

**Executive Council Committee on Science, Technology and Faith
April 18 - 22, 2007**

Joseph Retreat House
Manchester, New Hampshire

Wednesday Evening, April 18

Informal gathering, introductions and check-in.

Thursday Morning, April 19

Present: David B. Bailey, Vice-chair, Josephine Borgeson, Secretary, Barbara Elliot, Neil James, James A. Jordan, Chair, Thomas Lindell, Sandra Michael, Richard Schori, Paul Shepard, Alistair So, Stephen A. Stray, Ed Rodman, Executive Council Representative, Alexander Webb, General Convention Staff, Robert William, Church Center Staff Liaison

Excused Absence: Sally Bingham

After reviewing the minutes from our December/November meeting, Jim led a discussion of how we have sorted out what we are today as a Committee. We discussed where we can be helpful to the church in general and the Executive Council in particular.

Our focus is on science issues related to the MDGs and to other science/technology/policy issues of interest to the church and society. We have four major priorities as a committee: expanding Part III of the Catechism, water, ocean health and global warming (climate change).

CATECHISM OF CREATION

Borgeson is the point person for Part III.

We discussed three areas:

a) A version of the Catechism tailored to teenagers. So pointed out that it is one thing to teach the Catechism to kids; another to address a post school population. We discussed the value of adding visual content to the Catechism.

Some of the ideas that percolated about the Catechism:

- partnering with ECVA to add visual content
- partnering with camps and conference centers
- partnering with Episcopal summer camps
- partnering with Episcopal schools, especially for outdoor education weeks
- emphasizing experiential learning
- partnering with the Living the Good News Curriculum.

Lindell suggested creating a one page proposal for a church camp curriculum.

So spoke of the new center for Care of Creation Center at VTS as a possible partner. We need to survey the use of the Catechism. Schori suggested the use of the online "Survey Monkey". Shepard suggested the use of the STF Network to market the catechism.

b) Borgeson talked about three different theologies of Creation:

- 1) Benevolent Dominion. Key text in Genesis 1.
- 2) Stewardship of Creation. Key text in second creation story - to till and to keep. Accountability to God emphasized.
- 3) Community or Communion. Key text in Romans 8. Dynamic responsibility to the rest of creation and God.

c) "Pushing the envelope" on Part III, informed by evolutionary biology. Lindell talked about doing theology fully informed by the science. Environmental concerns moved from the edge to the center.

WATER

Jordan led the discussion. He will be the point person for this topic. He is a member of a water company board in Northern California. He suggests three issues:

- 1) The quantity and availability of water.
- 2) Quality of water.
- 3) Disposal of waste water that is safe and nourishes creation.

An ST&F tri-fold on water issues was proposed.

Sustainability issues related to water.

Is the church able to help create the kinds of changes needed?

The issues around water are systemic, there are no quick fixes.

Stray spoke of the situation in Melbourne.

Who owns water? Who pays the cost of distributing water?

Sanctity of water.

“Food for community, not food as commodity”; the same applies to water.

Public vs. privatized water.

Thursday Afternoon

attendance as above

OCEANS' HEALTH

Schori is the point person.

Connections to biological, physical oceanographers and ocean/fisheries technology

Need to look at the whole system

Schori needs to connect with network. Borgeson suggested Richard Williams of Woods Hole,

and will send contact info. Michael has suggestions, too.

We explored the issues.

Bailey suggested that it's not just about us - both science and theological reflection on God's value of the oceans, and what that means to us other than just getting food from the oceans

Oceans and climate - even though we don't live there, it does have a major impact on our human environment. (So)

Oceans and evolution - they are a kind of lab for studying origins and evolution. (Michael)

Ocean warming. (Williams)

At what price knowing? What are the unintended consequences of exploring? (Borgeson)

Oceans as carbon sink; also oceans' methane release. (Jordan, Rodman)

How about getting Katharine Jefferts Schori to comment on health of oceans (Williams)

Sense of responsibility - we all have the potential to influence the biota. It's not my fault, not my concern, what difference could I make? A loss of the sense of the commons. (Lindell)

What about protection of marginal habitats which indigenous communities depend on for food? Most poorer people fish closer to the shore where most of the pollution is. (James)

Possible resources:

NOAA

Pew study, California Oceans' Project

How much we don't know! The first study of all California coast out three miles has just been completed. (Jordan)

The Ownership Questions (Elliot) And how are ownership and responsibility related? It's on paper internationally (James) but without a navy to enforce it.

