

## COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND FAITH

### MEMBERSHIP

Dr. Robert J. Schneider, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Western North Carolina, IV, 2006
The Rev. Barbara Smith-Moran S.O.Sc., <i>Co-Chair</i>	Massachusetts, I, 2006, <i>resigned December 2005</i>
The Rev. Josphina Borgeson	Northern California, VIII, 2006, <i>appointed February 2006</i>
The Rev. Dr. Norman J. Faramelli	Massachusetts, I, 2006
Dr. Neil James	Florida, IV, 2006
Dr. James A. Jordan Jr.	Northern California, VIII, 2006
Dr. Paul S. Julienne	Virginia, III, 2006
The Rev. Dr. Thomas Lindell S.O.Sc.	Arizona, VIII, 2006
Dr. Sandra Michael	Central New York, II, 2006
Dr. John Miers	Washington, III, 2006
The Rev. Canon Johnnie E. Ross	Lexington, IV, 2006
Dr. Stephen Stray	Oklahoma, VII, 2006
Ms. Susan Youmans	Massachusetts, I, 2006
The Rev. Canon Anthony Jewiss, <i>Staff Consultant</i>	Los Angeles, VIII

### SUMMARY OF WORK

“Theology puts into words our rational and prayerful reflections on revelation. A theology of creation presents the Church’s thinking about the relationship between God and the world as it is informed by our understandings of Holy Scripture and observations of nature.... Throughout the history of Christian thought, in the tradition of “faith seeking understanding,” our understanding of the doctrine of creation has been informed by discoveries and theories in the natural sciences....” (“A Catechism of Creation: An Episcopal Understanding,” Part I, p. 5).

In the 2004–2006 Triennium, the Committee on Science, Technology and Faith (ST&F) has continued its work within this tradition of “faith seeking understanding” by providing information that educates the Church on science, technology and the Christian faith. Using the restructured approach approved by the 74<sup>th</sup> General Convention, ST&F reports the following initiatives:

1. Publication of a major teaching document in print and electronic versions, “A Catechism of Creation: An Episcopal Understanding.” This document assists the Church and individual Episcopalians in acquiring knowledge of and an appreciation for the Christian doctrine of creation, particularly in its Anglican expression; for the relationship of doctrine to scientific discoveries and theories; and for a Christian ethic of caring for creation. At its June 2005 meeting, The Executive Council commended the Catechism (*Executive Council Resolution NAC 027/CIM 035*) “for study in parish education and faith formation classes, Episcopal schools, diocesan and parish workshops, vacation Bible programs, summer camps, retreats, and other programs” A Spanish translation is being planned.
2. Collaboration with the Network for Science, Technology and Faith (NST&F), a membership organization, in the continued publication of the electronic Network Newsletter, which also reports on activities of ST&F. Available at: [http://ecusa.anglican.org/19021\\_53593\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm?menupage=53588](http://ecusa.anglican.org/19021_53593_ENG_HTML.htm?menupage=53588).
3. Cooperation with the NST&F in making “A Catechism of Creation” available in Braille transcription.
4. Continued efforts toward the creation of an electronic Resource Center of educational pieces and timely articles on a topics relating to science and the Christian faith that will be available on the Episcopal Church website.
5. Annual participation in the Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology and the Church. ST&F will be the host for the April 2006 Roundtable.
6. Expansion of the ST&F mandate, approved by the Executive Council at its June 13-16, 2005, meeting (*Executive Council Resolution NAC 028/CIM 036*): “ST&F will also, on a regular basis, conduct surveys to gather information about activities and programs related to matters of science, technology and faith that are

being carried out in the various provinces, dioceses, and other units of the Church. It will collate and provide this information in electronic form to the Director of Communication for posting on the Church web site, so that it may be made accessible to all.” ST&F plans to conduct this survey during 2006.

No resolutions were referred specifically to ST&F by the 74<sup>th</sup> General Convention. Pursuant to *GC Resolution 2003–A010*, as of December 2005, all but two members of ST&F will have received anti-racism training. Pursuant to *GC Resolution 2003–D011* (Append "Anglican Communion" to materials), the suggested words have been appended to the Newsletter of the NST&F, and care will be taken to append them to future reports and other documents.

### **Resolution A128 ST&F Membership**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That one-third of the members of the ST&F Committee, or as near
- 2 as possible, be rotated at the conclusion of every triennium, to be replaced by members of the network for
- 3 ST&F. A list of new members, selected for their personal and professional qualities and expertise from among
- 4 the members of the NST&F, shall be suggested to the Presiding Bishop (in the case of bishops) and the
- 5 President of the House of Deputies (for Lay and other Clerical members).

