issue of peace. The work of the Farmworker Ministry Committee that Evelyn began has been continued with the help of Chris Liu-Beers. People of Faith Against the Death Penalty grew and launched out on its own.

New programs and initiatives in the areas of immigration and health are becoming a part of the Council's legacy as well. As the communications work of the Council moved into the 21st Century (e-mail and web presence), my own work expanded to maintaining the Council's website. When Audrey retired, my role expanded again, taking on the myriad tasks she had performed as Office Manager. Then, when Aleta left the staff as Communications Associate in the spring of 2007, my role grew again as I took on additional responsibilities in the communications area and began to expand the technological capabilities of the Council.

At that point, the Executive Board took the action of changing my job description from support staff to program staff, reflecting my increasing role in the work of the Council. I look forward now to continuing to learn new ways to assist our program staff in their work. I believe that the work of the Council is relevant and vital and I feel blessed to be just a small part of that important work!

2008

Early in January 2008, Sister Evelyn Mattern was remembered at a luncheon in Raleigh. Several recipients of grants from the Sister Evelyn Endowment Fund attended, and there were comments and reminiscences about her work with many issues, such as those dealing with farmworkers, gender and racial justice, peace, the environment, and developing new advocates for social justice. Her efforts in forming an agreement between farmworkers, farm growers, and Mt. Olive Pickle Company were finally realized by success only after her death.

Alice Lloyd, director of North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light, retired from her position after being on staff since 2002, having taken on the work of global warming and climate change after Sister Evelyn's death, and affiliating with Interfaith Power & Light in 2005. The Council continued its work on issues such as sustainable agriculture, developing programs to help faith communities be well-informed on climate change and learn how to make healthy, responsibly produced food accessible to their communities. In September, Jill Rios was added to the staff as Director of NCIPL, following in the path of Alice Lloyd. She opened an office in Asheville, commuting to Raleigh for activities there.

Another activity of Council was the support given workers to unionize in Smithfield plants through the Justice@Smithfield campaign. Employees at the Tar Heel hog processing plant voted for a union to help guarantee basic workplace protections. In other Council efforts, it co-sponsored a stop by the *Jesus for President* book tour, bringing together about 500 people, many of them teenagers and young adults, to hear a biblical call for peacemaking and economic justice.

A three-year lectionary cycle of materials reflecting such biblical issues as social justice, health care and other issues supported by the Council, was completed: *Acts of Faith: Resources for Prophetic Worship*. Program Associate Chris Liu-Beers steered it to the final stages. It became an online

resource following its final publication. Also completed, through partnership with Habitat for Humanity in the FaithWorks program, was the 40th home in rural NC. The NC Community Shares organization presented the Council with the 2008 Agency for Change award during the 20th anniversary of that organization.

In the spring, the Executive Board established a Strategic Planning Committee, as a continuing effort to find more efficient methods of pursuing the work and mission of the Council. Earlier versions of the process took place in 1999, 2002, and 2004, with common themes including the role of the Board, staffing and funding concerns, and the visibility of the Council in the state.

A Critical Issues Seminar on immigration and surrounding issues, *From Hostility to Hospitality: Immigration and People of Faith*, took place in Greensboro in May. In conjunction with the seminar, the House of Delegates also met. At that time, three received Distinguished Service Awards: the Revs. Vernon Tyson, David Forbes, and Jimmy Creech. Nearly 300 attended the Seminar and lunch, the largest number ever for the event. A follow-up to the Seminar was a statement issued by the NC Religious Coalition for Justice for Immigrants, inviting signatures for the statement that affirms immigration as a justice issue, and putting a biblical perspective on the issue. Liu-Beers noted that it included passages from the Qur'an as well as from the Hebrew Bible and Christian New Testament.

The death of Dr. John "Jack" Crum in September brought forth a reflection by Executive Director Emeritus Collins Kilburn. Crum had served as the first Director of Christian Social Action from 1964-69. Those who followed in his path were Kilburn, Sister Evelyn Mattern, George Reed, Jimmy Creech, and others. Crum was involved in guiding faith communities to protest the US role in the Vietnam War, and organized the first of what later became known as the Legislative Seminars. He created the Endowment for a Prophetic Church in 1990, encouraging churches in social change ministries, and in 1997 received the Council's Distinguished Service Award.