Is Antarctica a model for approaching the ocean?

Research models there were developed with an assumption that there wasn't an economic interest (Jordan)

A model of cooperation

But it's restricted to the countries with good technology. (James)

Mystery - the unknown aspect of the ocean - what's the value of that? (Lindell)

It's not an either/or - utilitarian vs wonder. (Shepard)

Look at what's happened with Nobel. The pursuit technology fuels all kinds of co-creation.

How are we then responsible with what we come to know? (Elliott)

GLOBAL WARMING

The chair commented that global warming seems to be a coupling device. He also recognized Sally Bingham for her advocacy.

Bailey admitted he had had some questions about such as is human activity contributing? The UN docs that came out in February are helpful.

Borgeson said she had two issues. Most non-scientists have difficulty understanding modeling. They have seen the evidence (as in *An Inconvenient Truth*) but don't understand the predictions. She also was concerned that we reflect on solutions that don't make things worse, e.g., systems thinking is necessary in the case of biofuels.

What are the economic impacts of changing to other fuels, cutting emissions?

What about the extraction of fossil fuels. What about contributions to green house gases that are not fossil fuel based, i.e., methane from cows and beef cattle.

Jordan affirmed that the UN report acknowledges global warming as a fact of life, but asked how prepared are we to cope with the effects? Katrina offers a microcosm of the issues (whether you believe it was a result of global warming or not). The questions raised about whether or how to reconstruct New Orleans are a model for what we may need to ask about many poorer parts of the world. How are we going to make the right ethical decisions? Make any decisions?

James: The models may be crude at this moment. I have hope in the resiliency of human nature.

Humans are an adaptive system, but how can we adapt constructively? - Jordan

Elliot: We do know some things - like about biofuels.

James: We need to take another look at biofuels. They have made the life of billions of humans better - light, water purification, etc. - an example of human adaptability and the power of technology.

There was much conversation around these questions.

Our path is to review the UN report, draw some conclusions about the scientific bases and their conclusions. Then we need an initial work product, done in the context of General Convention resolutions on this subject.

Rodman says the timetable should be ours. But there is a current clamoring. Bailey will e-mail a link to the UN report.

Rodman will report to the Executive Council in June that we are working on this - to buy us time.

Michael has another resource person to recommend to Bingham and Bailey.

REPORT FROM OUR STAFF LIAISON, BOB WILLIAMS

He recommends we consider webcasting in the future - for panel discussions, in depth conversation.

globalgood.org - launching tomorrow, Friday, April 20. Resources for the MDGs. Editor is Daphne Mack (dmack@episcopalchurch.org)

Alex Baumgarten in the Washington, DC office is the contact for MDGs and international issues.

Presiding Bishop Jefferts-Schori is on message with MDGs. Don't hesitate to be in touch with her, recognizing the volume of mail she gets.

Sandy Webb is part of the working group on organizational effectiveness at the Church Center where there is lots of new energy and thinking. The new chief operating officer is open to the kind of ideas we have and projects we want to do.

Collaboration is the new thrust of the office of communication

There have been some improvements to the web site. Episcopal Life on-line (ELO) has been launched. The conversation about the balance between print and electronic continues. The print Episcopal Life is going to be undergoing some changes. Wikinomics approaches are to the fore: openness, peering, sharing, acting globally

Williams continued by reviewing contributions at a recent House of Bishops meeting by the Archbishop of Bangladesh, and conversations at the most recent HofB on the environment, specifically the environment and border issues, the environment and Southeast Asia, the environment and Katrina.

Williams asked us:

How many of the bishops know about our work?

Who are our audiences?

Williams reminded us that interviews, press work, and op eds are ways to make connections.

The group should use Borgeson's work with the Office of Communication and build on it. ELO requires new material every day.

Jan Nunley in the Office of Communication could also be a resource to us. Her work earlier was on Living On Earth. She has done the Al Gore training. We might want to invite her to a meeting.

January 2008 Sunday bulletin inserts are available to us. There was some conversation around

this. 2009 is the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth (February 12) and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species*. Could we do something then?

A continuing challenge, Williams said, is getting Episcopal experts out there in the public media. We could help identify experts on science and theology.

How are we doing at marketing/selling the Catechism of Creation? Are there possible partners for a revision, e.g., Trinity Wall Street?

Publications contact at the Church Center:

Jimmy Chen (Church of Our Savior) (publications@episcopalchurch.org) or
(jchen@episcopalchurch.org)

A dynamic web site does speak to our brief of technology, Williams said. Is there a way to collaborate on this with Trinity Wall Street, seminaries, environment center at VTS? a way to do it and model it?

