



**Diocese of the Virgin Islands**  
*(Episcopal Church / Anglican)*

By authority of the Bishop

The Rt. Rev. E. AMBROSE GUMBS, D.D.  
Bishop of the Virgin Islands

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**DISCUSSION PAPER No. 1/09**  
**Name and Establishment of the Diocese**

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JULY 2009

**Prepared by the Chairman of the  
2009 Constitution and Canons Revision Group**

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rt. Rev. E. Ambrose Gumbs, Bishop of the Virgin islands, commissioned the 2009 Constitution and Canons Revision Group (“**CCRG**”) on 15 April 2009. It’s mandate is to examine and report back on the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese with a view to the adoption of a modern, clear and comprehensive document. The CCRG has begun its work by circulating a series of discussion papers to gauge the views and ideas from across the Diocese. The CCRG is utilizing the Deaneries to establish discussion groups on each discussion paper and to act as a focal point for the channel of information between the CCRG and the wider Diocese.

This discussion paper was prepared by the Revision Group Chairman, Jamal S. Smith. It does not necessarily reflect any position or policy agenda of the Bishop’s Office or the Revision Group. It is important for the discussions to envision unique solutions to the unique situations of our Diocese when exploring many of the issues. Towards that end, this discussion paper attempts to identify the current position within the Diocese, outline the legal restrictions from both National Canons and civil law, and explore how the issue of the name of the diocese, jurisdiction, accession to National Canons and the symbols of the diocese is approached in various other dioceses within the Episcopal Church.

A related practical project that can arise from this aspect of the revision exercise and captivate the creative minds within the Diocese is a review of the overall brand strategy of the Diocese. The end result is expected to be a re-branding of the Diocese with a logo-type and possibly a re-designed Diocesan Seal that speaks to the unique identity of the Virgin Islands archipelago.

## II. NAME AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIOCESE

### (a) Name of the Diocese

The name of the diocese has traditionally been known as the “**Diocese of the Virgin Islands**”. However, in the current Constitution and Canons, the only reference to the “Diocese of the Virgin Islands” is when speaking of the “Convention of the Diocese of the Virgin Islands”,<sup>1</sup> the “Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of the Virgin Islands”,<sup>2</sup> the “Chancellor of the Diocese of the Virgin Islands”,<sup>3</sup> the “Vice Chancellor of the Diocese of the Virgin Islands”,<sup>4</sup> the “Bishop and Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of the Virgin Islands”,<sup>5</sup> and used generally elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Although the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America (the “**National Canons**”) have no specific requirements for the name of a Diocese, the Constitution and Canons of some dioceses within the Episcopal Church has a specific provision for the name of the Diocese.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, Art. I.1 and Canon 3.5.

<sup>2</sup> See, Canon 11.1.

<sup>3</sup> See, Canon 13.1.

<sup>4</sup> See, Canon 13.2.

<sup>5</sup> See, Canon 21.1.

<sup>6</sup> See, Canons 14.1, 21.1, 21.2 and 22.6.

<sup>7</sup> See, The Constitution of the Diocese of Michigan, Art. I; The Constitution of the Diocese of West Tennessee, Art. I.

## **(b) Geographical Jurisdiction of the Diocese**

The present Constitution outlines the geographical jurisdiction of the Diocese to include both groups of Virgin Islands.<sup>8</sup> Although using the correct legal style of the U.S. Virgin Islands, which was renamed as the “Virgin Islands of the United States” after the U.S. took possession on 31 March 1917 the present Constitution only refers to the “British Virgin Islands” instead of using its proper legal designation as the “Virgin Islands”. While the geographical jurisdiction of the Diocese is not designated as an Episcopal See or Bishopric (which is normally Roman Catholic or Church of England), for consistency, the Diocese being the geographical area over which the Bishop can exercise authority, the Episcopal See being the spiritual and temporal area over which the Bishop exercises that authority and it is the Episcopal See that can be occupied or vacated by the Bishop. Subject to Articles V and VI and Canons 10 and 11 of the National Canons, there are no specific requirements for designating the geographical jurisdiction of a Diocese, but the Constitution and Canons of some dioceses within the Episcopal Church make specific (and sometimes detailed) provision for the geographic jurisdiction of the Diocese.