In November, the Council sponsored a series of programs, *Sowing Peace in the Middle East: Opportunities for Iraq, Iran and Israel-Palestine*. Held in four locations across the state, there were lectures and discussions on current Middle-East issues affecting peace in the region. Featured were Jim Fine, Legislative Secretary on Foreign Policy for the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and members of NC churches.

Alice Loyd Reflections

As Program Associate, I led the Council's Interfaith Climate Change Campaign, which became The Climate Connection, which became NC Interfaith Power & Light.

I came to the Council as a Regional Coordinator assisting Sister Evelyn Mattern in initiating a statewide program to educate faith groups about the injustices of global climate change and to advocate for a faith-based response proportionate to the problem. I came to the work because of my experience organizing people of faith on the care of the Creation, and because it was an honor to work with Sister Evelyn. When she died, I became State Coordinator of the program, a position that developed into Director as the organization grew and stabilized.

Until 2006, the work was 25 hours per week and I held another 25-hour position. When we were able to obtain sufficient grant money, I became full-time and in 2007 moved the organization

into space that had opened up in the Council's office. At that point the climate/environmental work began to have more exposure to the Council's Executive Board and Delegates and began to be more integrated into Council priorities – as it was also becoming more integrated into the culture's priorities, and into those of the wider faith community. As I sometimes said, given the opportunity in those days, the “environment” usually was the last concern to be addressed in a budget or a presentation, a ranking that explained why we were in so much environmental trouble.

None of us was taught these values well, and we live in a setting that makes living by them difficult. Given those realities, I felt the reception by the Board of what was essentially a new focus was heartwarming, and my time of working with Council staff, board and committees was among my life's most satisfying experiences.

My primary long-term work relationship at the Council, however, was with the State Steering Committee, first of Climate Connection: Interfaith Eco-Justice Network and then of NC Interfaith Power & Light. The dedication, enthusiasm, and competence these individuals brought to our activities were a continual inspiration. Their commitment helped earn us the respect of the broad environmental community as well as with people of faith. These are people whose lives, writing and advocacy daily demonstrated what we were trying to teach. Because many stayed with the organization from early days through all the changes required as we grew, the vision remained consistent.

In particular I want to commend that committee for the mission statement that we created during months of valuable consideration. Through subsequent years, the statement was lived out through each presentation, document and training session we sponsored. It simplified decision-making; it helped me see priorities and eliminate non-essentials. I include it here as a means of explaining this aspect of the Council's functioning:

MISSION: We work with faith communities to address the causes and consequences of global climate change through education and public policy advocacy.

GOALS: Understanding

To explore the scientific, spiritual, and social dimensions of the ecological crisis

Reflection

To nurture reverence and wonder toward the Creation and our interconnected Earth community

Action

To apply these understandings and reflections in the conduct of our lives, as individuals, families and congregations

Advocacy

To work for public policy that supports the health of the Earth's ecosystems and that serves justice and respect for all life

2009

In February 2009, another *Come to the Table* Conference took place in three locations across the state. Developed by the Rural Life Committee with support from The Duke Endowment, the

events offered a means to learn about possible resources and strategies for the agricultural community. With a focus on ways that communities of faith could address hunger issues and support local farms, the conference recognized the various projects and resources available, such as community gardens, farmers' markets, and food banks, all of which use local produce. Breakout sessions included food and farm-related subjects for the nearly 300 who attended one of the conferences. In related actions, the Council developed a series of clergy breakfasts which were launched around the state. The purpose was for pastors to learn more about immigration and be better equipped to address the heated issues that have presented themselves over the subject.

