

# RESOLUTION FORM

Resolution Number B001

**Subject: Blessing couples in covenanted same-sex unions**

**Moved By:** Mr. Stephen Schuh from the Diocese of New Westminster

**Seconded By:** The Rt. Rev'd Michael Ingham from the Diocese of New Westminster

Note: The mover and the seconder must be members of the General Synod and be present in the House when the resolution is before the synod for debate.

## **BE IT RESOLVED:**

Notwithstanding any decisions taken by this its 2007 Synod, the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada affirms that the present practice of the Synod and Bishop of the Diocese of New Westminster in authorizing the blessings of covenanted same-sex unions in eight (8) Parishes of that Diocese shall continue in the Diocese of New Westminster pending further resolution by General Synod

## **Explanatory Notes (or: background context of this motion):**

The Diocese of New Westminster's engagement with issues of human sexuality, extending over many years and numerous Diocesan Synods, has resulted in a rite for blessing couples in covenanted same-sex unions.

This process has involved:

- Votes at three Diocesan Synods (1998, 2001, 2002), each with an increasing majority in favour; with the Bishop withholding his assent until 2002;
  - The affirmative conclusion of a national legal consultation into the authority of a diocesan bishop to authorize a rite of blessing of covenanted same-sex unions;
  - A three-year program (1998-2001) of extensive, diocese-wide parish dialogues to explore theological issues surrounding human sexuality and to hear the stories of gay, lesbian and ex-gay Anglicans, and to consider a proposed rite of blessing;
  - The careful development of a rite for blessing couples in covenanted same-sex unions;
  - The provision that no individual, clergy or lay, must participate in any such rites;
  - The development of a process and protocol for parishes to seek the Bishop's authorization to conduct such blessings;
  - The provision of an episcopal visitor for parishes and individuals opposed to the blessing of same-sex unions.
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The provision of this rite has enabled gay and lesbian people to feel safe, respected, and included in the full life of the church and that the sudden withdrawal of this rite would seriously undermine the progress that has been made.

In view of the deliberative process leading to a rite of blessing couples in covenanted same-sex unions in the Diocese of New Westminster, and the potentially damaging effects if this rite is abruptly withdrawn, and given affirmation ¶12 of the *St. Michael Report* that “history ... demonstrates that clarity emerges when thought and action occur simultaneously,” the Diocese of New Westminster needs to provide ongoing pastoral care and continuity for its people and parishes within its existing practice.

Source: Diocese of New Westminster  
(name of committee, diocese, etc.)

Submitted by: Diocese of New Westminster

A) Does this motion contain within it any financial implications?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

B) If yes, has the General Synod Expenditures Committee considered the implications?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

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