## **(c) Unqualified Accession to the National Canons**

The only reference to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (the “**Episcopal Church**”) and a mere recognition of the authority of its Constitution and Canons is to be found in the Preamble to the current Constitution. The National Canons require an unqualified accession to the National Canons by every diocese of the Episcopal Church.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the Executive Council of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in June 2007 reminded dioceses of the Episcopal Church of this ongoing obligation of a diocese and attempts to lessen or limit the unqualified accession is null and void.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, an unqualified statement of accession to the National Canons should be included in the new Constitution.

## **(d) Symbols of the Diocese**

While the name of the Diocese may be legitimately accepted through usage over the years and the geographical jurisdiction may also be clear, the key indicators of the Diocese as a corporate whole bound together by certain identifiable symbols in addition to our worship remains unclear. Examples of those key identifiable symbols of the Diocese would include, among others: (a) the seal of the Diocese; and (b) the official motto of the Diocese.

## **III. RELATED PROJECT: DIOCESAN RE-BRANDING**

As the charge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is to “suffer little children to come unto me”, the Diocese has a particular duty to engage the youth and ensuring that it can deliver the good news in a real way to a new generation of tech-savvy and information-overloaded young people. While it is usually not acceptable to speak about “branding” in the context of the church, the reality is that churches have developed a brand in much the same way as trading companies, and the need to leverage the church’s brand to meet changing market expectations and demands requires the

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<sup>8</sup> Article I.3.

<sup>9</sup> See, National Canons Art. V.1.

<sup>10</sup> See, Executive Council Resolution NAC 023.

church to rethink its brand strategy. While businesses spend from \$150,000.00 to millions of dollars leveraging their brand, a re-branding exercise can be done with minimal expense to the Diocese.

An approach to identifying the key symbols of the Diocese would be to involve the Sunday Schools, as well as the Episcopal Schools, to re-design the key symbols of the Diocese. It is possible to have a logo for the Diocese separate and apart from the official seal, as is done in the Diocese of Arizona,<sup>11</sup> the Diocese of Chicago,<sup>12</sup> the Diocese of New Hampshire,<sup>13</sup> the Diocese of Rhode Islands.<sup>14</sup> The CCRG can co-ordinate this effort with the assistance of a graphic designer to form part of its final report and incorporate the new symbols somewhere into the final draft Constitution and Canons for adoption. The use of the logo or re-designed Diocesan Seal, as was done recently in the Diocese of Atlanta,<sup>15</sup> may be made accessible on the internet for use in the Diocese in various formats and allow for silk screening and other uses, subject to a general diocesan emblem use policy.

#### **IV. SUBMISSIONS**

The Revision Group welcomes any submissions regarding the issues identified above. Submissions will be made publicly available on the Revision Group's website. If a submission, or any part of it, is to be treated as confidential, please indicate this clearly on the submission.

Submissions should be made by **1 September 2009** to:

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<sup>11</sup> See, <http://www.azdiocese.org/>.

<sup>12</sup> See, [http://www.episcopalchicago.org/components/image\\_gallery/index.cfm?albumId=1187B8C4-3048-8C8C-DA0D15D81A833898](http://www.episcopalchicago.org/components/image_gallery/index.cfm?albumId=1187B8C4-3048-8C8C-DA0D15D81A833898).

<sup>13</sup> See, [http://www.nhepiscopal.org/resources/res\\_graphics.htm](http://www.nhepiscopal.org/resources/res_graphics.htm).

<sup>14</sup> See, <http://www.episcopalri.org/WhoWeAre/AboutOurLogo/tabid/148/Default.aspx>.

<sup>15</sup> See, [http://www.episcopalatlanta.org/images/diocesan\\_seal.html](http://www.episcopalatlanta.org/images/diocesan_seal.html).