A Legislative Seminar was held in Raleigh in March. Among the many workshops available were those on affordable housing, the death penalty, global warming, health matters, immigration, human trafficking, labor concerns, mental health reform, public schools, and gay and lesbian issues. Workshops also covered various aspects of the state budget. During the lunch hour, the Rev. Dr. William Barber, pastor and current President of the NC NAACP, received the Faith Active in Public Life Award, the first clergy person to receive this award. Also in March, Pullen Baptist Church in Raleigh, a member body, received an award for the church's dedication of 9,800 square feet of green space. The Rev. Canon Sally Bingham, Founder and President of national Interfaith Power & Light, made the presentation.

Angela Roach Roberson served as the first Sister Evelyn Mattern Intern. Student body president at Hood Theological Seminary, and a member of the UCC, she worked with the Council during her spring semester. Willona Stallings came on staff to develop the Council's Partners in Health and Wholeness Program. Aleta Payne returned to Council staff after a two-year hiatus, to work with communications and the Council's resource development program.

The House of Delegates met in Greensboro in May, where new leadership was elected, including the Rev. Jean Rodenbough of Greensboro, who was elected President. The Distinguished Service Award honored Cy and Carolyn King of Raleigh for their lifetime commitment to social justice and Christian unity, and their faithful support of the Council's work. Executive Director Emeritus Collins Kilburn, long-time friend, joined with others in remarks. They were only the third couple to be honored with such an award.

After years of working for public policy changes regarding smoking and health, the Council saw gratifying results, in part through its efforts to publicize the health dangers involved in tobacco. Gov. Beverly Perdue signed into law a bill making public restaurants and bars smoke-free across the state. The Council had worked on this issue for 15 years, meeting strong resistance from tobacco growers and manufacturers of cigarettes. Rufus Stark chaired the Tobacco Study Committee in 1984, which began advocating public policies to curb tobacco use for the sake of public health. The goal of making all workplaces and public spaces smoke-free remained to be fulfilled, but the efforts of those early reformers had contributed to the progress to this point.

Another often controversial issue that the Council worked on was immigration, producing new resources about immigration and the need for clearer understanding of the plight of immigrants, particularly from Latin America. This work was funded by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. At least 18,000 fact sheets and 1,300 study guides were distributed free of charge. In addition to the clergy breakfast meetings across the state, workshops were developed to provide information on immigration and ways to implement support for those immigrants who have come to NC. The

Council continued its work on comprehensive immigration reform through meetings with legislators in NC and Congress, and through information dispersed to the public about needed policies.

A 75th Anniversary Committee under the leadership of Bridget Johnson, scheduled a number of regional events for the fall, with plans for gatherings in Greensboro, Asheville, Charlotte, and Winston-Salem. The celebration of the anniversary was planned for May 18, 2010, at Duke Divinity School in Durham. Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, former First Vice-President of the Council before being elected as the United Methodist Bishop of Mississippi, agreed to lead the opening worship service.

The Strategic Planning Committee, established in the spring of 2008, continued meeting into the fall of 2009. Seeking ways to make the Council more effective in its mission and ministries, it was chaired by Father Joe Vetter. Stan Kimer, First Vice-President and a member of the Committee, presented their recommendations at the September 2009 meeting of the Executive Board, with the hope that the changes could be implemented within the anniversary year of 2010. One of the most significant structural changes was eliminating the House of Delegates and giving all decision-making authority to the Executive Board, consisting of representatives of judicatories and the congregations who are members of Council. An annual Assembly would replace the House of Delegates' meeting, allowing participants to assemble for Christian fellowship, education, worship, and other related activities designed to strengthen the work and mission of the Council. The Board, after hearing the Committee's presentation, called for a meeting of the House of Delegates in November for the purpose of voting on the recommendations of the Executive Board, as guided by the work of the Strategic Planning Committee.

During the summer and fall, the Council put a great deal of energy into support of comprehensive health care reform. Sandy Irving, volunteer Program Associate, began work in August to coordinate Council efforts on health care reform with other groups, both in NC and across the nation. She continued the work that policy statements have advocated for more than 40 years, as is "based on our Biblical teaching." Advocates were encouraged to make calls to members of Congress and promote reform in many ways. The Council's website provided aids to this effort. In addition to Sandy Irving's involvement, Program Associate Willona Stallings worked through Partners in Health and Wholeness to connect good health care with matters of faith, involving partnerships with religious and secular groups, and funded by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation and the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. An August Health Reform Rally in Raleigh featured a speech by the Rev. William Barber, president of the NC NAACP, stressing that health reform is a moral matter and a religious concern for social justice.