#### **EXPLANATION**

The NST&F, a membership organization, represents a pool of Episcopalian women and men across the church with impressive experience and expertise in many areas, including the sciences, engineering fields, history and philosophy of science, and the science-and-theology field. They are used as consultants to the ST&F Committee in its work. When rotating new members onto the ST&F Committee, the ST&F leadership, in looking to maintain a balance of disciplines and other qualities, will recommend members drawn from the NST&F membership.

### **Resolution A129 Affirm Creation and Evolution**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 75<sup>th</sup> General Convention affirm that God is Creator, in
- 2 accordance with the witness of Scripture and the ancient Creeds of the Church; and be it further,
- 3 *Resolved*, That the theory of evolution provides a fruitful and unifying scientific explanation for the emergence
- 4 of life on earth, and that an acceptance of evolution in no way diminishes the centrality of Scripture in telling
- 5 the stories of the love of God for the Creation and is entirely compatible with an authentic and living Christian
- 6 faith; and be it further
- 7 *Resolved*, That Episcopalians strongly encourage state legislatures and state and local boards of education to
- 8 establish standards for science education based on the best available scientific knowledge as accepted by a
- 9 consensus of the scientific community; and be it further Resolved, That Episcopal dioceses and congregation
- 10 seek the assistance of scientists and science educators in understanding what constitutes reliable scientific
- 11 knowledge.

#### **EXPLANATION**

The theory of evolution is broadly accepted by the overwhelming majority in the scientific community as the most adequate explanation for the emergence of life on earth, and the ongoing adaptation of life to changes in environments. For example, knowledge of how evolution functions is essential in understanding the resistance of bacteria to antibiotics, the resistance of insects to insecticides, and the appearance of viruses such as HIV and influenza.

The teaching of evolution is a crucial contribution to the development of scientific literacy among the nation’s youth, yet state legislators and state and local school boards continue to challenge, limit, or seek to supplant the teaching of evolution. Limiting the teaching of evolution in our schools has the potential to compromise students’ ability to understand constantly changing living systems, and may undermine, for instance, the understanding and treatment of diseases of the future.

Since the sixteenth century, Anglicans have described their faith in terms of the “three-legged stool” of Scripture, Tradition and Reason. The quest to understand the origins of life on earth, and the forces that drive the ongoing changes in living organisms involves Reason and is in no way incompatible with the central truths of Scripture and

Christian Tradition. Episcopalians generally accept that it is appropriate to seek to understand, through scientific probing, the origins both of the cosmos and life on earth, and that evolution is a valid explanation of the development of all living things, including humanity. Several leading Anglican theologians, past and present, among them priest-scientists William G. Pollard, Arthur Peacocke, and Sir John Polkinghorne, have shown how an evolutionary world view can be integrated with a theology of creation. The 67<sup>th</sup> General Convention affirmed a belief “in the glorious ability of God to create in any manner”, and its “support of scientists, educators, and theologians in the search for truth” (*GC Resolution 1982-D090*).

### **Resolution A130 Promote Sustainable Agriculture**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 75<sup>th</sup> General Convention instruct the Committee on Science,
- 2 Technology and Faith (ST&F) to explore theological, social, scientific and technological connections between
- 3 having a sustainable food supply, locally and globally, and reducing poverty to create societies that are more
- 4 just; and be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, That the Committee develop educational materials for the Church through its Resource Center and
- 6 other channels on the means to establishing a just and sustainable food supply.

### **EXPLANATION**

The United States sustainable agriculture community is seeking a more purposeful integration of food-system work into a social justice framework. Unfortunately, those who work to promote a sustainable food supply often use language, address audiences, and target research that does not coincide with or complement efforts to increase equity and improve quality of life for the poor. Resources in our Christian tradition and Scripture have much to contribute to this purposeful integration, which is important for the Episcopal Church's work with poor communities throughout the world. It is crucial to have an awareness, for example, of which technologies, both high and low, may be appropriate to a particular situation, of the latest scientific and technical developments related to sustainable agriculture, and of the ecological and economic results of expansion of the world's food-producing capacity. Furthermore, the Church's work in developing countries requires knowledge of the ramifications of the increasing concentration, in the holding of a few corporations, of the ownership of seedstock, as well as of the social, economic and environmental consequences of transfer of genetic modification technology, including patenting and property rights over traditional knowledge.