

PROPOSER

Executive Council Committee on Science, Technology and Faith

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N/AHOUSE OF INITIAL ACTION / LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

HD / Education

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REVIEW STATUS (PB&F, CONSTITUTION, CANONS)

None required

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 77th General Convention
2 affirms that there is no inherent contradiction between holding and practicing the
3 Christian faith and practicing or utilizing the outcomes of science and medicine;
4 and be it further
5 *Resolved*, That this Convention affirms that certain characteristics of faith, most
6 explicitly the tenet that reason and tradition are essential to extending our
7 understanding of God’s Creation, are mirrored in science; and be it further
8 *Resolved*, That in God’s physical universe, the proper practice of science cannot
9 and does not automatically lead its practitioners or others to lose faith in God, or
10 to be led into beliefs that contradict the existence of God; and be it further
11 *Resolved*, That the methods of science, when applied to a search for truth,
12 contribute to our understanding of God’s Creation such that we should use
13 scientific information, after diligence as to its acceptance among scientific peers
14 in relevant disciplines, to inform and augment our understanding of God’s
15 Creation, and to aid the Church in developing Christian programs and policies
16 consistent with our faith and our understanding of God’s Creation and our
17 stewardship of it; and be it further
18 *Resolved*, That this Convention encourages the dioceses and the parishes of The
19 Episcopal Church to establish Christian education programs pertinent to this
20 complementary relationship between science and faith, using resources such
21 as those compiled by the Executive Council Committee on Science, Technology
22 and Faith.

EXPLANATION

In recent years, a number of clergy and Christian educators have been seeking guidance on the relationship between science and faith in the Episcopal Church. This resolution clearly spells out the Episcopal Church believes that there is no contradiction between being a person of faith and a person of science. The passing of this resolution will become a useful tool for Christian education and formation programs in the Episcopal Church

In matters of faith, Episcopalians appeal to Scripture, Tradition, and Reason, sometimes called the “three-legged stool” of Anglicanism. This is parallel to the basic process of scientific tradition (See Kuhn 1962; LaTour

1988; and Callon 2004). In science, reason is the careful and thorough use of theory and data collection to offer up the best possible explanation for corporeal and related phenomena in God's Creation. The traditions of science are incorporated into its body through training at colleges, universities, research institutions and laboratories through the use of techniques, practices and beliefs consistent with those methods that have produced the best science in the past. Although there is no "scripture" in science, we may observe that the "text" of science is the phenomena to which it applies itself to understand, that part of the universe which exists in physical form as an extant body of God's glory.

The scientist makes his or her explanation of the universe in much the same way as St. Paul does when he asserts that "we see through a glass darkly". Science is an on-going process of observations of the natural world, formation of hypotheses, and testing of hypotheses through empirical evidence to form theories. Similarly, in Christian doctrinal development, our doctrines must be able to stand the test of time and the information we obtain through appeal to Scripture, Tradition and Reason. Sound Christian doctrines must be able to demonstrate "chronic vigor" (John Henry Newman, *Essays on the Development of Christian Doctrines*).

Both faith in God's creation and a scientifically based understanding of the cosmos are needed for the Church to discern and develop doctrines, liturgy and advice surrounding creation and science. Therefore, we encourage the study of the Catechism of Creation to enrich our Church in this aspect of our faith development.