Friday morning, April 20

attendance as above

WEB PRESENCE

Deliberations commenced with a follow-up on the discussion of the web platform that took place at the Chicago meeting in November. Bailey provided an overview of the internet presence for the Executive Council Committee on Science, Technology, and Faith. Basically, there are two websites for the Committee: one on the Committees, Commissions, Agencies, and Boards (CCAB) website hosted by the General Convention Office, the other on the Episcopal Church Network on Science, Technology and Faith (ECNSTF) website, hosted by the Communications Office and currently maintained by Bailey. The CCAB website is updated cybernetically and only contains officially mandated content such as the roster, meeting schedule, our mission as defined by General Convention, and minutes. The site on the ECNSTF website (<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/science>) can be used to host written documents (essentially in html format). Other formats, such as PDF, are less readily uploaded to the website; Bailey recommends this type of content be emailed to the Communication Office (to Williams or Barry LNU) for posting. Alternatively, PDFs etc could be hosted elsewhere and linked to the website. Bailey reports that the major difficulty with the ECNSTF website is that the site must be built in RedDot, a system built more for the service industry than the kind of content we have (documents etc, updated only occasionally). RedDot is cumbersome and not user-friendly to the amateur user, frequently requiring specialized expertise. All documents must be made in the RedDot template. Bailey reports that he has been granted the appropriate level of security access and that technical assistance is forthcoming from Church Center (815) personnel when required. However, because of all the inbuilt security features, RedDot is formidable to the occasional user. Webb agreed that the ability to be used creatively is not a strength of RedDot.

How can we make best use of web technology?

At the request of the Chair, Webb discussed options for interactive use of internet resources available through 815. Episcopal Communities (<http://epicom.faithgroups.com>) is a private and

secure virtual community available to groups with TEC affiliation and was introduced by the Very Rev Nick Knisely at the Chicago CCAB meeting. This replaces "Ecunet". A username and password issued by the General Convention Office is required. Webb will (re)issue these. Once logged in to Episcopal Communities, the user will see all those groups of which s/he is a member. The groups are opened by clicking on the group name. The group site contains information such as the roster and email addresses of members, and "fileshare" documents can be hosted on the group site. The server will generate an email to all members when a document is posted. Documents are uploaded by selecting "fileshare" to upload a document from the users local drive. Epicom also includes software features such as a listserv which may be used through email; this allows the server to log the discussion thread. The listserv cannot accommodate large documents as attachments. Epicom communities can be set up for outside (but Church-related) groups such as the ECNSTF.

Webb reports that other groups meet via internet chat in real time. This can be arranged at any time through 815; Webb describes this feature as "clunky" compared to other commercial products, but this product is owned by TEC, security is guaranteed, and a transcript is generated. There is no way to make a reservation, but users can sign on at a prearranged time and "meet". Webb reports that Epicom is compatible with most current browsers, but may not work as well on older ones. Epicom also has a calendaring function; this informs members when an update is posted. There is no facility for listing biographical data- only email addresses. There is no facility currently available through Epicom for online editing of documents. Webb reminded the Committee that the Church Archives office requests that all "substantive drafts" be retained for archival purposes.

Lindell asked if teleconferencing were available to the Committee. Webb replied that this can be done both easily and cheaply through 815, but would require some lead-time for setup. This would be arranged through Patrick Haizel in the Meeting Planning section of the General Convention Office. This could also be used for ECNSTF meetings, but the Network would reimburse the Church for this use. Webb and Jordan will enquire about the cost, for comparison to cost estimates obtained by Michael.

Email

Bailey reports that each member of the group handles this on an ad hoc basis. He has established two listserves on Yahoo.com (one for the Committee and one for the Network.). Subscription to these is by invitation from the group; people may have missed receiving the invitations because many spam filters remove emails with multiple recipient addresses. Network-related email will be so identified in the subject line- this may be used to tell spam filter to allow such messages through. Bailey reminded the Committee of the necessity to be aware to whom emails are being sent and the importance of discretion. Webb pointed out that Epicom has both "Reply" and "Reply to All" buttons.

Use of Epicom system for Committee and Network business.

