

OVERVIEW OF TOPIC

Focus Text: Ephesians 4:1-16

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

Scripture Commentary by Rev. Rollin Russell, former Conference Minister, Southern Conference, United Church of Christ

“To speak the truth, directly and in genuine love is frighteningly difficult, but utterly required for the Christian community to be faithful to Jesus Christ and to be fruitful in fulfilling His mission and our calling.”

Pastoral Reflection by Rev. Rollin Russell

“God’s holy purpose is the unity of the whole creation and the unity of the church as a witness to that purpose. Nothing is more important or takes priority over the divine embrace of unity in Christ. We read it and weep at the continuing and growing scandal of our multiple divisions.”

Personal Vignette by Dr. Geoffrey Wainwright, Robert Earl Cushman Professor of Christian Theology, Duke Divinity School

“My engagement with institutional ecumenism began in 1964, when my mentor Raymond George, the Methodist theologian, invited me to accompany him as a youth delegate to the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches at Aarhus in Denmark. When I had gained a bit of seniority, I myself became a member of Faith and Order, and I played an active part in the writing of the document “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” that was unanimously adopted by the Commission at Lima in 1982.”

Key Fact

The twentieth century conciliar movement produced councils of churches at the international, national, state, and local levels. The North Carolina Council of Churches shares the broad goals of Christian unity and justice with the World and National Councils and with the many state councils, and our members come from many of the same denominational streams. But there are no structural or financial connections between us. Each is its own autonomous organization, and the NC Council, founded in 1935, actually predates both the National and World Councils by more than ten years.