Immigration issues continued as a major focus, guided by Program Associate Chris Liu-Beers. He coauthored a column with Executive Director George Reed which ran in state newspapers as well as in papers across the nation. During the fall, a series of mini-conferences were offered across the state, *From Hostility to Hospitality: The Immigration Debate and People of Faith*. The Rev. Spencer Bradford, Program Associate for Peace, resigned at year's end in order to devote more time to Durham Congregations in Action, where he served as Executive Director, and his pastorate at Durham Mennonite Church. He had been the first staff member to work solely with peace issues.

A called meeting of the House of Delegates was held in Greensboro at St. Mathews United Methodist Church for the purpose of responding to recommendations from the Strategic Planning

Committee. An addition to the purposes of the Council, as noted in the constitution, involved expanding relationships with other faith bodies: “To encourage fellowship and cooperation with other religions and faiths in North Carolina for building mutual respect and promoting the well-being of all people in North Carolina.” The other change requiring the Delegates to vote involved the structure of the Executive Board and the elimination of the House of Delegates itself. The vote of the Delegates, including those present and those responding by mail-in ballots, was unanimous in favor of the changed structure, which became effective immediately, as well as the interfaith additions to the constitution.

The Council anticipated the celebration of its 75th anniversary. Bridget Johnson, a former Council President, was in charge of the Anniversary Committee planning the event. Included in the program would be moments of reflection and of looking to an active future for the Council.

This volume carries the story of the Council to the end of 2009. May the next chapters show forth justice, peace and ecumenism in the spirit of the founders.



**Distinguished
Service Award
recipients
Janie Speaks and
Jack Crum.**

Collins Kilburn
Motivated by Hope

When the Rev. Collins Kilburn first came to the North Carolina Council of Churches in 1969, he began a ministry of advocacy for social justice, peace, and ecumenism that lasted more than 30 years. It was to take him from the hopeful times of the '60's to the turbulence of the '90's with issues around war; economic justice; expanded ecumenism and social issues; just treatment for farmworkers; leadership opportunities for women; the dangers of tobacco to the health of North Carolinians; and bringing the Metropolitan Community Church into Council membership.

He first served under Executive Director Sam Wiley, as the Director of the Office of Social Ministries. Jack Crum, who served before him in that position, had focused on issues surrounding race, which was the prevailing social concern at the time. By the late '60's, however, social justice concerns had widened to include a great variety of issues. "When I started out," he noted, "the '60's were a time of some rising hopes and expectations with regard to social change, along with a lot of chaos and violence. . . . Since then, it's been increasingly an uphill battle." He was determined to stay with the battle, spurred by the needs of the least among those in North Carolina. "All of us are motivated by hope," he believes, and it was that hope that gave him the energy and purpose to work for change. In addition, he held to the conviction that "faithful Christian witness must include at the center a passion for social and economic justice."

During his time with Social Ministries, he added legislative issues to the Council's agenda. He had come to realize the importance of following the actions of the state Legislature during his pastorate at the United Church of Raleigh, when he also served as Chaplain of the NC House of Representatives, providing daily prayers for meetings of the Legislature when it was in session. He realized that issues affecting the lives of North Carolinians were the grist of the legislative deliberations and found that the only church-related presence there had to do with laws regulating alcohol. He was able to educate legislators about the value of a church voice on matters such as prison reform, tax reform, and other concerns. He also developed a more official relationship with the Legislature in order to lobby for issues vital to the lives of the people the lawgivers represented.

After ten years directing the Council's Social Ministries, he was asked to serve as the Executive Director of the Council, following the Rev. Sam Wiley's decision to retire. Taking on the new responsibility in 1979, Kilburn quickly reinforced the Council's activities in the Legislature through lobbying on bills promoting the welfare of the state. The annual Legislative Seminar became an effective opportunity for a large number of participants throughout the state to become knowledgeable and active in making a difference in legislation that was passed affecting all areas of life for North Carolinians.

