

1 Resolution to Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery (Final Version)

2
3 <Amended text as it would appear if adopted. Scroll below the line of asterisks (*****) to
4 see the version showing all deleted and added text.>

5
6 *Resolved*, that the 135th Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon affirms the
7 General Convention Resolution [2009-D035](#) in repudiating and renouncing the Doctrine of
8 Discovery as fundamentally opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our understanding of the
9 inherent rights that individuals and peoples have received from God; and be it further

10
11 *Resolved*, that the 135th Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon repudiates
12 the Doctrine of Discovery as fundamentally opposed to the concept of each person bearing the
13 image of God, the human dignity given to every person by God, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
14 and be it further

15
16 *Resolved*, that we, as members of the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon, research, name and
17 confess our historical and present participation in and benefit from the displacement of
18 Indigenous peoples throughout Western Oregon through the suppression and attempted
19 erasure of indigenous culture, language, and traditions. We lament the devastating results of
20 trauma from the colonial and settler mentality that still affects and oppresses Indigenous
21 people today; and be further resolved,

22
23 *Resolved*, that we continue to dedicate ourselves to the work of reparation, reconciliation, and
24 healing through the support of Indigenous cultural revitalization, tribal sovereignty, land and
25 habitat restoration, and antiracism and racial reconciliation training and formation in our
26 Diocese; and be it further

27
28 *Resolved*, that as part of our commitment to and intentional relationships with the Indigenous
29 Peoples of Oregon, the 135th Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon urges
30 all congregations and Diocesan institutions to research and collaborates with Indigenous
31 peoples displaced in their area to develop [Land Acknowledgment](#) liturgies and prayers to
32 incorporate into any public meetings or worship.

33
34 *****)

35 <Proposed amended resolution text showing exact changes being made:>

36
37 *Resolved*, that the 135th Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon affirms the
38 General Convention Resolution [2009-D035](#) in repudiating and renouncing the Doctrine of
39 Discovery as fundamentally opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our understanding of the
40 inherent rights that individuals and peoples have received from God. ~~This doctrine, which~~
41 ~~originated with 1452 papal bull *Dum Diversas*, issued by Pope Nicolas to King Alfonso V of~~
42 ~~Portugal and was later embraced by King Henry VII in 1496, held that Christian sovereigns and~~
43 ~~their representative explorers could assert dominion and title over non-Christian lands with the~~

44 ~~full blessing and sanction of the Church. It continues to be invoked, in only slightly modified~~
45 ~~form, in court cases and in the many destructive policies of governments and other institutions~~
46 ~~of the modern nation state that lead to the colonizing dispossession of the lands of Indigenous~~
47 ~~peoples and the disruption of their way of life. This doctrine, which originated with 1452 papal~~
48 ~~bull *Dum Diversas*, issued by Pope Nicolas to King Alfonso V of Portugal and was later embraced~~
49 ~~by King Henry VII in 1496, held that Christian sovereigns and their representative explorers~~
50 ~~could assert dominion and title over non-Christian lands with the full blessing and sanction of~~
51 ~~the Church. It continues to be invoked, in only slightly modified form, in court cases and in the~~
52 ~~many destructive policies of governments and other institutions of the modern nation state~~
53 ~~that lead to the colonizing dispossession of the lands of Indigenous peoples and the disruption~~
54 ~~of their way of life;~~ and be it further

55
56 *Resolved*, that the 135th Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon repudiates
57 the Doctrine of Discovery as fundamentally opposed to the concept of each person bearing the
58 image of God, ~~the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and~~ the human dignity given to every person by God,
59 and the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it further

60
61 *Resolved*, that we, as members of the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon, research, name and
62 confess our historical and present participation in and benefit from the displacement of
63 Indigenous peoples throughout Western Oregon ~~and through~~ the suppression and attempted
64 erasure of indigenous culture, language, and traditions. We lament and subsequent the
65 devastating results of trauma from the colonial and settler mentality that still affects and
66 oppress Indigenous people today. ~~We lament the devastating results of colonial and settler~~
67 ~~mentality that continue to oppress Indigenous peoples~~; and be further resolved,

