

Resolution A015 Jubilee Ministry Thanksgiving

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 74th General Convention acknowledge with thanks to
2 God the ministry of Jubilee on its 21st anniversary; and be it further
3 *Resolved*, That this ministry of “joint discipleship in Christ with poor and oppressed people, wherever they
4 are found, to meet basic human needs and to build a just society,” continue to be “at the heart of the
5 mission of the Church...;” and be it further
6 *Resolved*, That Jubilee Ministry be reaffirmed and commended to the whole Church.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND FAITH

www.episcopalchurch.org/gc/ec/ccs/ecstf/default.html

Membership (2000-2003)

Mr. Milton Coleman, <i>acting Co-Chair</i>	Central New York
The Rev. Barbara Smith-Moran, S.O.Sc., <i>Co-Chair</i>	Massachusetts
The Rev. Dr. Norman Faramelli	Massachusetts
The Rev. Dr. Kendall Harmon	South Carolina
Dr. Neil James	Florida (appointed 10/02)
The Rt. Rev. Robert H. Johnson	<i>Council Liaison</i>
Dr. Robert Schneider	Western North Carolina
Chaplain Lt. Mark Winward, USN, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Assigned to Olympia (resigned 10/02)
Ms. Susan Youmans	Massachusetts

WORK SUMMARY

The redemption of Christ brings healing and restoration, not simply to men and women in creation, but to the whole created order. The God who makes the world comes to that world to redeem a holy people *in and for* the world. With this understanding, the Committee on Science, Technology and Faith (ST&F) strives to bring before the Church concerns resulting from science and technology that bear upon the redeemed life of God’s people and their relationship with the whole of creation.

Toward this end, ST&F reports the following initiatives undertaken during the 2000 – 2003 Triennium:

- 1/01 national 3-day conference, “Genetic Engineering and Food for the World,” at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City.
- 2/01 public forum with speaker Bill Joy of Sun Microsystems: “Genomics, Robotics, and Nanotechnology,” at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco.
- 11/01 launch of the new electronic ST&F network newsletter: at <http://home.earthlink.net/~smithmoran/>
- 4/02 program for the Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology and the Church in Canada and the US. A practicum on effective educational writing in science and religion, with Jim DeLa, Director of Communications, Diocese of Southwest Florida.
- 4/03 Ecumenical Roundtable hosted by ST&F at Roslyn Conference Center, Diocese of Virginia.

To implement its work, ST&F chose four study areas in the current triennium because of their immediate importance for the beliefs and communal life of faith. Four subcommittees were formed:

The **Subcommittee on Creation** received endorsement for its Mission Statement at the June 2002 Executive Council meeting <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/gc/ec/ccs/ecstf/minutes/default.html>. Its educational agenda assists the Church corporately and Episcopalians individually in acquiring a thorough knowledge of and appreciation for the Christian doctrine of creation, particularly in its Anglican expression. Subcommittee chair Robert Schneider is writing a set of essays on critical issues in science and religion for the Berea College web site at <http://www.berea.edu>. These will serve as preliminary studies for materials for distribution to the Church via the web.

The **Subcommittee on the Ecumenical Roundtable** with similar committees from other churches and denominations plans the annual meeting of the Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology and the Church in Canada and the U.S. Before ST&F was appointed by the 1997 General Convention, several members were founders of the Roundtable in the mid 1980s.

Subcommittee chair Barbara Smith-Moran is the convener of the Steering Board of the Episcopal Church Network for Science, Technology and Faith (ECNSTF). This membership organization, with about 140 members, serves as a church-wide pool of expertise, available to provide technical and scientific information and advice to our Church. Consultants-at-large to the four subcommittees are drawn from ECNSTF.

The **Subcommittee on Genetically Modified Foods** has been considering such issues as the environmental and social impact of genetically modified crops, including their safety and efficacy in alleviating world hunger. These topics were addressed in the national conference, “Genetic Engineering and Food for the World,” held in January 2001 at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. An edited volume of essays from that conference will be available on the web. Beyond these topics, the subcommittee has uncovered a network of related concerns, all the more pressing since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Subcommittee chair Susan Youmans made a presentation on food security to the Executive Council Committee on National Concerns in June 2002. This presentation is the basis for the Food Security resolution submitted by ST&F.