Kilburn's 20-year tenure as Executive Director covered a wide area of ministries, always dedicated to what would work for the causes of justice, peace and ecumenism in North Carolina. The details of his accomplishments are chronicled in this history, showing his hand in making the NC Council of Churches "a very present help" in the life of the people of faith and the needs of all who sought adequate health care, a living wage, safe housing and peaceful neighborhoods. His efforts branched out internationally as he traveled to Russia and to Colombia, among other parts of the

world. As a former student of the founder of the Council, H. Shelton Smith, he learned his lessons well and earned many awards and recognitions over the years. He supported fair labor practices, a difficult road to travel in this state, and brought in staff who would reflect his goals for the Council. He said the best thing he ever accomplished was the staff he brought in.

In his farewell address to the House of Delegates in April 2000, he noted three major emphases that provided a picture of the Council's history in the state and the direction in mission he found important during his time with the Council. The political action ministry which was felt in the public policy arena may have been in the form of "a minority voice and surely not a dominant one," but its importance was clear as far as the effects upon the legislative actions were acknowledged. A second emphasis, and one that was prominent from the beginning of the Council itself, was in race relations. The role of the church in issues of race was critical, with lessons learned through controversies and conflicts, risks and successes. "Each of these lessons has decisively informed and fueled my soul, and the Council's soul, for the past 30 years," he affirmed. The third emphasis lay in the Council's involvement with the women's movement. The efforts of justice and equality for women both in the church and world resulted in challenges and opportunities, and "showers of blessings," through work on the Equal Rights Amendment in particular. With partnerships through Church Women United and the Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South, education and advocacy for women were also effective. He closed his address with a reference to Sojourner Truth, who was challenged by an elderly white man as saying her efforts against slavery were no more a matter to him than the bite of a flea. Sojourner parried that "Perhaps not, but the Lord willin', I'll keep you scratchin'!" Kilburn's charge to the Council: "Be a persistent flea. Keep 'em scratchin'!"

He added a touch of realism to that comment later, noting that "I don't think that in any foreseeable future, the major bulk of the church is going to be out there with flags waving and marching on the front line for social justice. My hope is more modest." He looked back, however, to a realization for him about his Council ministry: "When I worked with the Council of Churches, because of what the Council did, it attracted a certain kind of people. And so there was a lot of mutual support that kept me going, and presumably I helped other people keep going, so there was a community. That was really at the heart of it. There was a community of folk who didn't agree on everything, but generally had the same basic kind of commitment. So it was *fun*, actually."



THE PROPHET SINGS

There – on the square –
a guitar's new song
of justice and peace
The prophet sings
to lawmakers and preachers
to women who stand up

Those canded vigils
the protests
of inequalities
death by the State
exploited workers
children in danger
all give voice to justice' song

The prophet sings
surrounded by seekers
of shalom

Thanks be to this prophet
a persistent flea
goading, urging, strumming
the strings of hope

Hush! Listen!
the prophet sings still!
shalom shalom shalom
shalom

--- *Jean Rodenbough*

PRESIDENTS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

1935-36:	H. Shelton Smith	1970-72:	James H. Lightbourne, Jr.
1936-37:	Walter L. Lingle	1972-73:	Charles E. Dietze
1937-38:	W. Walter Peele	1973-75:	Cecil Bishop
1938-39:	Paul B. Kern	1975-77:	Vernol Robert Jansen, Jr.
1939-40:	J. Kenneth Pfohl	1977-79:	R. Eugene Owens
1940-41:	W. A. Stanbury	1979-81:	Richard F. Amos
1941-43:	Edwin A. Penick	1981-83:	Mildred Fry
1943-45:	John R. Cunningham	1983-86:	James W. Ferree
1945-47:	E. L. Hillman	1986-88:	George M. Kloster
1947-49:	Stanley C. Harrell	1988-89:	Thomas L. Law
1949-52:	Clyde A. Milner	1989-91:	Robert W. Estill
1952-54:	Edwin Kelsey Regan	1991-93:	Raymon Hunt
1954-55:	Cecil A. Jarman	1993-95:	Cally Rogers-Witte
1955-56:	Mark Depp	1995-97:	Joseph Mann
1956-58:	Richard H. Baker	1997-99:	Rollin Russell
1958-59:	W. Arthur Kale	1999-2001:	Bridget Johnson
1959-61:	Cecil W. Robbins	2001-2003:	Joseph C. Brown Sr.
1961-63:	Harold J. Dudley	2005-2007:	Michael Cogsdale
1963-65:	George R. Whittecar	2007-2009:	Sèkinah Hamlin
1965-67:	M. George Henry	2009-Present:	Jean Rodenbough
1967-68:	Samuel E. Duncan		
1968-70:	Thomas A. Collins		



