

Research Proposal: A Primer on the Polities of the Anglican Communion **DRAFT**

Proposed by: The Rev. Mary Kate Schroeder

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Purpose: To provide a short published reference handbook or primer, accessible to a wide range of readers, that describes the institutional organization of the 38 Provinces of the Anglican Communion. The descriptions would include: the primary governing body and how it works and how decisions are made that affect dioceses and the whole province; the role of laity and clergy in that governing body including representation, the number of houses, and different means of voting; how bishops are selected (including the primate or presiding bishop), structures for carrying out governance of the primary governing body between meetings (e.g., The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church and corresponding entities in other Provinces); the status of constitutions and canons, including their application to the laity; relationship to secular law in the Province. Other categories of description to be refined as research commences.

Grounds for Research:

How often do we speak of other Provinces, without understanding how decisions are made, who has voice and vote, how that voice and vote are invited and effected, and the functioning of governance? As the Anglican Communion has been and is being transformed by globalism, this information is essential to share for our unity and understanding. No short reference of this type currently exists, and it would be helpful to many in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion to have this information available in an accessible manner. Deeper understanding between leaders and the faithful--clergy and laity--in the provinces of the Anglican Communion can come only when we understand the world and context in which others live.

Although polity seems to occupy a realm of life far from the every-day believer, the structures of institutional governance and organization matter to Anglicans.

Extant Research:

The volume **Canon Law in the Anglican Communion** by Norman Doe (Oxford University Press 1998) provides a comprehensive survey of the Canon Law of the Anglican Communion. It is in some cases too general and in others too specific to be accessible to non-academic readers. Little other comprehensive research or compilation of the applicable canons exists.

Research Necessary:

Direct contact with persons in the Provinces that can provide Constitutions, Canons, and other documents will be the best way to obtain the necessary information, along with research using the above named work by Dr. Norman Doe. A possible research venue is direct contact and work with Dr. Doe. The primary work will be gathering current information and verifying that the same information is obtained for all Provinces. The secondary work will be summarizing and compiling research results into a usable format.

Qualifications of Researcher:

Researcher is a priest of the Episcopal Church with an abiding interest in the unity and broadening understanding of the Anglican Communion (CV attached). This work is not part of an academic degree, but will conform to academic standards for writing and citation.

Funding Necessary:

Unknown at this point. Funding needs depend on the need/ability to travel to obtain information or to network with others who have access to the necessary information.

Endorsements:

This project has been discussed with and is supported by the following persons:

The Rt. Rev. Robert J. O'Neill, Diocese of Colorado

The Rev. Dr. Gregory Straub, Secretary, The General Convention of The Episcopal Church

Dr. Gregory Robbins, Director of Anglican Studies, Iliff School of Theology, Denver

The Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner, Professor of Historical Theology, Wycliffe College, Toronto; Member of the Covenant Design Group for the Anglican Communion