The **Subcommittee on Robotics and Nanotechnology** was formed after a public talk by computer technologist Bill Joy in February 2001 on “Genomics, Robotics, & Nanotechnology,” co-sponsored by ST&F, at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco. His concerns about the rapid technological development, and society’s slowness to regulate it, prompted ST&F to monitor these areas. Under chair Mark Winward, the subcommittee has been considering changes in the nature and understanding of life and death as computer-assisted replacement organs become available, purporting to considerably extend an individual’s life.

Restructured Approach for the 2004-2006 Triennium

Having been a working group of The Executive Council, ST&F was authorized by resolution D011 of the 2000 General Convention. Following Convention, a petition to give special emphasis to the new concern about stem cell research resulted in an Ethics and the New Genetics Task Force (ENGTF), for one triennium. Funding was drawn from ST&F’s budget plus augmentation from Council, and ST&F had a reduced membership of seven persons. For the upcoming triennium, an ongoing, restructured approach should obviate the need to split ST&F in the future.

ST&F formed The Episcopal Church Network for Science, Technology and Faith (ECNSTF), consisting of about 140 respected members of the scientific community, who offer expertise to ST&F in fields such as biomedical ethics, human genetic research and gene therapy, but it receives no General Convention funding. This resource will help ST&F offer web based education programs in such disciplines as bioengineering and genetic science. Human genetic research is a subject in which the Church’s application of moral theology is of immediate concern. Provisions for education and guidance in matters of genetic testing, stem cell applications, and gene therapy are important to equip the leadership of the church.

ST&F’s restructuring and its utilization of ECNSTF can offer a sound interface between science and religion for the Episcopal Church. This country and other countries receive misinformation on food security, the stewardship of our world and attempts to divorce the natural world from God’s creation. The Doctrine of Creation is the theological context for ST&F’s mission and its membership should include theologians, ethicists, and scholars of culture to maintain this interface.

- ST&F has been restructured and will include theologically sensitive Episcopalians with scientific or technical training in a wider range of fields than the current seven members can represent, including knowledge in food systems science, environmental science/engineering, genetics/cell biology, astronomy/cosmology, medicine/healthcare, computer science/technology, materials science/technology and neuroscience/neuropharmacology.

- The ST&F mandate is to act as a clearing-house for articles, monographs, scientific papers, commentaries, books and other works by scientists and researchers, drawn from ECNSTF and other sources, relating to issues which can inform the faith of Episcopalians.
- ST&F will check each author’s reputation and their work’s reliability. It will assess the work for suitability for an Episcopal audience while making editorial suggestions for understanding.
- ST&F will share its findings with the Director of Communication at the Episcopal Church Center who will arrange for a web library of informative and timely articles. These will educate the Church without a need for the General Convention to take a theological or ethical policy position on developments that are always changing. The Director of Communication is considering a regularly published feature on challenging topics for information, but not doctrinal mandate, for the whole church. Articles by ST&F or ECNSTF could be reprinted by Forward Movement.
- ST&F’s work will include representation at meetings, conferences, and consultations with other churches and professional organizations. ST&F members will participate in discussions, interact with leaders in various fields, learn about the theological and ethical ramifications of cutting-edge developments in science and technology, and build ECNSTF. Possible meetings are the American Association for the Advancement of Science (ST&F contributes to a resource table); the American Public Health Association; the American Academy of Religion; and consultations of the Society of Ordained Scientists and the Church of Scotland’s Society, Religion and Technology Project, which has done benchmark work in communicating matters of scientific and ethical interest to church constituents.
- ST&F will be comprised of 12 members. They will meet twice a year: in April, to coincide with the Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology & the Church in Canada and the U.S., and in the fall. This will require \$87,000 for the six meetings and attendance at other meetings during the triennium.