Past presidents Rollin Russell and Bridget Johnson.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1953: Bishop Edwin a Penick
Bishop J. K. Pfohl
Dr. H. Shelton Smith</p> | <p>1968: Dr. Cecil W. Robbins</p> |
| <p>1954: Mrs. R. W. Barnwell
Dr. J. R. Cunningham
Dr. Stanley C. Harrell</p> | <p>1969: Mrs. Ira C. Shelley</p> |
| <p>1955: Mrs. Walter P. Sprunt
Dr. Clyde A. Milner</p> | <p>1970: Dr. George R. Whittecar</p> |
| <p>1956: Dr. and Mrs. E. L. Hillman
Dr. David D. Jones</p> | <p>1971: Dr. Charles W. Ward</p> |
| <p>1957: (no record)</p> | <p>1972: Dr. Thomas A. Collins</p> |
| <p>1958: Dr. Price H. Gwynn
Dr. L. E. M. Freeman</p> | <p>1973: Mr. William H. Shipes</p> |
| <p>1959: (no record)</p> | <p>1974: Bishop M. George Henry</p> |
| <p>1960: Mrs. Aubrey Mauney</p> | <p>1975: The Rev. Robert Lee Mangum</p> |
| <p>1961: (no record)</p> | <p>1976: Dr. James H. Lightbourne, Jr.</p> |
| <p>1962: (no record)</p> | <p>1977: (no award given)</p> |
| <p>1963: Dr. W. A. Kale
The Rev. J. Clyde Auman</p> | <p>1978: Dr. H. Shelton Smith</p> |
| <p>1964: Bishop Richard H. Baker</p> | <p>1979: Dr. Samuel S. Wiley</p> |
| <p>1965: Mr. David S. Cotrane
The Rev. Jack P. Mansfield
Mr. Roy A. Huggins
Dr. Harold L. White</p> | <p>1980: (no record)</p> |
| <p>1966: The Rev. Morton R. Kurtz
The Rev. H. L. Mitchell</p> | <p>1981: Mrs. Jean Vickers</p> |
| <p>1967: Dr. and Mrs. Harold J. Dudley</p> | <p>1982: Ms. Juanita Abston Henderson</p> |
| | <p>1983: Dr. Otis Hairston</p> |
| | <p>1984: Mrs. Catherine Watson</p> |
| | <p>1985: The Mst. Rev. Michael Begley, DD</p> |
| | <p>1986: Mrs. Estelle Hillman</p> |
| | <p>1987: The Rev. H. Charles Mulholland</p> |
| | <p>1988: Mrs. Catharine Vick
The Rev. Joy J. Johnson</p> |

