

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND FAITH

Membership

The Rev. Alistair So, *Chair*, 2015
Mr. H. Talmage Day, 2015
Mr. Shawn Evelyn, 2015
Dr. Lisa Fortuna, 2015
The Rev. Stephanie Johnson, 2015
The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely, 2015
The Rev. Evelyn Manzella, 2015
Ms. Meredith Rawls, 2015
The Rt. Rev. Mark Sisk, 2015
Dr. Edward B. Sisson, 2015
The Rev. Dr. R. Jim Trainor, 2015
Mr. Joseph Wolyniak, 2015
The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, *Ex Officio*
The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, *Ex Officio*
Katie Sherrod, *Executive Council Liaison*
Mr. Richard Serota, *Staff*

Summary of Work

Mandate: To identify, explore, and recommend policies to General Convention and Executive Council regarding emerging issues in science and technology and their implications for Christian faith, life, and practice. Duties:

- To represent the Church in ecumenical and other gatherings relating to its concerns;
- To facilitate education on the theological, scientific, and ethical implications of policy-related and other controversial issues;
- To serve as a resource for the House of Bishops and other Church bodies.

Resolution A013: Study Genetically Modified Food Crops

The Executive Council referred Resolution A013, Study Genetically Modified Food Crops, adopted by the 77th General Convention to the Committee on Science, Technology & Faith. The Resolution calls upon the Church to empower the 78th General Convention to take action toward developing policy to address issues arising from the development of genetically engineered plants and patenting of genetically modified organisms (“GMOs”). The specific concerns identified in the resolution included the consequences for biodiversity, agricultural sustainability, the environment, human nutrition, health and disease, and economic impacts on small farmers. The Resolution further commended the leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) for its work on the moral, ethical, and theological principles raised by GMOs.

Drawing upon principles for a just society developed and employed by the ELCA in a number of its social statements, other recent work in Christian ethics, the science policy literature, and other scientific literature significant for establishing policy context, Tal Day, Chair of the Subcommittee on GMOs of the Executive Council Committee on Science, Technology & Faith prepared a working paper framing and reviewing the issues raised by the Resolution. The working paper identified subject matter and general principles that could be incorporated into appropriately framed resolutions for submission to the 78th General Convention.

As support for the Resolution's call that Episcopalians study about GMOs and reflect upon their duty of stewardship of creation and the related issues of economic development, food insecurity, biodiversity, and environmental sustainability, the Committee has published, in addition to the working paper, an annotated bibliography of selected resources. Links to each of these work products are on the website maintained by the Committee at <http://episcopalscience.org/gmos/>.

A short article by Tal Day summarizing the GMO issues considered and the particular perspective on GMO issues afforded by the Christian tradition, "GMOs and Protection of 'Nature,'" is being published in the September 2014 issue of *Covalance*, the Bulletin of the ELCA Alliance for Faith, Science and Technology. A resolution framing policy proposals supported by the working paper and narrative supporting the resolution is including in this report.

Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology, and the Church

The Episcopal Church's Executive Council Committee on Science, Technology, and Faith (ECCSTF) recently hosted members of several denominations for the annual Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology, and the Church (ERT, May 7-10, 2014). Lutherans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and other ERT attendees joined Episcopal delegates to explore a variety of issues pertaining to science, technology, medicine, and the Christian faith — from the recent discovery of primordial gravitational waves to the latest climate-change projections. Begun years ago as an informal gathering, ERT has grown into an annual gathering of Christians seeking to ecumenically engage in discussion of a range of theological, philosophical, and ethical topics.

Attendees began their meeting with Committee work in their respective denominational groups, and then joined together for prayer, worship, conversation, and fellowship. The Rt. Rev. Scott Hayashi (11th Bishop of Utah), who hosted the gathering at the Episcopal Church Center of Utah and celebrated at the ecumenical Eucharist, surmised: "Gathering people from different denominations and expressions of the Christian faith is in itself an enriching experience. To be together for the purpose of learning from one another and advancing the conversation on the intersection of faith and science is a demonstration that reason and faith are not strangers to each other, just as people who seek the truth are not strangers to one another."

The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely (13th Bishop of Rhode Island and ECCSTF bishop-member) likewise touched on themes of pursuing mystery in science and faith in his homily at the ERT Eucharist: "A rabbi once told me, in a conversation about faith and science, that God hides the truth from us and expects us to use all our faculties to find it. That is counter to the common understanding of how science or theology work, but for those of us who are seekers in both fields it is something that we know to be true. We encounter it every day of our lives."

The culminating event was a keynote address entitled, "Christology, Evolution & the Theological Imagination" by The Rev. Dr. W. Mark Richardson (President & Dean, Church Divinity School of the Pacific). The address focused on Anglican responses to Darwinian evolution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including by figures such as Charles Gore (1853-1932) and William Temple (1881-1944). The conference was live-tweeted with #ERT2014, and the keynote was live-streamed via a Google+ Hangout On Air, with an opportunity for members of the public to submit questions on the Hangout or via Twitter (@episcosci) or Facebook (fb.com/episcopalscience). The live-streamed event is archived and available for viewing on the ECCSTF's YouTube page.

Following the keynote address, Meredith Rawls (lay ECCSTF member from the Diocese of the Rio Grande and PhD candidate in astronomy at New Mexico State University) hosted stargazing for ERT attendees and members of the public, with help from a colleague in the Department of Physics & Astronomy at the University of Utah. ERT attendees glimpsed Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and the Moon through a telescope. "Our star party — part of the worldwide #OneSky event — was the perfect way to close the day," noted Rawls.

