**A REPORT**

**on the Meetings of the**

**ACNA Provincial Council and College of Bishops**

**at Nashotah House Seminary, Nashotah, Wisconsin, June 18 -21, 2013**

The Provincial Council in attendance was probably over a hundred persons, representing some 34 dioceses, and a number of Ministry Partners, such as the Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas (FACA), which I was there to represent. Bishop Mark Lawrence of the Diocese of South Carolina was also in attendance. We all had an opportunity to speak and report on our respective jurisdictions and organizations. My report on FACA cited Bp. Lawrence’s attendance at our recent April meeting, along with Archbp. Peter Robinson of the United Episcopal Church, and the growing number of clericuses around the country to facilitate cooperation and eventual geographic re-organization. I also mentioned our growing relationship with Forward in Faith North America, and the closer relationship between the Anglican Church in America and the Anglican Province of America, both FACA partners.

**Tuesday, June 18, Provincial Council**: After Morning Prayer, Dr. Mott of Nashotah House led a Bible Study on “Teaching the Difficult Psalms.” These portions of Scripture should change us – we should not change them. The Bible interprets us, more than we interpret the Bible.

Archbp. Duncan’s address was on “keeping the main thing the main thing,” the focus on mission being the main thing. He cited the excellent work of the task forces, and the growth of ACNA.

The report of the Task Force on Governance was about the admission of new dioceses, overlapping jurisdictions and the need for higher standards for admission as a diocese. There are geographic dioceses and affinity based ones, and there will now be a tilt toward the former.

CANA sponsorship of military chaplaincies was presented by Bps Julian Dobbs and Derek Jones. They will keep the old system (chaplaincies based in dioceses) and start a new one (a diocese for the armed forces for chaplains who have no Anglican or Episcopalian background)

Some dioceses-in-formation, such as Forward in Faith’s Missionary Diocese of All Saints, (Bp William Ilgrenfritz) were fully accepted as dioceses.

Bishop Keith Ackerman spoke on Forward in Faith North America as a bonding agency for traditional, orthodox Anglicans, for the teaching “the whole of the Faith for the whole world” in the context of the apostolic ministry. Our Assembly next month has as its theme “Ecclesiology at the Crossroads,” and will feature Bp. Michael Nazir-Ali as the keynote speaker.

Two new members of the Executive Council were elected, and we saw a video, a one act play called “Surprising Melody,” an imaginative presentation on the Anglican mind.

The day concluded with Evening Prayer, a reception and a banquet. As always at these meetings, one of the fruits is the opportunity to visit with old friends, to meet new ones and to commend our work to others. It was a pleasure to visit with Bp. Steve Woods (from Mt. Pleasant, SC), Bp. Julian Dobbs (from northern Virginia), Bp. Frank Lyons, now of Pittsburgh and many of the clergy.

**Wednesday, June 19, Provincial Council**

After Morning Prayer Dr Mott continued teaching on the difficult Psalms (and by implication, other difficult passages of Scripture, or passages often omitted) by saying how important it is that we expand our scriptural imaginations.

Budget reports followed, and then a visit with Zachary Braddock, our seminarian at the House.

“Anglican 1000’s” goal is to plant 1,000 new parishes. 300 have been started so far.

Other reports followed: 2012 Congregational Report, the International Report, GAFCON2, in Nairobi, Kenya, this October, Communications, Young Anglicans, Anglican Relief Development Fund, Domestic Relief Policy, the College of Bishops. Seminary Consortium, Liturgy (a new Book of Common Prayer is coming out in sections), and Ecumenical Relations (Bp. Ray Sutton) Talks are going forward with the Russian Orthodox, the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, Roman Catholics, the Polish National Catholic Church, various evangelicals and Messianic Jews. The first four groups want to know, of course, how ACNA is going to resolve the issue of those jurisdictions which ordain women.

The new Catechism can be seen on the ACNA website and resources page, and is seen as a re-orientation of life, from earth-bound to heavenward, to the reign of Christ. There is the content and the process for becoming a disciple, with the usual structuring around Creed, 10 Commandments and Lord’s Prayer.

Bps. Julian Dobbs and John Guernsey spoke on Islam and Religious Liberty and last January’s March for Life in Washington, D.C., with outstanding youth participation.

Bp David Hicks (REC) summed up his insightful work with the Theological Task Force on Holy Orders. There are 5 phases for this study. The first is to call into being the task force, the second (which is being concluded now) is general hermeneutical principles, the third is ecclesiology, the fourth is the issue itself, and the fifth is the presentation of the recommendations to the College of Bishops.

After Bp. Mark Lawrence brought us greetings from the Diocese of South Carolina we had Evening Prayer, Supper, and a Festival Eucharist at St. Joan of Arc RC Church in Nashotah.

**Thursday, June 20, College of Bishops**

Bp William Ilgenfritz and his MDAS gave up two parishes for geographic reasons. This had a remarkable impact on missionary strategy…like clearing a log-jam. The ACNA is far from perfect but it has done a lot of good, in ecumenical relations, networking, starting new missions, parishes and relief programs, setting up training for ministry, and the beginnings of a new Prayer Book. My prayer for us all is that we will (i) come to the mind of Christ on Holy Orders (ii) and thereby open up the possibility for one province for all traditional, orthodox Anglicans in North America. There is no doubt in my mind that we can get all the main continuers together, FACA, plus ACC, PCK and UEC, into ever more tightly woven federated relationships that include over 500 parishes which , God grant, will someday in the not distant future make common cause with all other traditional, orthodox Anglicans.

After Morning Prayer, Dr Mott continued his teaching on difficult psalms with Psalm 88. We are to let Scripture interpret us. We do not interpret the Bible…the Bible interprets us. Difficult scriptures are God’s judgment on us when we stray, and on wayward cults and cultures. The judgments of God are good and true and we are to bear them, be changed by them and be thankful for them.

The bishops discussed the proposed Prayer Book, the Catechism and the proposed Diocese of the Armed Forces and institutional chaplaincies.

We wound down to Evening Prayer and a reception at the Dean’s House, after which I had an opportunity to visit with Zachary and Brittany Braddock in their home on the Campus, and join them for supper.