Michael proposed that separate Epicom communities should be set up for the Committee, the Network Steering Board, and the Network at large. The latter two would duplicate/replace the current Yahoo group. Jordan stated that it would be useful to be able to grant limited access to the communities to those acting as consultants on particular projects. Webb reported that this

would be best accomplished by establishing multiple separate groups within Epicom. At this stage, such groups would have to be set up and populated by the GC Office, although Webb is hoping that this will change. Webb reiterated that such groups were available to organizations such as individual dioceses, parishes, and other church-related groups.

Alternatives to RedDot- followup on Joint Meeting with Communications Commission (at Chicago CCAB)

Schori updated us on his investigation of potential alternatives to the TEC RedDot based website. He has been in contact with Skip Schueddig, Director of the Episcopal Media Center (EMC) in Atlanta, GA. EMC is the former Episcopal Radio and Television. EMC sells software to Episcopal Dioceses and parishes (as described in minutes of Joint Meeting in Chicago). EMC has tools with similar capabilities to those available through Epicom, but the EMC tools are more sophisticated. EMC also has a web content site development system which is not html-based. Schori may collaborate further with EMC on software development. Schueddig has offered free web hosting “as an experiment”. In summary, EMC offers a nice suite of products, but it is not clear if there would be any cost to the Committee.

Schori also reported that he has duplicated the Network’s RedDot-based site in DreamWeaver format, a system in which he has much experience and finds very intuitive to use. This is hosted on his private server and he reports that it looks very good.

Bailey proposed that we develop a hybrid approach where the Network page (www.episcopalchurch.org/science), where most committee-related material is currently found, would be linked to an external page containing Network and Committee material hosted elsewhere. Webb said that a link could be created on the Committee CCAB site to Committee material on the Network site. Jordan reminded the group that the Committee and the Network have separate roles: the Committee’s is to provide material for the use of the Church at the request of EC, GC, HOB etc, whereas the Network has a more evangelistic role, to say that TEC “cares about creation and thinks about this from a scientific standpoint.”

How will the average person access Committee, Network material?

There are currently two entry points for members of the Committee: Epicom and episcopalchurch.org. Williams pointed out that the average person is looking for a portal to such material as we might produce; this needs to be easy to navigate and use as a jumping-off point to find other resources. It can be a “bucket” to collect and store information, but it need not be boring. Currently, the Communications Office three information lines: news line- primarily for journalists, infoline/infodesk for the general public, and tech line- mainly to provide technical assistance on communications products owned/used/maintained by 815.

Schori introduced two models for the way the internet is used: the “library”, mainly a repository of information; and the “town square” a means of interaction with other users via bulleting boards, blogs etc. He stated that EMC has the facility for setting up a moderated “town square” format, where posts could be vetted prior to becoming public. He suggested that “pushing the envelope” on this model could become part of the Committee’s mission.

Lindell and Borgeson opined that it is currently difficult to find or collect Episcopal-related material from the internet: for example, is there any web presence of the Episcopal Ecological Network? Webb pointed out that the Church Archives (episcopalarchives.org) should contain any official material, but the consensus was that it is difficult to collect information from “non-815” resources.

Jordan pointed out that “websites tend to accrete stuff” and tend to be open-ended- in this sense , a website can be a useful collection tool. However, two separate systems are needed- one to collect and the other to present information. Borgeson suggested that a blog containing lots of links is a useful format for this; this can be linked to a portal and vice-versa. Michael reminded the group that the previously-established guidelines for posting material to the website were that all material would be reviewed. After discussion it was clarified that the prior decision was that any two members of the Committee could approve material for posting on the Network site. Michael also pointed out that the Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology, and Faith had previously discussed having a web presence that would act as a central portal.

How can we use a website to get more people interested in ST&F issues?

So began a discussion of how use the website to pique interest in ST&F issues. It was suggested that we try to increase visibility by having beliefnet (www.beliefnet.com) review our site- this would be an easy way to generate more traffic. It would be important to create a safe place for searchers. Material such as sermons could be on this website as well as other more technical literature. Bailey opined that it was important to “stock the shelves before the store was opened”, i.e. make sure there was a decent collection of material before we establish a new web presence. Jordan stated that, in addition to having a long term vision, we needed to have an understanding of how this will work in the immediate future. He reminded the group of the KISS rule (Keep it simple, stupid) when developing any new endeavor, especially something that is intended for use with the general public. The Committee currently has a website for external use (by the general public), which can be used as a jumping off place for other resources on the net, and one for internal use, the CCAB site. We need to know how to make best use of the current resources. For the moment, Bailey and Schori will continue investigating our options, including interaction with EMC, and will report back to next meeting.

