

The Saint David Plan

Towards Geographic Dioceses for the Province of the
Anglican Church in North America

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2025



Introduction:

The goal of this document is to lay out *an* option for the stated goal of the Anglican Church in North America to move towards geographic dioceses. The creation of new missionary districts like the Great Plains District demonstrate what is already in motion towards this end. In addition to the obvious canonical issues presented by overlapping dioceses, there are purely practical reasons for desiring geographically bound dioceses which will presumably make the job of the bishop ordinary of that diocese more clear and exact. The clear barrier to exacting this in our Province is the undecided status of the validity of the ordination of women to holy orders. A variety of positions are tolerated in the denomination, and while the ordination of female bishops is not allowed in any diocese, some allow for the ordination of female presbyters, and others allow for the ordination only of female deacons, and some do not allow for the ordination of women to any holy orders, but do permit female lay deaconesses. This plan details a hypothetical total overhaul to bring total conformity throughout the Province in order to institute geographic dioceses. Is this because I believe that the plan detailed herein absolutely *will* come to total fruition exactly as it is? No. But I do think it *could* and *should*. Think of this as an exercise in visualization. Many have discussed what they do *not* think is possible in the ACNA, and not only do I think many are overly pessimistic, I think their skepticism is a dangerous first step in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Let us instead propose positive change for the sake of conformity. Conformity, not only within our Province, but of our Province with the catholic church of the ages.

Overview:

Step 1:

A moratorium on the ordination of women to the office of Presbyter in all dioceses.

Step 2:

Reorganization of all ACNA parishes into geographic dioceses.

Step 3:

Women who have been ordained to the presbyterate will be given three options, with two ultimate ends:

1. Licensure in a diocese which continues to permit their priestly ministry until they retire.
2. Diaconization or Lay Ministry - renunciation of their presbyteral orders in exchange for permission to continue operating in the non-priestly aspects of their ministry within dioceses that do not permit their priestly ministry.
3. Immediate retirement - the cessation of all active priestly and diaconal ministry in exchange for being paid into an annuity fund to aid their retirement.

All paths will eventually lead to the retirement of all female presbyters with the continuation of female deacons in dioceses which permit it.

Part I: The Moratorium

Very plainly, the existence of female clergy is at the heart of the internal division within our Province. It is also at the heart of our division with other church bodies, and even Anglican bodies in the so-called Continuum. Unity within will mean either complete acceptance or complete rejection. To fully embrace the practice as a Province, would inevitably cause a split with those dioceses and parishes which cannot abide it, which are the majority of dioceses (17 out of 28). It would also perpetuate the current state of disunity between the ACNA and other church bodies. However to instantly eject all present female clergy would not only be unwise logistically for the Province, but also totally unkind, inconsiderate, and cold to those who have been already received, trained up, and charged with ministry by due authorities in the Province. Instead, in an effort to heal, we must first close the wound, and stop the bleeding. If it is the will of the Province, and the counsel of the College of Bishops, they could, in unity of purpose, unanimously, and voluntarily cease in accepting female candidates for holy orders. This would not require any official act of the Provincial Assembly or revision of the Constitution and Canons.

Part II: Geographic Dioceses

Some priorities:

The Preservation of the Extant Bishops:

This project will take into account the actual size (in population and area) of the ACNA, and so the goal is to reorganize the existing 28 dioceses into 28 new geographic dioceses without creating new bishops. The right to do that will remain with the College of Bishops. Some prospective dioceses will contain future projections of how they could be further divided assuming that the dioceses continue to grow, but it will not presuppose those hypothetical future divisions.

Determination of Size and Boundaries:

My goal will be to create fairly equally sized dioceses that accounts for: 1. State boundaries 2. Cultural regions 3. Time needed to travel the diocese 4. Number of parishes.

The goal was to create dioceses which have enough churches to sustain themselves financially, without being too geographically large and difficult to administer, with notable exceptions such as the Great Plains, Missouri, and Western Gulf. Dioceses such as the geographically largest,

Cascadia, connect large centers such as Portland and Seattle with sparsely churching regions like Montana.

Additionally, since existing dioceses are being “transformed” into these new dioceses, I roughly tried to keep old dioceses in the same region of the US, which is why there are only four dioceses in the western half of the country, although further divisions may be warranted.

Cathedrals:

I have suggested certain cathedrals for each proposed diocese, trying to preserve previous diocesan cathedrals where possible. But, given that my proposal will take a few cathedrals out of their diocese, I have taken the liberty of suggesting alternatives. As with all of the suggestions in this plan, take my suggestions with a grain of salt. The cathedrals could be changed without any adverse effect to the plan.

