

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018  
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

**RESOLUTION NO.:** 2018-D011  
**TITLE:** Doctrine of Discovery Training  
**PROPOSER:** The Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton  
**TOPIC:** Ordained Ministry

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**Directly Related:** (Attached)

2015-A024 Direct Dioceses to Examine the Impact of the Doctrine of Discovery  
2012-A128 Examine Impact of Doctrine of Discovery  
2012-A131 Express Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples  
2009-D035 Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery

**Indirectly Related:** (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

None

*In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.*

# D011 Doctrine of Discovery Training

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<b>Proposer</b>	The Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Steele, Ms. Minnie; Sells, The Rev. Michael
<b>Sponsored by</b>	
<b>Page numbers</b>	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
<b>HiA / Leg. Cttee</b>	HB / 15 - Ministry
<b>Current Status</b>	Resolution Filed
<b>Version</b>	Original (as filed)
<b>Review Status</b>	Not yet reviewed

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## RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, in accordance with the directive to all dioceses made by the 76th, 77th and 78th General Conventions, most recently with resolution 2015-A024, advance the education of all those seeking ordination in the Church by recommending a minimum of four hours of training on the Doctrine of Discovery, and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That the 79th General Convention direct the Indigenous Missioner of the Presiding Bishop's Office to identify and appoint indigenous representatives to provide training on the Doctrine of Discovery to those seeking ordination, such that the Office of the Indigenous Missioner provide direction to and oversight of the Doctrine of Discovery training program, and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That the 79th General Convention encourage seminaries and local clergy formation programs to allocate funds from their organizational budgets or pursue available grant funding for the provision of four hours of training on the Doctrine of Discovery for those seeking ordination.

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## EXPLANATION

Christian European monarchs and popes were historically responsible for legitimizing colonial genocide of diverse Indigenous peoples through a series of three Papal Bulls of Discovery: *Dum Diversas* (1452), *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) and *Inter Caetera* (1493). The bulls form the basis of a body of law known as The Doctrine of Discovery, which remains in force today. Additionally, the Doctrine of Discovery historically informed the legal premise for justifying the enslavement of African and Asian peoples. In 2009, the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church passed resolution D-O35, calling for the Episcopal Church to review its policies and programs with a view to exposing the historical reality and impact of the Doctrine of Discovery and eliminating its presence in contemporary policies, programs and structures.

Because the Doctrine of Discovery is a legacy of Christian missionization and colonialism, leadership in The Episcopal Church bears particular responsibility to know the historical role and impact of the Doctrine of Discovery. Additionally, the opportunity for direct engagement with Indigenous trainers promotes the Church's work of racial reconciliation in ways that strive to heal and transform injustice

and brokenness in ourselves, our communities, institutions and society. By providing Indigenous trainers for the education of all persons seeking ordination in the Church, Indigenous voices in the Church will be empowered to provide an educational experience which only they are truly qualified to present, informed as they are by their lived experience today and which cannot rightly be ascribed to the past. The Office of the Indigenous Missioner provides centralized leadership and has existing organizational resources to support this work.



**Resolution Number:** 2015-A024  
**Title:** Direct Dioceses to Examine the Impact of the Doctrine of Discovery  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

***Resolved, 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.***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 412.



**Resolution Number:** 2012-A128  
**Title:** Examine Impact of Doctrine of Discovery  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, in the spirit of our Baptismal Covenant and in being inclusive, direct all dioceses to examine the impact the Doctrine of Discovery, as repudiated at the 76th General Convention, has had on all people, especially on persons of color, including racial discrimination, racial profiling and other acts of oppression; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church, the National Episcopal Historians and Archivists, and the Episcopal Women's History Project, in consultation with the Standing Commission on Lifelong Christian Formation as well as diocesan historiographers and archivists, be requested to assist dioceses in documenting and explaining the effects of the Doctrine of Discovery, especially in the life of the church; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the President of the House of Deputies, be asked to seek volunteer dioceses to develop appropriate written guidance about how a diocese may effectively document and explain the church's historical role, negative and positive, in connection with the treatment of people of color, including African Americans and Native American people, as a result of the now-repudiated Doctrine of Discovery.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 183-184.



