

The United Churches' Ministry for Theology, The Natural Sciences, and The Continuing Creation

I. PURPOSES

A. To help the congregation recognize that God's revelations to human beings did not cease with Revelation 22:21; God's Book of Nature continues being authored by Him/Herself, as aided by God's co-partners through whom God has revealed (or enabled them to discover) much truth about the Continuing Creation and about the Creator.

B. To assist the congregation and the larger community in understanding findings from science relevant to Judeo-Christian traditions, beliefs, and practices. The Truth of Nature is consistent with the Truth of Scripture; only the latter must be accepted on faith, while the former is testable and provable. But "Both Truths are the Lord's," as Augustine wrote.

C. To help the Church identify and keep abreast of important areas in which theology, the natural sciences, and technological advances impact, or should impact, the Church's mission and the lives of its participants.

D. To be the rudder as the pastor(s) navigate among the plethora of interconnected science, technology, and theology challenges.

E. To help the *"Church leaders better prepare to help people deal with challenges posed by theology, the natural sciences, and technology."* (Adapted from Cole-Turner 1992, p. 8).

F. To help the congregation recognize that "we are fearfully and wonderfully *evolved*" (adapted from Psalms 139:14) to acknowledge, obey, love, and praise God and to participate responsibly in God's Continuing Creation.

II. PROGRAM AREAS AND FUNCTIONS

A. The Ministry will under gird the Wellspring Covenant with science and Judeo-Christian theology, ... "being doers of the word and not hearers only" ... (James 1:22).

B. The Ministry will avail both youth and adults with knowledge of:

(i) who we are as Children of God

(ii) the two separate biological and spiritual creations

(iii) our obligations to help God effect the Continuing Creation

C. The Ministry will cooperate with the Christian Education Ministry in sponsoring / leading an occasional adult class, and work with the Youth Ministry to teach (I.B., above) at the children or youth levels.

D. the Ministry will cooperate with the Stephen's Ministers and Caring Friends to help them become more adequately prepared to help people deal with challenges posed by theology, the natural sciences, and technology. (Purpose I.E., above).

E. The Ministry will urge that the Worship Ministry adopt a goal of having one sermon / quarter incorporating the Book of Scripture and the Book of Nature and stress the contribution of the latter to religion (Purpose I.E., above).

F. The Ministry will support the Congregational Life and Mission, Peace, and Justice (MPJ) Ministries in making this new Ministry known to the larger, more scientific / technical community, in part by having individuals as advisers, teachers, etc. In particular, the Ministry will assist MPJ's exploring relevant societal implications of science and technological developments.

G. An array of Ministry members and other volunteers will track changes in their respective disciplines and professions that may impact areas identified in I.C., above, and flag them for attention by the appropriate Ministries.

H. The Ministry will cooperate with the Arts Task Force to help it incorporate / integrate science and technology into arts projects.

I. The Ministry will help the congregation use scientific knowledge to illuminate the pre-science scriptures. Among other things, the congregation will be challenged to consider and compare the probable relative accuracy of the oral tradition of transmitting history, the written method that requires sequential translation among evolving languages, and the biologically derived unbroken genetic record from the beginning of life to the present.