Canons and Constitutions:

By far the most difficult question will be what should be done for the Constitutions of these new dioceses. The existing canons of the former diocese that is being transformed into the new diocese can be maintained, and only slightly adjusted to recognize the new diocesan boundaries. Alternatively, model canons and constitutions could be put forth for the basic adoption by these new dioceses to create uniformity (or at least familiarity) across dioceses.

What about the REC?

The Reformed Episcopal Church already has geographic dioceses, does not ordain women to any holy orders, and these dioceses overlap with the jurisdictions of other ACNA dioceses that also do not ordain women to the presbyterate (and some of which do not ordain female deacons either). Will the REC diocese be preserved or dissolved? This question seems like it is beyond my pay grade. The question of whether or not the REC will remain jurisdictionally independent until the end of time seems plausible to me. However, if a total assimilation into other ACNA traditional geographic diocese is desired, this proposal will articulate which hypothetical diocese that the REC parishes would be reallocated to. In the same breath, since all of the extant bishops will be preserved, some parishes will be moved into “REC” dioceses as a consequence of this restructuring. If the REC does not get assimilated into this plan, then a second plan will be necessary which reorganizes the other diocese into 24 geographic dioceses. Although, I certainly hope that they can be assimilated, and think it would be good to do so. If we are going to be a single province in God’s One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, we should not have internal divisions. Canon law has never permitted overlapping affinity jurisdictions. Additionally this plan does not “destroy” any REC dioceses, but simply reconfigures their geographic boundaries to accommodate the other ACNA dioceses. The “REC” dioceses are re-named, but they could just as easily not be. In many ways this plan could be considered to be *growing* the REC, rather

than dissolving it. Additionally, a solution to this problem is addressed in the section on “Affinity Based Covenants”.

*International Diocese and the Great Plains Missionary District:

The International Diocese has already been dissolved officially. However the ACNA Church Finder page (which was indispensable in this project) still lists many congregations as being a part of the International Diocese. This means that of the dioceses actually led by bishops with active jurisdiction is only 27. However, with the creation of the Great Plains missionary district, as a diocese in formation, the total relevant “dioceses” has been restored to 28. So the total number of dioceses in this plan remains 28.

The prospective Cathedral (according to this plan) of the Great Plains Diocese would be a parish formerly from the International diocese. However, as the GPMD is forming, it appears that many churches in Texas are being included in the district. In fact, Christ Church, in Plano Texas is the current prospective cathedral. In this plan they would not be in the Diocese at the end of the full formation, but as with all of the recommendations in this plan, current, on the ground necessities should be prioritized. I understand the need to have some parishes which can financially support this embryonic diocese. The hope is that in the future, churches which do not even yet exist actually in the range of the Great Plains will be enough to support that diocese and that the Texas parishes can be included in a Texas based diocese, although this might take place over a longer period of time than the rest of the plan.

Jurisdiction of Armed Forces & Chaplaincy:

Despite the fact that the JAFC does not ordain women to the presbyterate, they are not going to be included in this plan because they are intentionally non-geographic in character.

Conferences:

Conferences are a proposal I thought of to streamline the *legal* elements of provincial administration. Much of the applicable laws that would concern parishes and dioceses strictly follow state boundaries and one of the chief problems in our current situation is that dioceses have to comply with the various state laws of the states they are in. Switching to geographic dioceses will reduce this problem but not totally solve it. Especially because some states will actually end up being split into two dioceses at the final tally. So by putting dioceses (a canonical and ecclesiastical jurisdiction) into “conferences” (a secular organizational jurisdiction) dioceses can share staff across conferences to streamline compliance with state laws and reduce staffing and overhead in each diocese. This isn’t an essential element of the plan, but simply a suggested feature.

Affinity Based Covenants

The fundamental goal of this plan is to undo a lot of the reality on the ground that has resulted from *affinity* based dioceses. Affinity based organization is not wrong, but it is not the traditional

purpose of dioceses. To accommodate this issue I propose an alternative idea called Affinity Based Covenants. Parishes which hope to maintain some continued affiliation with the REC or Forward in Faith North America in the case of MDAS, could be parts of an associated Affinity Based Covenant. An All Saints Covenant could mean that a parish that is currently in MDAS will be able to ensure that their parish will always have an “Anglo-Catholic” orientation. I also envision a Reformed Episcopal Covenant, alongside perhaps nationality based covenants for Nigerian or Rwandan diaspora congregations. Any number of ABCs could be proposed, but the important part would be allowing for a shift towards geographic dioceses while maintaining the valuable heritage many of the existing affinity based dioceses protect. Covenants can require whatever is canonically permitted by the Province and ensure that no congregation gets sorted into a diocese which offends the temperament of their rector and congregants.

