



*The Episcopal Church's delegation to the
Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology & the Church
in Canada and the U.S.*

**Report to the Ecumenical Roundtable
on Science, Technology and the Church in Canada and the U.S.**

**24 April 2004
Las Vegas, Nevada**

Take a look at the Organizational Chart, which clarifies how the ST&F Committee and Network relate to each other and to the larger church structure. The Network's Steering Board functions as the Committee's representative at the Ecumenical Roundtable.

In last year's report to the Roundtable, we had a section called "Continuing Difficulties and Problems," and these are the two difficulties we reported:

(1) how to serve the members of the ST&F Network—that is, what to give them in return for their dues money

(2) how to accept and utilize the skills, expertise, and experience our members offer the church.

We decided to forget trying to give the Network members their money's worth—which is a whopping \$10 per year in dues, if we actually remember to collect the dues. Instead, we decided to ask which of them would be willing to invest their time, ideas and energy into making the Network stronger and more active. Our Network Membership Director (Peter Arvedson) sent out a questionnaire last fall to all Network members asking which of them were so willing. About 15 Network members answered in the affirmative. As soon as the General Convention authorized it, we increased the size of the Committee on ST&F from 7 to 12 members, drawing new members from the list of the willing. And others have been elected to positions on the Steering Board of the Network.

Milt Coleman and Kendall Harmon resigned from our Committee for different reasons, and we welcome seven new members to the Committee, all of whom were able to meet here over the past two days.

The General Convention also approved a proposal to create a resource center in science, technology and religion. In our meetings just ended, we began to prioritize which topics are of primary importance to the life of Episcopalians at the current time. This resource center will be located on our redesigned website, found at <www.episcopalchurch.org/science>. [It cannot at this moment be reached from the Episcopal Church homepage, a real frustration.]

In connection with this resource center, since the General Convention last summer, the ST&F Committee has made a good start on what we call "A Creation Catechism." This is the first tool for Christian education in the area of creation theology to come out of our church in many years. It is intended to correct the dearth of scientifically informed theology that has drifted into contemporary thinking, a dearth which has represented a great opportunity for creationism and intelligent design to function and flourish. We have Bob Schneider's considerable talents to thank for taking the lead in the development of this Creation Catechism. We intend for it to be available in a variety of formats for adaptation for all age groups and venues.

The ST&F Committee is approved to continue representing our church at conferences and consultations where it's important for the church to have a voice. Two such meetings in the past year were the AAAS consultation on "Evolution and the Religious Communities: Theology, Education and Public Policy," held last January in Washington, D.C., and a consultation between Mexican and U.S. Farmers, held in Des Moines, co-sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

Back again to last summer's General Convention, the ST&F Committee submitted a resolution on Food Security, which was not passed. It sought to raise awareness of the broader food security context of genetically modified foods, including concerns for environmental and biosafety, reduced diversity of wild and domesticated plants, displacement of small farmers in the U.S. and world-wide, and the concentrated control of commercial seed production within fewer and fewer corporations. We have been analyzing why it didn't pass, and we intend, with the advice of our staffperson, Tony Jewiss, to rewrite it and submit that in 2006—which is just around the corner.

The ST&F Network has produced and distributed three more issues of its electronic newsletter. Many of you receive email notification of that. If you don't receive that notification but would like to, just tell Peter Arvedson.

At the annual meeting yesterday of the Network's Steering Board, we voted to co-sponsor the upcoming AAAS/DoSER conference at MIT, 19-21 September, to be called "The Brain & I: Neuroethics, Responsibility, and the Self." This will take the form of a monetary donation from our dues.

Finally, yesterday, the Network Steering Board held its triennial elections. I'm very pleased to announce that Sandra Michael was elected to be the new Convener, succeeding yours truly. The last names of new officers is on the organizational chart.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Smith-Moran, S.O.Sc.
Convener (1998-2004)