

Proposed by:

The Reverend Deacon Steven DeHart, The Reverend Deacon Dorcie Dvarishkis, and Sharman Brown, Candidate for Holy Orders – Deacon, of The Diocese of Montana

Title:

Implementation of General Convention Resolution A024

Resolved:

The Diocese of Montana implement 2015 General Convention Resolution A024, “Direct Dioceses to Examine the Impact of the Doctrine of Discovery” with the final language reading: *The House of Bishops concurring that the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, in accordance with our Baptismal Covenant and in the spirit of being inclusive, reaffirm and renew the directive to all dioceses, made by the 76th and 77th General Conventions, to examine the impact, including acts of racial discrimination, racial profiling, and other race-based acts of oppression, that the repudiated Doctrine of Discovery, as well as the related Doctrine of Manifest Destiny has had on all people, especially on people of color and indigenous peoples.*

Explanation:

When this was proposed to the 2015 General Convention, the resolution included the following explanation: *The Executive Council Committee on Anti-Racism calls for a renewed effort by dioceses to do this work of self-examination on the impact of the Doctrine of Discovery. Not all dioceses have engaged this work, and the need for learning, growing in faith, and repenting through the process of self-examination is as important today as when General Convention repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery in 2009 at the 76th General Convention. The Episcopal Church Native American/Indigenous leaders have taken this work to other groups, including to other churches and the United Nations, and it is important that the Church's dioceses also engage this work faithfully.*

The Doctrine of Discovery is a doctrine that was promulgated by European monarchies in order to legitimize the colonization of lands outside of Europe. Between the mid-fifteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, this idea allowed European entities to seize land inhabited by indigenous peoples under the guise of discovery. In 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas declared that only non-Christian lands could be colonized under the Doctrine of Discovery. In 1792, U.S. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson declared that the Doctrine of Discovery would extend from Europe to the infant U.S.

Government. The Doctrine and its legacy continue to influence American imperialism and treatment of conquered indigenous peoples.

Manifest Destiny is a policy of imperialistic expansion defended as necessary or benevolent. This 19th century doctrine held that the United States had the right and duty to expand throughout the North American Continent.

As Deacons and a Diaconal Candidate for Holy Orders, we believe Christians have a particular moral responsibility to the welfare of our indigenous brothers and sisters in Montana. We further believe there is at present a pressing need to embrace a better understanding of the historical and lingering impact of the explicit and implicit discrimination policies practiced in the name of the Doctrine of Discovery. To that end, we believe that within this Diocese the people of our individual parishes should be encouraged to actively engage in purposeful educational forums to bring said resolution implementation to fruition and thus place The Diocese of Montana in accord with the 2015 General Convention Resolution A024.

Fiscal Note:

There is no related expense to The Diocese of Montana regarding the implementation of this resolution.