Proposed Future Dioceses:

Any number of hypothetical future dioceses could be contemplated, and any future diocese could in reality be hypothesized. At the bottom of the proposal, I have chosen to articulate a few further divisions that could be executed in the near future, without substantial growth in the Province, but which I omitted from the plan out of a desire not to require that new bishops be consecrated to enact the plan. If the Council of Bishops so desired, they could create any number of new bishops. If they intended to do so in accordance with other aspects of the St. David plan, that section is my suggestion for how they could do so. Most of them would clean up some of the state sharing between dioceses, and shrink some already large dioceses.

Naming of Dioceses:

For the sake of clarity I have tried to maintain already extant names, and to not repeat names already in use by the Episcopal Church (or even the Roman Church if possible). This often means returning to the older tradition of naming dioceses after their seat rather than their region. Hence the current Diocese of “California” is actually the Diocese of San Joaquin, and the invented Dioceses of Minneapolis, Roanoke, Columbia, Philadelphia, Boston, Cincinnati, Denver, Loganville, Houston, and Charleston are not named after regions, but their seats instead. Still many simply kept their regional names like the Diocese of Cascadia. Where this was not possible or preferable, I have used more general or regional names like in the case of the Diocese of the South West. This was especially used in cases where I anticipate that the city which houses the current cathedral is not likely to remain the seat in perpetuity, and which would have resulted in huge dioceses named after small towns like the diocese of Connecticut and New York (Hudson) being called the “Diocese of Gale’s Ferry”. In some cases, I have listed alternative names.

Potential Benefits of this Proposal:

Canonical Conformity:

It is a widely accepted fact that the canons of the Church catholic do not assume or permit overlapping dioceses. This proposal will allow for the conformity to the traditional canonical view of episcopal jurisdiction which the Church has always rightly received. Were this the only reason for the implementation of the plan, it would be adequate.

Practical Simplicity:

Anglican laity and clergy, especially those who are prevented by conviction from receiving Holy Communion, the source and summit of the Christian life, when it has been consecrated by women as it is a violation of God's word in Holy Scripture, will be able to have more familiarity, comfort and security in their decision to remain within our province. Parishes physically located close to each other will be able to better coordinate their evangelical efforts, charity work, and administrative functions with uniform and coordinated episcopal oversight. Bishops will be able to familiarize themselves with the particular needs of a more restricted, contiguous region, united by a more limited set of state laws, and regional cultures. It would reduce travel time within dioceses, and make episcopal visitations easier.

The Prospective Reception of Other Traditional Anglicans:

There are a number of "Continuing Anglican" parishes and diocese which have remained outside the ACNA because of the denomination's current stance on the ordination of women, which they cannot in good conscience accept as worth compromising on because of the perceived consequence it would have in respect to the validity of the sacraments. While I am sure that this proposal will *not* single handedly end that injurious schism which now persists in the Body of Christ between the ACNA and those independent parishes and dioceses, it will at least provide a framework for potential incorporation if those in the Continuum should desire it, by allowing them to accept the operation of the dioceses and parishes here outlined, as the valid "province" in the Anglican communion, while maintaining their principled opposition to the bishops and dioceses which permit the ordination of women to the presbyterate. Where some of these jurisdictions are already in full communion with the Reformed Episcopal Church, that status of full communion could be extended to the geographical dioceses in this proposal.

Ecumenical Relationships:

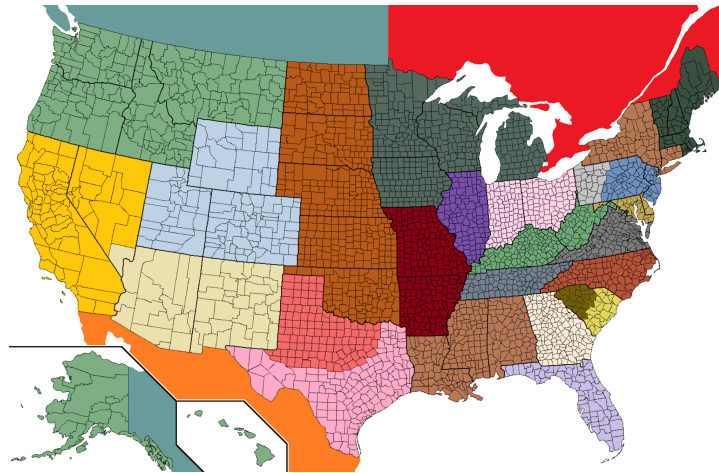
Many other ecclesiastical jurisdictions have expressed an interest in entering into some form of ecumenical agreement with Anglicans. Some have even suggested altar and pulpit fellowship or full communion. However with many of them, such as in recent conversations with Rome and the LCMS, the issue that strikes at the heart of any effort is the permission of the ordination of women in our Province. Church bodies which might otherwise have allowed their members to commune at our churches, are worried that this might lead to invalid reception at the hands of a