Actions to be taken

Shepard suggested that Epicom be used to as the forum for developing the Committee’s work product, and that the decision regarding how to proceed should be made “today”. Bailey suggested collecting email addresses from the group again since some of the addresses collected at Chicago are no longer functional. Webb circulated a list, promising to check against his current list to be certain that he had the most up-to-date and correct list possible. Webb will then email all members, and will re-send usernames and passwords for access to Epicom. In response to a question from Michael regarding how best to integrate members of the network into the work of the Committee, it was decided that Jordan (Chair) and Michael (Network Convenor) would send out an appeal to the network membership for members with appropriate expertise to assist in fulfilling the tasks decided upon in Chicago.

CONDUCT OF COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Two items of general business:

Designation of 0.7% of Committee Budget for Donation to Episcopal Relief and Development for Millennium Development Goal-related Project.

At the Chicago CCAB meeting, all groups were asked by the Presiding Bishop to contribute 0.7% of the group’s budget to a Millennium Development Goal (MDG)-related project through Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD). This would amount to approximately \$84 of our budget.

MOVED S. Michael

SECONDED A. So

That the committee contribute 0.7 % of our triennial budget to ERD for a project related to potable water.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

NOTES. The MDG's were developed by the United Nations Millennium Development Conference, 2000, and since adopted by TEC and ELCA, among other churches. Potable water is mentioned in Goal 7, related to environmental sustainability. The 0.7% calculation is derived from the estimate that a donation of only 0.7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of developed countries would be required to reduce world poverty by 50% by 2020. In real terms, this would be equivalent of a donation of 0.2 % of annual per-capita income in the United States. (information provided by Williams and Bailey)

So pointed out that our contribution is minuscule in dollar terms, but the Committee can act symbolically by modeling responsible and transformative behavior.

Reimbursement of Member Expenses

Expense forms can be obtained from the Church website (www.episcopalchurch.org/finance).

This is a new form since last time. All expense forms will be processed through the General Convention Meetings Office. The DFMS requires that all members submit expense forms, even if travel has been paid by DFMS. Reimbursement requests should be accompanied by a receipt for any air travel; this can be either an airline receipt or the receipt mailed by MTS travel. Webb instructed us to leave the accommodation column blank at this point unless a member is billed (a receipt must be provided). The amount of any airfare paid by the DFMS must be entered twice: once where the airfare total is requested, and a second time where the portion already paid by DFMS must be entered. Instructions for completing the form are to be found on the website. Prompt submission of expense requests are essential for budgetary purposes.

Ecumenical Roundtable presence at AAAS meeting, 2008

Derek Pursey (PCUSA delegation) will ask for a donation towards mounting a presence at the AAAS meeting in Boston. The Committee has previously contributed \$250, with the Network contributing a further \$500. Webb opined that while budgets might have been used flexibly in the past, our budget this triennium was specifically for meetings of the Committee and could not be applied to other purposes. Williams suggested that there was the possibility that this might be considered an acceptable use of our funds, but Williams and Webb will follow up with the appropriate authorities at 815.

In response to questions regarding how the Ecumenical Roundtable AAAS presence has been mounted in the past, Michael discussed her prior involvement. She has staffed the table, along with members of the UCC and Presbyterian delegations, AAAS Dialogue on Science and Religion (DoSER), and others. In the past, when a member of the Presbyterian delegation was a staff member of DoSER, he arranged cost sharing among a number of organizations. More recently, the cost of an exhibition table has been shared with the Counterbalance Foundation. The cost to the Ecumenical Roundtable is expected to be approximately \$2500. Michael has previously taken an Episcopal windsock to attract attention, along with fliers, advertising material, and copies of the Catechism of Creation. The table has been a useful way to connect with Episcopalians attending the meeting, some of whom subsequently have become members of the Network. AAAS is the largest interdisciplinary meeting of scientists in the USA.

Final Miscellanea

Schori requested clarification on our deliberations regarding the use of the various internet resources discussed earlier in the day. The consensus was that we would use Epicom for business in the immediate future, with potential longer term use of resources available through EMC and alternatives to the RedDot website to be further followed up by Schori, Bailey, and Williams. Further clarification as to whether our monies could be spent on anything other than our regular meetings would be sought from Gregory Straub, the Director of the Meetings Office of General Convention.

Rodman reminded us that the new administration in the Church has a very high standard for fiduciary responsibility and transparency.

The Network Board met Friday Afternoon.

The Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology and the Church met Friday evening through Sunday morning.

Josephine Borgeson (Deacon)
Secretary