

Meeting of the Committee on Science, Technology & Faith

Conference Call, Sunday, 16 October 2005, 4-6 p.m. EDT

Attendance: Robert Schneider and Barbara Smith-Moran, Co-chairs; Norman Faramelli, Neil James, James Jordan, Paul Julienne, Thomas Lindell, Sandra Michael, John Miers, Johnnie Ross, and Susan Youmans. Stephen Stray sent his regrets; a diocesan event required his presence.

At 4:10, Bob called the meeting to order and Barbara opened the meeting with prayer.

Review of previous actions:

From the April 2005 meeting in Santa Fe, there were 12 action items:

1. Put the PDF of "A Catechism of Creation" (C of C) in booklet format on the website. Jim will do this with the help of ST&F Network Consultant David Bailey.
2. Draft the following resolutions: Commendation of the C of C to the Church; Extension of the ST&F Committee mandate; Reaffirmation and update of the 1982 resolution on sound science teaching; Food Security.
3. Make a presentation of the C of C to the Executive Council. Johnnie and Bob will present at the June meeting.
4. Publicize the Genesis Award. Network board member and consultant to the Committee Josephine Borgeson, in attendance, will write up something for ENS, and Barbara will report on it (or reprint Phina's article) for the Network Newsletter.
5. Draft ST&F's Blue Book report, with resolutions. Barbara and Bob will draft the report, and others will draft accompanying resolutions, for approval before the deadline of 16 September 2005.
6. Members who need it will take charge of finding an Antiracism Training session and arranging to attend, traveling on the Committee's budget. They will notify Bob and Barbara of their plans.
7. Get a Spanish translation of the C of C made. Barbara will handle this.
8. Find out which members of the Network are Deputies. Sandra will do this.
9. Collect information about diocesan faith-and-science committees. Members of the Committee will do this, with help from Network members, if the resolution to extend ST&F's mandate passes.
10. Help plan the display for the AAAS Annual Meeting. Sandra will be on the Planning Committee for this display.
11. Host the 2006 Ecumenical Roundtable. Jim and Sr. Claire Lofgren, Network board member, will join the Planning Committee for 2006 and make arrangements for hosting the Roundtable at a suitably frugal site near a major airport, if possible.
12. Write, vet, and post articles on the website. The plan is to have 6 articles sent to David Bailey by September, and 6 more by next April.

Of these, the first 5 have been accomplished, and reports were received concerning each.

Actions taken at the present meeting:

The resolution to commend the C of C to the Church, and the resolution to extend the ST&F mandate were passed by the Executive Council at its June meeting (NAC 027/CIM 035 and NAC 028/CIM 036). Bob and Johnnie reported on the warm reception they received both in committees and in Council. The Blue Book report was submitted, together with three resolutions: "Affirm evolution as compatible with Christian faith," "Promote sustainable agriculture in the context of social justice," and "The rotation of members of ST&F."

Regarding (#6) members' attempts to obtain anti-racism training, Sandra, Neil, Paul and Tom are still on the look-out for suitable opportunities. Several training sessions for which they had registered were cancelled, but they are persevering. Jim says that 815 seems to have delegated many or most of the training to the dioceses. Johnnie will receive training as an Anti-racism Trainer in early November at Berea College. Barbara will ask Tony and Janet Aguhob at the General Convention Office for travel authorization for Sandra, Neil, Paul and Tom to attend training wherever and whenever they can.

Regarding (#7) progress in getting the C of C translated into Spanish, at Tony Jewiss's direction, a resolution was passed by ST&F by email vote on 30 August 2005: "Resolved, that the General Convention direct a department of the Episcopal Church Center to provide for the publication of the document, "A Catechism of Creation: An Episcopal Understanding" in both English and Spanish versions, the latter being made under the direction of the Rev. Thomas Mansella." Barbara forwarded this to Tony, but no word has been received yet regarding any progress on this project. Barbara will try to find out where this stands.

Regarding (#8) attempts to identify which ST&F Network members are Deputies to the General Convention, John said that he has not yet been able to obtain the list of Deputies from Louie Crew. Barbara suggested that a quicker method might be to ask ST&F Network Membership Chair Peter Arvedson to send out a query on the Network listserv. John said he would pursue that strategy. Once we identify who they are, we may ask them to give testimony when our resolutions come up in committee, or to testify against other resolutions that are unsound from an ST&F standpoint. Sandra would like to organize something like a Dutch-treat lunch or dinner for all who can attend.