Resolution A016 Food Security

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the mind of this 74th General Convention reflect the
2 conclusions of the Executive Council Committee on Science, Technology and Faith (ST&F) in its capacity
3 of providing to the Church informed conclusions concerning the intersection of science and technology
4 with the faith life of Episcopalians. Christians are called by God to be stewards of and delighters in God’s
5 world, and to protect the diversity of God’s Creation. We urge Episcopalians in their corporate,
6 community and individual action to integrate national and international food security into their
7 understanding of Christian responsibility; and be it further
8 *Resolved*, That in their understanding of Christian responsibility all Episcopalians support public policy
9 and actions that foster research and development of the types of science and technology that preserve
10 “biodiversity in food production”, which refers to the maintenance of a healthy relationship among
11 varieties of food crops and species on which they depend; and be it further
12 *Resolved*, That Episcopalians become informed about trade conditions and intellectual property practices
13 that exacerbate the tendency of genetic modification technologies to reduce biodiversity in food
14 production; and be it further
15 *Resolved*, That Episcopalians support and participate in programs that protect farming and farmlands and
16 promote intentional purchases of food produced locally

EXPLANATION

Since 2000, ST&F has examined the validity of claims for genetic engineering to alleviate world hunger. Its position is that:

1. The limited time frame and context for the research conducted has produced insufficient data for full agreement on the environmental and biosafety implications of genetically modified plants and food.
2. The burden of responsibility should be with technology producers to assure consumer and environmental safety, rather than with consumers to prove harm.
3. Genetically modified seeds usage can lock farmers into a food production approach that reduces the need for human stewardship skills and requires more expensive seeds and increased, costly chemical inputs.

4. For impoverished nations, this worsens the trend in which food diversity produced for local consumption is replaced by monoculture crop production (the practice of planting a single genetic variant of a crop species, rather than multiple varieties and species) for export. Food producers' ability to buy food for themselves becomes dependent on their success in exporting crops internationally.

ST&F is aware of the cumulative effects of changes affecting production, distribution and consumption of food in the U.S. and globally. What was once called a "farm crisis" is now called a "food revolution".

For decades in the U.S., industrialized food production and a decreasing amount of the food dollar returned to food producers has caused serious secular and faith community concern. A small number of corporations have increased their market share in owning and cultivating resources to produce, manufacture, process, and market food. Countless farmers, ranchers, and fishermen and communities have been dislocated. Food producers' independence has diminished. Fewer and fewer corporations control seed development and patents, utilizing arrangements in which seed or stock, chemicals, and plant technology are included in contracts.

In the last decade, food producers as suppliers of raw materials have been denied a fair share in the value-added economic activity of the food system that extends from the grower to the consumer. Less food is being produced and consumed locally; domestic food products are directed at international markets; and domestic infrastructures to support production aimed at regional markets have been reduced. The rate of agribusiness corporate mergers has accelerated, and corporate consolidation has virtually eliminated competition among food product buyers, leaving many producers unable to bargain over prices they receive.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks generate additional concern for national food security. Domestic food systems are vulnerable due to reliance on long-distance crop shipments. A clash over use and protection of knowledge between developing and developed countries reinforces perceptions of unbridgeable differences between the interests of rich and poor nations.

ST&F asserts that biodiversity in food production manifests the variety in God's Creation and the roles of caring and relatedness within God's Kingdom. Humans steward local varieties of seeds and pass them down over generations. In millions of microclimates women and men use their knowledge of local conditions to feed their families. Finally, Jesus' preference for the poor is a compelling argument against domination of countries' seed and food production by large commercial interests.

ST&F rejects claims that treating plants and animals as food production units and eliminating their cultivation as a value-added human process ultimately alleviate hunger. ST&F believes that, in impoverished countries, changing over from food production for local use to crop production for export substitutes trade conditions for food sustainability and causes hungry people to be losers in international markets.

ST&F believes that monoculture food production practices require increased use of synthetic fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides that adversely affect microorganisms and surrounding plant and animal species. ST&F believes subsidized transportation to bring food to distant markets has hidden environmental costs of greenhouse-gas emissions and soil, air, and water contamination harmful to diverse ecosystems. ST&F questions whether genetically modified seed cultivation reduces the need for pesticides and herbicides.

The science and technology predominant in industrial food production have resulted in the reduction of diversity in ecosystems, habitats, and species, as well as in genetic variation within species. This trend has been accelerated by the energy-intensive agriculture introduced by the Green Revolution's new seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Today, interdependence of regional ecosystems enforced by political and economic structures makes this trend a matter of urgent concern. Science and technology must be directed toward promoting sustainability in long-term food production.