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE RECIPIENTS, cont'd

- | | | | |
|-------|---|-------|---|
| 1989: | Mrs. Kathy Gramely | 2000: | The Rev. Collins S. Kilburn |
| 1990: | Dr. William C. Smith Jr. | 2001: | Mrs. Mildred Fry |
| 1991: | The Rev. George M. Kloster | 2002: | (no award given) |
| 1992: | Sr. Evelyn Mattern, SFCC | 2003: | Mrs. Julia Elsee |
| 1993: | The Rt. Rev. Robert W. Estill | 2004: | The Rev. Joseph Brown, Sr.
Mrs. Bridget Brown Johnson |
| 1994: | The Rev. Dr. James W. Ferree | 2005: | The Rev. W. Joseph Mann |
| 1995: | Ms. Tibbie Roberts
The Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte | 2006: | Bishop Joseph Gossman |
| 1996: | Wilton Hartzler | 2007: | Ms. Barbara Zelter |
| 1997: | Mrs. Janie A. Speaks
Dr. John H. Crum | 2008: | Jimmy Creech
Dr. David Forbes
The Rev. Vernon Tyson |
| 1998: | Dr. F. Belton Joyner, Jr. | 2009: | Cy and Carolyn King |
| 1999: | Dr. W. W. Finlator
Ms. Joan Papert Preiss | | |



Distinguished Service Award Recipients Vernon Tyson, David Forbes and Jimmy Creech.

FAITH ACTIVE IN PUBLIC LIFE AWARD RECIPIENTS

- 1985:** Judge Willis P. Whichard
NC General Assembly and NC Court of Appeals
- 1987:** The Hon. Bertha M. Holt
NC General Assembly, House of Representatives
- 1989:** Ferrel Guillory
The News & Observer
- 1991:** The Hon. Daniel T. Blue, Jr.
NC General Assembly, Speaker of the House
- 1993:** The Hon. Anne Craig Barnes
NC General Assembly, House of Representatives
- 1995:** The Hon. Robin Britt
Secretary, NC Department of Human Resources
- 1997:** The Hon. Ruth M. Easterling
NC General Assembly, House of Representatives
- 1999:** The Hon. Leslie Winner
NC General Assembly, Senate
- 2001:** The Hon. William N. Martin
NC General Assembly, Senate
- 2003:** The Hon. Ellie Kinnard
NC General Assembly, Senate
- 2005:** The Hon. Verla Insko
The Hon. Martha Alexander
NC General Assembly, House of Representatives
- 2007:** The Hon. Alma Adams
NC General Assembly, House of Representatives
- 2009:** The Rev. Dr. William Barber
President, NC NAACP

NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES/DIRECTORS

- 1936:** H. Shelton Smith (interim)
- 1936-39:** Trela D. Collins
- 1939-48:** Ernest J. Arnold
- 1948:** Frances C. Query (acting Executive Secretary)
with interim committee of S.C. Harrell,
Everett B. Witherspoon,
and E. J. Arnold
- 1948-49:** Carl Rollen Key
- 1949-51:** Frances C. Query (elected to fill unexpired term;
elected Director May 9, 1950)
- 1951-64:** Morton R. Kurtz
- 1964-79:** Samuel S. Wiley
- 1979-2000:** S. Collins Kilburn
- 2000-Present:** George Reed



George Reed speaks at a press conference on immigration.

**NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
MEMBER COMMUNIONS**

African Methodist Episcopal

Presbyterian Church (USA)

African Methodist Episcopal Zion

Reformed Church in America

Alliance of Baptists

Religious Society of Friends

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Roman Catholic Church

Christian Methodist Episcopal

United Church of Christ

Episcopal Church

United Methodist Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Congregations

General Baptist State Convention

Binkley Memorial Baptist

Congregation at Duke Chapel

Knollwood Baptist

Mars Hill Baptist

Myers Park Baptist

Pullen Memorial Baptist

Watts Street Baptist

Wake Forest Baptist

Metropolitan Community Churches

Moravian Church in America



**Participants in a 1997
ERA retreat.**

As part of FaithWorks, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, the Council has helped build more than 50 homes in rural North Carolina, including this one under construction in 2004.



The Council has a long history of activism in support of peace, including participation in events like this rally in 2004.

Activists with the North Carolina Council of Churches take part in HK on J in Raleigh, February 2008.



In October 2009, the Council co-sponsored an interfaith memorial service for those who have died due to a lack of health care coverage.

Volunteers with North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light weatherize homes for those who cannot afford it in 2009.

