

Resolution Number

Subject: “A Covenant of Protection”: Proposed Human Rights Principles

Moved by: the Rt. Rev. Barry Jenks from the Diocese of British Columbia  
Seconded by: the Hon. Ron Stevenson from the Diocese of Fredericton

BE IT RESOLVED:

#### THEOLOGICAL PREAMBLE

Since 1949, General Synod has been urging Canadian and foreign governments to conform their policies to principles of Universal Human Rights. This position of the church is deeply rooted in Scripture.

In the first chapter of Genesis we read that all human beings have been made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). We conclude from this that all human beings, regardless of their background, identity, status, ability, accomplishment or belief have a fundamental dignity which comes from God. All members of the Anglican Church affirm this position when, in the words of our baptismal covenant we promise to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.”

As Christians, we also acknowledge with St. Paul that we have done those things we ought not to have done and we have not done those things we ought to have done. We are sinners and we need to build into the structures of our common life the same standards of right behaviour and safeguards against discrimination that we demand of others. We do this in the knowledge that the real test of our support for human rights is how we treat the minorities in our midst - the poor, the stranger, the outcast and the foreigner (Matthew 25:40).

In the summary of the Law recorded in the Gospel of Mark, we are told by Jesus that we must love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength, and love our neighbours as ourselves (Mark 12:29-31). From this we understand that Christians are a covenant community called by God to join others in protecting the rights of all persons in society and in the church. One of the ways we can do this is by ensuring that our own processes of participation and deliberation are fair and transparent.

Accordingly, we propose:

that the Anglican Church of Canada enter into a Covenant of Protection with its members, with its employees, and with those who seek the services of the church, in order to protect those most vulnerable. We call this Covenant, “Human Rights Principles.”

#### 1. The right to be treated with courtesy, compassion and integrity

All persons who seek the services of the church, including sacraments, counsel and pastoral care, shall be treated with courtesy, compassion and integrity by the church and its representatives or officials, without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic (or place of) origin, ancestry, disability, creed or socio-economic status.

#### 2. The right to fair treatment

a) All persons receiving educational, medical or financial assistance from the church shall be treated fairly and without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic (or place of) origin, ancestry, disability, creed or socio-economic status.

b) All persons occupying church property or being accommodated in institutions provided by or

governed by the church shall be treated fairly within the stated purposes of these institutions and without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation , family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic (or place of) origin, ancestry, disability, creed or socio-economic status.

3. The right to vote

All baptized persons who qualify, in accordance with the relevant canons and constitutions, shall be eligible to vote at General Meetings of their Parish and Synod without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic (or place of) origin, ancestry, disability, or socio-economic status.

4. The right to be considered for election

All baptized persons who qualify, in accordance with the relevant canons and constitutions, are eligible to hold elected positions in the church without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic (or place of) origin, ancestry, disability, or socio-economic status.

5. The right to be considered for service

All baptized persons who qualify, in accordance with the relevant canons, constitutions and guidelines, shall be eligible to have their vocations tested and to be considered for service in the life and on the committees of the church without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic (or place of) origin, ancestry, disability, or socio-economic status.

6. The rights of employees

All persons employed by the church in positions not requiring ordination shall be employed on the basis of ability, skills and experience appropriate to the position without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic (or place of) origin, ancestry, disability, or socio-economic status.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A resolution proposing Human Rights Principles for the Anglican Church of Canada was presented to General Synod 1995. These principles were not approved. The EcoJustice Committee was asked by Synod to review the principles in light of the debate and make recommendations to the next General Synod. After consultation with a variety of groups and individuals, we acknowledge that this Covenant does not resolve all outstanding issues. However, we believe that with the above changes, the Covenant reflects the position of the church at this time.

The Committee has substantially revised the Preamble in order to clarify the theological foundation of the church's support for Human Rights. We have dropped the section requiring a grievance procedure. We have re-ordered the principles for purposes of clarity. The Committee acknowledges that the church has not yet come to a common mind about the human rights of persons ordained by the church and so has limited the employment provision to those jobs not requiring ordination.

This Covenant does not supercede the canons and constitutions of the church but is an attempt to articulate some of the principles which guide our common life.

Source: EcoJustice Committee  
Submitted by: the Rev. Margaret Marquardt, chair