The chair of the ECCSTF, The Rev. Alistair So (Rector, All Hallows Parish, Diocese of Maryland), summed up the gathering as “a model of ecumenical engagement not just for the purpose of the important dialogue between science and faith, but also as an example of how our various denominations can work together in the mission field of the 21st century.” In his presentation to the group, The Rev. Dr. Roger Willer (Canon Theologian to the Presiding Bishop in the ELCA) echoed these sentiments: “The Ecumenical Roundtable is one of the more important ecumenical efforts I am aware of, addressing such pressing issues [related to science and technology] in the Church and wider society.”

At the gathering, the ECCSTF worked on resolutions assigned at the 77th General Convention — tackling issues from Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) to weaponized drones — in preparation for the upcoming 78th General Convention. The Committee is also working to revamp and more widely distribute the “Catechism of Creation” (originally developed and disseminated by the ECCSTF in the previous triennium) in keeping with a resolution passed at the 77th General Convention that “affirmed the compatibility of science and the Christian faith” and “encourages the dioceses and parishes of The Episcopal Church to establish Christian education programs pertinent to this complementary relationship.”

More information can be found on the website of the Episcopal Network for Science, Technology & Faith (ENSTF, <http://episcopalscience.org>). You can also like the ENSTF on Facebook (<fb.com/episcopalscience>) or follow the Network on Twitter (<twitter.com/episcosci> or [@episcosci](https://twitter.com/episcosci)).

W. Mark Richardson Granted 2014 Genesis Award

The Very Rev. Dr. W. Mark Richardson (President and Dean, Church Divinity School of the Pacific) was awarded the 2014 Genesis Award from the ENSTF following his keynote address at the recent Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology & the Church that was hosted by The Episcopal Church’s Executive Council Committee on Science, Technology & Faith (ECCSTF).

The Genesis Award recognizes Episcopalian leaders in the ongoing science and religion dialogue. Richardson was granted the award for his decades of scholarship, teaching, and leadership on issues related to science, technology, and faith. A priest, scholar, lecturer, theologian, and Episcopal Church Foundation Fellow (1990), Richardson has written extensively on faith, science, and evolution. He was the founder and director of the Science and Spiritual Quest Project at the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (Berkeley, CA), an effort which led to the publication of *Science and the Spiritual Quest: New Essays by Leading Scientists* (Routledge, 2002). He has authored, edited, and co-edited several other essays and books, including *Faith in Science: Scientists Search for Truth* (Routledge, 2001), *Human and Divine Agency: Anglican, Catholic, and Lutheran Perspectives* (University Press of America, 1999), and *Religion and Science: History, Method, Dialogue* (Routledge, 1996).

Richardson received his PhD from the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in 1991, writing a thesis on the 1956/57 Gifford Lectures of the English theologian, philosopher, and priest Austin Farrer (one of the leading figures of 20th-century Anglicanism). Serving as an Associate Professor-in-Residence of Philosophical Theology at the GTU until 1998, Richardson joined the faculty at General Theological Seminary (New York, NY) in 1999, where he served as a Professor of Theology until his appointment as President and Dean of CDSP. Richardson also served as a Senior Theological Advisor to the Trinity Institute (a continuing education program of Trinity Wall Street, New York, NY) and as Chair of the Editorial Committee for the *Anglican Theological Review*.

The ENSTF gave the first Genesis Award in 2005 to The Rev. Dr. J. John Keggi, a retired priest of the Diocese of Maine who holds a PhD in organic chemistry, who served as a longtime co-convenor of the North American chapter of the Society of Ordained Scientists, and who was instrumental in the formation of the ENSTF.

Other recipients of the award include the late Rev. Dr. Peter Arvedson in 2006 (who passed away in 2011, having served in six different parishes over 35 years after obtaining a PhD in inorganic chemistry from the University of Wisconsin and a master of divinity from General Theological Seminary); The Rev. Barbara Smith-Moran in 2007 (a priest in the Diocese of Massachusetts with a background in chemistry and astronomy, founder of the Faith & Science Exchange in Boston, and one of the co-founders and first co-chairs and of the ECCSTF); and Dr. Robert J. Schneider in 2008 (professor emeritus of Berea College, lead author of the Catechism of Creation, and co-chair of the ECCSTF from 2003-2006). Richardson is the first recipient of the Genesis Award since 2008.

Miscellaneous

1. We are currently working on a resolution to address the Church's role in responding to the effects of global climate change.
2. We are in the process of updating the Catechism of Creation. In particular, we hope to produce materials for use in the Christian Formation of all ages.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

A030: CREATE TASK FORCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church call upon the Executive Council to create a task force to begin to create resources for parish and diocesan use that will equip faithful Christians to respond pastorally and materially in their local context.

The Task Force is asked to report back to the 79th General Convention on its progress and to share what is already happening at the local and diocesan levels in The Episcopal Church.

EXPLANATION

The question of whether or not climate change is occurring is no longer open. Scientists, by broad agreement, see that an increase in the Earth's atmospheric temperature is driving changes in sea level, storm intensity, and large-scale and local climate instability. The Church has a responsibility to respond on a number of levels to these changes. Church buildings may be lost or relocated. Existing industries may be imperiled, and new industrial challenges will emerge, creating significant economic difficulties for governments and citizens worldwide. There will be significant impact on wildlife. Agriculture will have to adjust to the changing weather and, as it is doing that, food insecurity in this nation and others may expand beyond present levels. All of these factors together will require a coordinated response for which, at present, little planning has occurred.

Budget

The Executive Council Committee on Science, Technology, and Faith plans to meet approximately four to five times during the next triennium. This will require \$10,000 for 2016, \$10,000 for 2017, and \$10,000 for 2018, for a total of \$30,000 for the triennium.