**A REPORT**

**on the Meeting of the Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas**

April 9, 2013, at the Cummins Memorial Theological Seminary in Summerville, SC

by the Rt. Rev. Paul C. Hewett, Moderator; Bishop, Diocese of the Holy Cross

The Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas (FACA) is comprised of six jurisdictions that communicate and cooperate with one another, and are in communion with one another as traditional, orthodox Anglicans, for the spread of the Gospel. The jurisdictions in FACA are Anglican Church in America, the Anglican Mission, the Anglican Province in America, the Diocese of the Holy Cross, the Episcopal Missionary Church and the Reformed Episcopal Church, for a total of more than 400 parishes. FACA is a ministry partner of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), with seat and voice at all meetings.

We were honored on April 9 to have two guests, Bishop Mark Lawrence of the Diocese of South Carolina, and Archbishop Peter Robinson, of the United Episcopal Church. Bishop Lawrence told his story of “leaving Egypt,” and wanting to work with us. He invited us to his Cathedral that evening for a visit with four bishops from East Africa and a reception, and some of us made plans to go. Archbishop Robinson expressed his desire to see closer relationships throughout the continuum, and told us about the UEC’s partnerships with the Province of Christ the King and the Anglican Catholic Church.

Father Kevin Donlon from the Anglican Mission reported on a visit to the Mission Province in Sweden last October, setting the stage for a meeting with the Lutheran Bishop Walter Obara in Kenya (who helped give the Mission Province its episcopate), with Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini. Father Donlon also talked about the Anglican Mission’s extensive networks with young Anglican bishops in Africa and Southeast Asia. We all need to be moving toward conciliar governance, whereby we live within the theology, the ministry and the disciplines of Holy Scripture and the Councils of the undivided Church.

The Anglican Church in America and the Anglican Province in America are working toward a much closer relationship, and Bishops Walter Grundorf and Brian Marsh reported on their progress, and on “speed bumps.” By going slowly the two jurisdictions can marinade their lives together, leaving behind a template, or model, for others to follow.

Bishop David Hicks (REC) reported on the Task Force to study Holy Orders in the Anglican Church in North America. This study, now in its first phase, will recommend to ACNA’s College of Bishops whether, based on Scripture and Tradition, the ordination of women is possible, or whether our Lord and the apostles intend only men to be ordained. The task force is starting with a hard look at ecclesiology, since the two sides of this issue come at the matter from quite different ecclesiologies. It was noted that Bishop Keith Ackerman is encouraging all traditional, orthodox Anglicans to magnify the lay office of deaconess. The REC’s training program for deaconesses is fully operational, as is the Anglican Deaconess Association.

Four continuing bishops recently sent an appeal to ACNA’s College of Bishops, to have only men in Holy Orders, and to use a historic Anglican liturgy. Archbishop Mark Haverland (ACC) and Peter Robinson (UEC), and Bishops Brian Marsh (ACA), Walter Grundorf (APA), and the Moderator (DHC) signed this appeal. It was an example of continuing church bishops speaking with one voice, and of seeking the reforms in ACNA that will allow FACA to be in communion with everyone in ACNA, at which point FACA’s jurisdictions and societies could join the ACNA. This May 24 – 25, the Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen, meeting in Fredericksburg, VA, will make “The Appeal” the subject of its presentations.

Bishop Ray Sutton (REC) highlighted the extraordinary breakthroughs of the Task Force on ecumenical relations (ACNA), with the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, the Roman Catholic Church (an audience with the Pope) and the Russian Orthodox (an invitation to visit Patriarch Kyril in Moscow in 2014). The Moderator proposed a delegation to visit Hieronymos II, the Archbishop of Athens, Greece, in the autumn of 2014, to strengthen ties with the Greek Orthodox, both in Greece, and North America.

Bishop Richard Lipka (Missionary Diocese of All Saints, Forward in Faith) spoke on the upcoming Forward in Faith/North America Assembly, July 17 – 19, in Belleville, Illinois. Our guest speaker will be Bishop Michael Nazir Ali. A delegation of bishops and clergy of the Polish National Catholic Church will be part of that week’s meetings. There are now five dioceses that are part of Forward in Faith/NA: Fort Worth, San Joaquin, Quincy, Missionary Diocese of All Saints and the Diocese of the Holy Cross. As Bishop Ackerman says, Forward in Faith/NA is an organism that serves all traditional, orthodox Anglicans, for teaching the faith and order of the undivided Church, and to help reveal the essential unity of the Body of Christ.

The Moderator made a report on the new federation emerging in the UK, with the Free Church of England (Bishop John Fenwick), the Nordic Catholic Church (Norway, Bishop Roald Flemestad, and part of the Union of Scranton), the Polish National Catholic Church, and the REC’s burgeoning work in Europe. It was noted that the Free Church of England is now canonically recognized by the Church of England. The Anglican Association, a Forward in Faith/UK think tank, is helping to put this federation together. One of the Anglican Association’s leaders, Canon Geoffrey Neal, Forward in Faith/UK Dean of the Ouse Valley, will be a speaker at the Diocese of the Holy Cross Synod in Winchester, VA on April 19.

A motion was made and unanimously carried that whenever parishes want to change jurisdictions, their respective bishops will confer. A committee on standards of preparation for ordained ministry was set up.

All in all, there was a sense at this meeting that FACA has, over the years, become ever more important to everyone in it, as a way of living together as “continuers,” and as a catalyst for a single fully traditional, orthodox province for us all, upholding the Catholic Faith and Apostolic Order of the undivided Church.