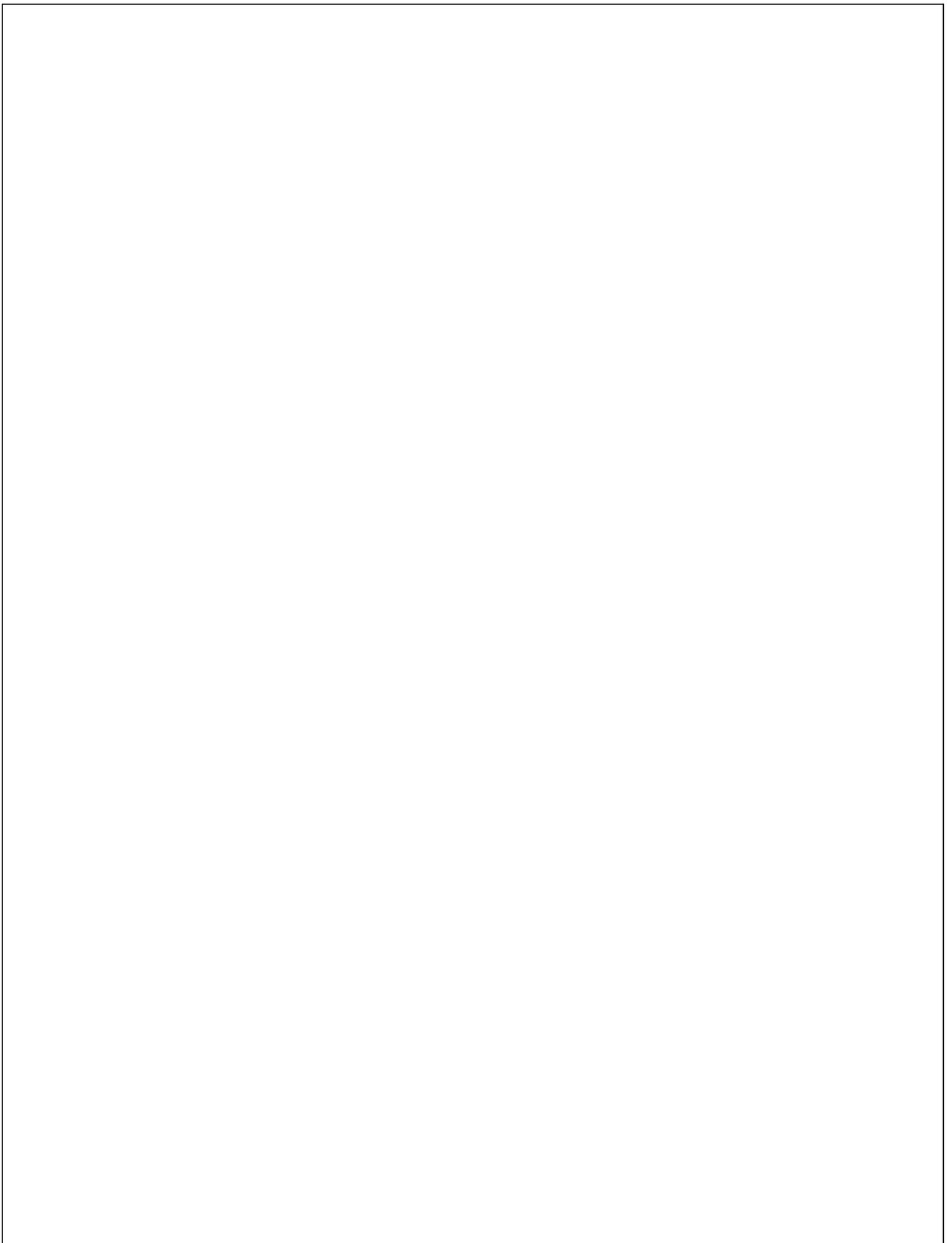




Rev. Ismael Ruiz Millan speaks in Greenville at a Clergy Breakfast on Immigration, May 2009.



Congregations among the first to receive Bronze Level Certification through the Council's Partners in Health and Wholeness program were recognized at the first Faith and Health Summit where Governor Beverly Perdue was the keynote speaker, March 2010.





**North Carolina
Council of Churches**

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919-828-6501

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