female priest. If a contiguous, nationwide system of dioceses with a coherent sense of organization was formed, such agreements could be made with the traditional majority of dioceses in the Anglican Church in North America which hold to the historic view on this issue. Dialogues with even the Eastern Orthodox in the 20th century were nearing intercommunion, only to be sadly overthrown by the ordination of women. Why not rejoice in the opportunity for brothers in Christ to dwell in more perfect unity across denominational boundaries, without requiring an internal schism in the ACNA?

Uniform Public Face:

Having geographically bound dioceses allows the bishop, not only to organize the Church within his jurisdiction, but also to be a public face in that region to those not in the Church. This kind of consistent public figure will be able to have a greater positive impact on the Anglican Church in North America's relationship with other local institutions, both secular and religious.

The St. David Plan



The Diocese of the Hudson

Cathedral: Bishop Seabury Anglican Church, Gales Ferry, CT

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of the Living Word)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Connecticut

New York

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Boston

Cathedral: All Saints, Amesbury, MA

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese in New England)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Maine

New Hampshire

Vermont

Massachusetts

Rhode Island

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Philadelphia

Cathedral: Church of the Atonement, Philadelphia, PA

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Reformed Episcopal Diocese of the Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Pennsylvania

New Jersey

Delaware

Ordination of Female Deacons: No

The Diocese of Appalachia

Cathedral: Church of the Ascension, Charles Town, WV

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Missionary Diocese of All Saints)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

West Virginia

Kentucky

Ordination of Female Deacons: No

The Diocese of Roanoke

Cathedral: Church of the Holy Spirit, Roanoke, VA

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of Christ our Hope)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Virginia

North Carolina

The District of Columbia

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Loganville

Cathedral: Holy Cross Cathedral, Loganville, GA

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of the South)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Georgia

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of the Western Gulf

Cathedral: Good Shepherd Church, Metairie, LA

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Mississippi

Louisiana

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Tallahassee

Cathedral: St. Peter's, Tallahassee, FL

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Florida

Alabama

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Weddington

Cathedral: All Saints, Weddington, NC

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of the Carolinas)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

North Carolina

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Charleston

Cathedral: St. John's Reformed Episcopal Church, Charleston, SC

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Reformed Episcopal Diocese of the Southeast)

Jurisdiction:

Regions of States & Provinces:

South Carolina

Ordination of Female Deacons: No

The Diocese of Piedmont

Cathedral: Church of the Holy Apostles, Columbia, SC

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of South Carolina)

Jurisdiction:

Regions of States & Provinces:

South Carolina

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Nashville

Cathedral: St. Patrick's, Murpheesboro, TN

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of Church for the Sake of Others)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Tennessee

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Cincinnati

Cathedral: Trinity Church, Mason, OH

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Reformed Episcopal Diocese of the Central States)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Ohio

Indiana

Ordination of Female Deacons: No

The Diocese of Quincy

Cathedral: St. John's Cathedral, Quincy, IL

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of Quincy)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Illinois

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

Conference: 10

The Diocese of Minneapolis

Cathedral: Church of the Cross, Hopkins, MN

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Upper Midwest)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Minnesota

Iowa

Wisconsin

Michigan

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Missionary Diocese of Missouri

Cathedral: All Saints, Springfield, MO

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Reformed Episcopal Diocese of Mid America)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Arkansas

Missouri

Ordination of Female Deacons: No

The Diocese of Fort Worth

Cathedral: St. Vincent's Cathedral, Bedford, TX

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of Fort Worth)

Jurisdiction:

Regions of States & Provinces:

Texas

Ordination of Female Deacons: No

Conference: 5

The Diocese of Houston

Cathedral: St. Francis Cathedral, El Paso, TX

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of All Nations)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Neuvo Leon

Regions of States & Provinces:

Texas

Ordination of Female Deacons: No

The Diocese of Denver

Cathedral: Christ the King, Denver, CO

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Rocky Mountains)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Colorado

Wyoming

Utah

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of the South West

Cathedral: Christ the King, Denver, CO

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of Western Anglicans)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

New Mexico

Arizona

Regions of States & Provinces:

Nevada

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of San Joaquin

Cathedral: Emmanuel Church, Fresno, CA

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

California

Regions of States & Provinces:

Nevada

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Missionary Diocese of the Great Plains

Cathedral: Christ our Redeemer, Oklahoma City, OK

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the current Missionary District)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

North Dakota

South Dakota

Nebraska

Kansas

Oklahoma

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Cascadia

Cathedral: St. Charles, Bremerton, WA

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of Cascadia)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Washington

Oregon

Alaska

Montana

Idaho

Hawaii

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Eastern Canada

Cathedral: NA

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of the Great Lakes)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Ontario

Quebec

New Brunswick

Newfoundland & Labrador

Nova Scotia

Prince Edward Island

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Diocese of Western Canada

Cathedral: NA

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of Canada)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

British Columbia

Alberta

Saskatchewan

Manitoba

Nunavut

Northwest Territories

Yukon Territory

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

The Missionary Diocese of Mexico

Cathedral: NA

Prospective Bishop: (The Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest)

Jurisdiction:

Entire States & Provinces:

Every State in Mexico

Ordination of Female Deacons: Yes

Part III: Compensating Retiring Female Clergy

In the wake of the moratorium on the ordination of female candidates to the presbyterate, extant female clergy will have the following options:

Licensure:

Every newly formed diocese will be able to license already ordained female clergy to continue ministry within that diocese until they retire naturally.

Deaconization:

If the new diocese in which a female priest is now operating, does not license female priests, but does have female deacons or deaconesses, female clergy may continue their ministries as deacons or deaconesses.

Immediate Retirement:

Here I will propose a financial mechanism for the appropriate care of those women who have faithfully served Anglican churches in spirit led ministry, but who at the implementation of this plan have been called to retire.

I suggest that two new financial structures be established for all clergy—the first, an annuity scheme, and the second, a pension plan, both linked to one central fund.

Within a fixed window of time, any female clergy who feel called to retire will be able to do so. If they opt, within this window, for either licensure or diaconization, this plan will not be available to them. Additionally, any “retired” clergy who go on to pastoral ministry in some other denomination will be disqualified and cease to receive their annuity payments. The minimum initial payment for their age will be paid for them completely by the central fund. Contributions and donations to this central fund by the province, dioceses, and private persons will be appreciated, but principally the money needed to pay off the initial payments of all of the participating retiring female clergy will be immediately sourced by the payments of *all* of the ACNA’s active clergy into the pension plan. Anyone else who wants to privately pay into the annuity will be exempt from paying into the pension plan. Anyone paid into the annuity will be entitled to start receiving their payments (annually or monthly) at 65 years of age. The design will enable all of the clergy retiring, largely as a result of this plan, to be compensated, while also establishing a central financial institution for clergy’s retirement funds.

Final Plea:

No doubt some will object to aspects of the proposal on the grounds of the distinct cultures of some of the dioceses, or out of refusal to be in a diocese which disagrees with their view of the ordination of female deacons. I understand the difficulty. However, it must be acknowledged that some of these difficulties are inevitable, and until a uniform view is imposed on the Province, it will remain an obstacle. Whatever your view, understanding that the validity of diaconal orders **does not affect the validity of any sacraments**, I beg you to not see it as a reason to reject this proposal. The ACNA is still relatively young, so I believe it is imperative that these potential obstacles be overcome as soon as possible, or else they will only be further solidified.

Ultimately, this plan may amount to nothing. It is just a suggestion that at the least may begin a conversation. I am just a young law student, without any clerical qualifications or position in the denomination. The closest thing to a qualification that I have is the fact that I run a mildly successful Anglican YouTube Channel.

My hope is that we will be brave enough to overcome some inconveniences and difficulties for the greater good of the Province. That is what this is, after all; a united province, headed by a metropolitan (the Archbishop). A province is composed of dioceses, which are the fundamental ecclesiological building block of the Church. Dioceses, and provinces have geographic boundaries. Simple.

There is no illusion on the part of the author or any of those who support the plan that this will be instantly adopted at the next Provincial Assembly and immediately implemented with all of the intended transfers. Often we overestimate what we can do in a year, but underestimate what can be achieved in a decade. If there is a good will in the Body of Christ, it can, by faith, be achieved. I believe this plan is a *good* thing. We should plainly desire to achieve good goals, both for ourselves, our local churches, our dioceses, and our provinces. Obviously if this plan will harm any of those, it should be revised, and any potential peculiarities should be accommodated. As our Lord said, even the *Sabbath* was made for man. How much more is this true of a young man's passion project?