

**To** EGGS  
**From** Jane Patterson and John Dunnett  
**Subject** Canterbury CNC

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1.0 The following report is jointly offered by Jane Patterson and myself, both of us having served on the Crown Nominations Commission as elected members from the General Synod since 2012.

The following comments are offered to foster discussion on the proposals contained in the consultation document entitled "See of Canterbury – Membership of the Crown Nominations Commission".

2.0 The document "See of Canterbury – Membership of the Crown Nominations Commission" helpfully indicates:

- the particularities of the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury and how in various ways this is both different /additional to both the Archbishop of York and other diocesan bishops.
- the role of the Diocesan Synod in Canterbury Diocese in bringing this matter forwards
- the current composition of the Canterbury CNC (paragraph 6)
- the proposed composition of the Canterbury CNC (paragraphs 21-24)

3.0 The following comments are offered in no particular order.

3.1 It is certainly the case that the Archbishop of Canterbury has a unique role with regard to the Communion, not shared or inhabited by other bishops in the Church of England (though the Archbishop of York and other bishops do play varying roles across the Communion, including membership of the Lambeth Conference).

However, it is worth noting that the "degree" of investment in the Communion can vary from Archbishop to Archbishop. Paragraph 12 of the Consultation Document notes that Archbishop Justin suggests that 25% of his time relates to Anglican Communion responsibilities. It is quite possible that his successors may give either less or more. The point of spelling this out is that this consultation might be seen to be built on a particular commitment of one Archbishop towards the Communion – and it may be worth asking whether it is appropriate to "enshrine" this in CNC processes going forwards.

3.2 With regard to the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury as the diocesan bishop of Canterbury – it is notable that in paragraph 12 (Consultation Document) Archbishop Justin suggests that only 5% of his time is spent on diocesan work. Given the various other responsibilities of his role this may not be surprising – and neither Jane nor I have any particular point to make or axe to grind about this. Indeed, in structural/legal terms, one might be entitled to explore whether the proposals to change the composition of the Canterbury CNC actually reflect better this small commitment to diocesan work. More radically, one might wish to ask whether there comes a point where there are so many differences between the Archbishop of Canterbury (and the process by which he/she is appointed) and every other diocesan bishop, that they become distinct categories rather than the same with some degree of difference (ie not at root level a diocesan bishop).

3.3 One of the crucial questions that members across Synod (i.e. not just from an evangelical constituency) are likely to ask about the proposals in paragraphs 23 and 24 is "who decides who represents the Anglican communion on a Canterbury CNC?". We suggest it would be a backward step if the wealthy (largely) West and Northern Hemisphere dominated the process when the

“weight” of Anglican membership is in the southern hemisphere and particularly in developing countries. However – there will be others who would resist the possibility of some of the African (or other) provinces having a significant vote in the process. In other words, it might be that Synod as a whole feels unable to give its support to this consultation/proposal until further detail is made available. This is a point that EGGs members might feel able to make in contributing to the Consultation. Put differently – 5 of 17 place on the CNC would be chosen outside of the C of E. Some might consider this helpful – others not so.

EGGS members will be aware that were the Communion members of the CNC to be elected by members of provinces connected with the Global South, then the CNC would have a more orthodox flavour than if from some other provinces – hence the need to understand HOW the 5 representatives would be chosen.

3.4 More ‘radical’ members of EGGs may feel paragraphs 15 and 16 do not go far enough in that they might wish for consideration be given to the possibility that the historic role of the Archbishop of Canterbury as one of the instruments of the Communion should be dissipated/shared with other primates across the Communion in order to introduce greater parity between the growing majority provinces and the shrinking membership of the European/American provinces (despite their historic contribution in founding the Communion). Paragraph 16 potentially indicates this in reference to the proposals as being ‘a small step and a first step’.

4.0 EGGs members are invited to note that the consultation period runs until 31 March 2022, and are encouraged to offer submissions. In particular, EGGs members are asked to indicate their interest in hearing more details about the means and ways in which the five Anglican Communion representatives will be appointed.

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