**Resolution Number:** 2012-A131  
**Title:** Express Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention expresses its solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples of the world and supports the rights of Indigenous Peoples to live in and retain their traditional lands and territories, to maintain their languages and enrich their cultures, and to ensure that their traditions are strengthened and passed on for generations to come; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention ask the Presiding Bishop and other representatives of The Episcopal Church to make protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples a priority in joint work with other Provinces of the Anglican Communion, in ecumenical work with other Christian denominations, and in interfaith work with other faith communities; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention reaffirm the 76th General Convention's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, a misguided, unfair, and harmful legal doctrine which the Church helped promote in earlier centuries, a legal doctrine which has been used in English, Continental, and American law to justify the unfair treatment and exploitation of Indigenous Peoples; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention urges the United States government and governments in other countries in which the Episcopal Church has dioceses to review their laws and policies, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, and to identify and correct those which treat Indigenous Peoples unfairly or which, although neutral in content, result in invidious discrimination against Indigenous Peoples; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention direct the Office of Government Relations, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, to make protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples a high priority in its advocacy about United States foreign policy, including advocacy about trade agreements, human rights advocacy, and international environmental protection; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and corporate offices of The Episcopal Church, with the aid of resources such as "Exposing the Doctrine of Discovery," to reflect upon their history and to encourage them to support Indigenous Peoples in their ongoing efforts to exercise their inherent sovereignty and fundamental human rights, to continue to raise awareness about the issues facing Indigenous Peoples, and to develop advocacy campaigns to support the rights, aspirations, and needs of Indigenous Peoples; and be it further*

*Resolved, That in consultation with Indigenous Peoples within their dioceses or Provinces that congregations and dioceses be urged to take tangible steps to help Indigenous Peoples, including:*

- **Action to preserve Indigenous Peoples' language, history and culture, such as by supporting appropriate linguistic, historic, Bible (and authorized liturgical resources) translation work for language groups into which the Bible and authorized liturgical resources have not yet been fully translated,**

- **Action to obtain fairer and better treatment of Indigenous Peoples, such as seeking the repeal of unfair laws and policies,**
- **Formation of partnerships with congregations whose members consist primarily of Indigenous Peoples; and be it further**

*Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and corporate offices of The Episcopal Church to support continued use and development of theological reflections by Indigenous Peoples, with guidance from the Office of Indigenous Ministries, Indigenous Theological Training Institute, local Schools for Ministry and seminaries, which promote Indigenous visions of full, good, and abundant life and which strengthen their own spiritual and theological reflections.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 149-150.



**Resolution Number:** 2009-D035  
**Title:** Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Substituted  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 76th General Convention repudiates and renounces the Doctrine of Discovery as fundamentally opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our understanding of the inherent rights that individuals and peoples have received from God, and that this declaration be proclaimed among our churches and shared with the United Nations and all the nations and peoples located within The Episcopal Church's boundaries. This doctrine, which originated with Henry VII in 1496, held that Christian sovereigns and their representative explorers could assert dominion and title over non-Christian lands with the full blessing and sanction of the Church. It continues to be invoked, in only slightly modified form, in court cases and in the many destructive policies of governments and other institutions of the modern nation-state that lead to the colonizing dispossession of the lands of indigenous peoples and the disruption of their way of life; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church review its policies and programs with a view to exposing the historical reality and impact of the Doctrine of Discovery and eliminating its presence in its contemporary policies, program and structures and, further, that this body directs the appropriate representatives of the House of Bishops and House of Deputies, to inform all relevant governmental bodies in the United States of its action and suggest similar and equivalent review of historical and contemporary policies that contribute to the continuing colonization of Indigenous Peoples and, further, to write to Queen Elizabeth II, the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, requesting that her Majesty disavow, and repudiate publicly, the claimed validity of the Christian Doctrine of Discovery; and be it further*

*Resolved, That each diocese within The Episcopal Church be encouraged to reflect upon its own history, in light of these actions and encourage all Episcopalians to seek a greater understanding of the Indigenous Peoples within the geo-political boundaries claimed by the United States and other nation states located within The Episcopal Church's boundaries, and to support those peoples in their ongoing efforts for their inherent sovereignty and fundamental human rights as peoples to be respected; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 76th General Convention direct the Office of Government Relations to advocate for the U.S. government's endorsement of the "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," which the United States has refused to endorse (only the U.S., Canada, New Zealand and Australia have failed to sign on).*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), pp. 371-372.