The project (#9) to collect information about diocesan science-and-religion committees has been approved by the Executive Council. Stephen will finish a draft of a questionnaire to be sent to the Communications Officer of each diocese. The dioceses of Province IX will be included. The plan is to send the questionnaire by the end of the year, and to post the results on the ST&F webpage on the National Church's website by next spring. Those who volunteered to survey the dioceses in all the provinces are listed below:

Prov. I.....Barbara

Prov. IISandra

Prov. IIIPaul and John

Prov. IVBob, Neil and Johnnie to consult on this

Prov. Va Network member, to be identified in consultation with Peter Arvedson

Prov. VIa Network member, to be identified in consultation with Peter Arvedson

Prov. VIIStephen

Prov. VIII....Jim

Prov. IX.....Bob to consult with **Network board member** Joyce **Wilding** on who might survey this Province

On the matter (#10) of the AAAS Annual Meeting in early February 2006 in St. Louis, Sandra said that she will contact Jim Miller at the AAAS to see what is happening with the plans of science-and-religion organizations to pool resources to purchase display space. We will consider selling the C of C there, provided there is continuous staffing to take in the money and prevent the books from disappearing.

ST&F is hosting (#11) the 2006 Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology & the Church. Jim reported that we will be at the Emrich Center, a facility of the Diocese of Michigan. It's in Brighton, between Ann Arbor & Flint, and a 45 minute drive from the Detroit Airport. Jim said that Emrich is very cooperative and willing to help with transportation. Two ideas for the programmatic part of the Roundtable were discussed; a) sound science education and how the churches might support it, and b) how racism and other "isms" effect the practice of science and education of scientists. Someone recalled that the United Methodist Church delegation was going to take care of the program. Barbara said she would check this out with that delegation's leaders.

On the subject (#12) of the Resource Center we're trying to build up, Barbara has written and submitted two vetted essays. Several others reported that they are working on theirs. The topic of the Fog Index of our articles was revisited. At the Las Vegas meeting in April, we decided to aim at a Fog Index of 9 (roughly 9th grade reading level). After looking at Barbara's essays, one at F.I. 9 and one at F.I. 12, we decided that the level was too low by a considerable amount. We want to post essays that appear to have been written by scientists knowledgeable in the field in which they are writing. Sandra said that Barbara's two essays, as circulated, would not inspire confidence in the ST&F Committee. We decided to aim at F.I. 12-14 for future essays, and Barbara will re-write her essays before asking David Bailey to post them..

New Business:

(A) Stephen Stray was invited to represent ST&F as a consultant with the Board on Life Sciences of the National Academies (Science, Medicine, and Engineering). The Board is a standing committee of the Academies and helps provide advice on possible projects in the biological sciences and their impact on society. The Board has an interest in encouraging dialogue between scientists and the religious community. Stephen circulated his report by email before the Conference Call. To summarize, he wrote, "Overall, I would have to say that the meeting was very respectful and friendly (one of the self-identified non-theists made the point of coming over to speak to compliment me on the Committee's work and thank us for our participation). The Board was going to discuss this issue further at a later session; I made it very clear that we would be happy to assist in any way they see fit and that they should contact [our Co-chairs]. The two self-identified Episcopalians both gave me their cards and I'm hoping to be in contact with them shortly." We are grateful for the opportunity to consult with the the Board, and that Stephen was able to take part in the discussions.

(B) We discussed how to publicize the Network at the General Convention. The Episcopal Ecological Network, which maintains a display table, was very happy to display our brochures in 2003. We will ask ST&F Network Board Member Joyce Wilding to see whether this arrangement will be possible again.

(C) Sandra said that she is a candidate for election to the General Board of Examining Chaplains. We urged her to electioneer loudly and visibly.

(D) Barbara said that if the resolution regarding the rotation of ST&F members passes at the General Convention, Norm, Susan, and she will rotate off the Committee at the end of 2006. She then announced that she plans to resign a year early, at the end of 2005, as she begins graduate study at CDSP. Others will think over who should fill out her term, not as Co-chair, but as member.

(E) Tom reported that there is a new book out called *Gays and the Future of Anglicanism: Responses to the Winsor Report*.

(F) Bob will contact Bonnie Anderson, Chair of the Executive Council, to request that she appoint an Executive Council Liaison for ST&F.

(G) Bob reported that at invitation of Jim Miller, he has participated as a consultant to the Program on Science, Ethics and Religion of the AAAS in the writing of a DoSER-sponsored book, *The Evolution Dialogues*. The book is written for study in Christian churches.

At 6 p.m., Bob adjourned the meeting with prayer.