68
69 *Resolved*, that we continue to dedicate ourselves to the work of reparation, reconciliation, and
70 healing through the support of Indigenous cultural revitalization, tribal sovereignty, land and
71 habitat restoration, and antiracism and racial reconciliation ~~dismantling racism~~ training and
72 formation in our Diocese. ~~We commit to listen and watch for new permutations of racist~~
73 ~~ideologies~~; and be it further

74
75 *Resolved*, that as part of our commitment to and intentional relationships with the Indigenous
76 Peoples of Oregon, the 135th Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon
77 ~~affirms General Convention Resolution 2022-C072 in~~ urges all congregations and Diocesan
78 institutions to research and collaborates with Indigenous peoples displaced in their area to
79 develop implement Land Acknowledgment liturgies and prayers to begin incorporate into any
80 public meetings or worship, ~~and to utilize the resource offered by the Indigenous Ministries of~~
81 ~~The Episcopal Church that outlines the followings to be reflected in the Land Acknowledgment:~~

82 **Submitted by:**

83 Sydney Fitzpatrick, Christ Church, Lake Oswego

84
85 **Endorsed by:**

86 **Truth and Reconciliation Working Group:**

87 Concetta Buckner, St. Luke's, Grant's Pass
88 Miki Charlton, St. John the Baptist, Portland
89 Bernadine Clay, St. Philip the Deacon, Portland
90 Bob Craft, Trinity Cathedral, Portland
91 Pamela Filbert, St. Timothy, Salem
92 The Rev. Ernestein Flemister, Missioner for Racial Reconciliation
93 Alan Murray, Trinity Cathedral, Portland
94 Meredith Pech, Trinity, Ashland
95

96 **Explanation:**

97
98 As people who freely live and work on the lands of Western Oregon, whose original inhabitants
99 were deprived of those all-encompassing benefits nearly 200 years ago, we, as Episcopalians,
100 are compelled to respond. We are mindful of many different Christian denominational
101 responses to the Doctrine of Discovery and subsequent edicts resulting from its adoption and
102 must now look at the work we have begun to do and expand our vision.
103

104 We are called by the wider Episcopal Church to work for the full inclusion of Indigenous people
105 in the life, work, and leadership of the Church and we must acknowledge and work to repair the
106 long-term damage done to our Indigenous siblings. The violence and damage through the
107 centuries were sanctioned by the Christian Doctrine of Discovery and the institutions fostered
108 by its adoption.¹
109

110 The Doctrine of Discovery is defined as "the idea that Christians enjoy the moral and legal right
111 based solely on their religious identity to invade and seize Indigenous lands and to dominate
112 Indigenous peoples."² We are most recently reacquainted with the atrocities practiced in the
113 boarding schools (hereafter referred to as assimilation camps) against the most vulnerable and
114 innocent populations of young children.³ We therefore propose a resolution to repudiate the
115 Doctrine of Discovery. In this resolution, we propose to educate ourselves, our churches, and
116 our communities and provide leadership in efforts of reconciliation.⁴ We hereby begin the
117 process of, as a Diocese of Acknowledgment and apology for our complicity in the cultural
118 genocide of Indigenous peoples.⁵
119

120 1. "Statement on the Doctrine of Discovery and Its Enduring Impact on Indigenous Peoples."
121 <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/statement-on-the-doctrine-ofdiscovery>
122

123 2. "Cultural genocide" and Native American children. Equal Justice Initiative. (2019, November
124 11). <https://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-cultural-genocide/>.
125

126 3. Ferguson, Tom. "We Are Pontius Pilate: Council of Churches, February 17,
127 2012. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/statement-on-the-doctrine-ofdiscovery>
128

129 4. "Cultural genocide" and Native American children. Equal Justice Initiative. (2019, November
130 11). <https://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-cultural-genocide/>.