

Interview with the Reverend Thomas L. McClellan by Clark Groome, Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania Oral History Project, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 8, 2014.

CLARK GROOME: All right. When did you first get involved in the church and feel that you might be called to be a priest? You're a lifelong Episcopalian, I assume?

THOMAS MCCLELLAN: Yes. It's a little murky, but I do remember strongly that there was an older friend who was married to a doctor's daughter, whose grandfather had been a priest in Pittsburgh, on the Shadyside. And he was working for IBM, or Xerox, or one of the big corporations, and he was doing very, very well. And one day I ran into his mother-in-law, who would have been the daughter of this priest. And she, with some degree of delight, said, "Did you hear about—did you get the news from your friend, our son-in-law?" I said, "No." She said, "Well, he's going to seminary." And I can clearly remember in my mind thinking to myself, "He's lost it. Something's gone wrong."

CG: [Laughs]

TM: He was doing so well, getting all these promotions in business.

CG: At one of the big, big companies?

TM: Yeah, one of the major companies.

CG: And back then they were starting out, right?

TM: Yeah. And you know, he is throwing his life away.

CG: How old were you, at this point?

TM: I would have been in my, oh, very early twenties. So anyway, I was so blown away by this that I thought, well, I've got to, you know, almost like do an intervention! I need to [laughs] contact him

immediately! Now, I might say, parenthetically, that his mother-in-law, being the daughter of a priest, thought this was great.

CG: Sure!

TM: Not all families are of that opinion, but she was. Well anyway, I did make contact with him and he was just so excited about what he was doing, when he was starting seminary.

CG: Where was he going?

TM: He was going to Philadelphia Divinity School.

CG: Oh, okay.

TM: And anyway, he was so excited, and then he said to me, “Why don’t you come sometime and visit?” And so I did. And then, I still thought he was insane. [Laughs]

CG: To go back just a little bit, had you been active in church as a kid?

TM: No. Well, yeah. I mean, we went to church, but I never enjoyed it, honestly.

CG: It wasn’t a refuge for you like it was for a lot of kids?

TM: No, not at all. I went; I remember one time we even went to the Presbyterian Church for a little while, because my parents could see that we weren’t that enthralled with the Episcopal Church. And that wasn’t any different, really.

CG: [Laughs] That didn’t help!

TM: It did not help. But anyway, going back to . . . so I visited him, but I could see very clearly how intoxicated he was with what he was doing, and it was very obvious that this was a very sincere decision on his part. So I think a seed was obviously planted. I then was doing some—I was waiting to get called to go to Basic Training in the Army.

CG: So this was after college?

TM: Yes, and I was waiting to go get my orders. And because any employer would say, “Well, why don’t you get your military”

CG: Out of the way? Yeah.

TM: “And then you can go back to us.” So I was a Reservist. I was doing what a lot of people did, and that is I didn’t want to go to Vietnam, so by being in the Reserves or the National Guard, like George W. Bush, you could avoid that.

CG: This was in the late sixties?

TM: This was in the late sixties. So, I then had to do something, so a family friend, a judge who had two sons—who were both doing what I was doing; they were also in the National Guard, and they were waiting to get called to Basic Training. By the way, the Basic Training centers were putting people like us on the back burner, because they were putting through the draftees right away, so they could ship them off.

CG: Right, because this was when Vietnam was heating up?

TM: Heating up. So, what happened was that I didn’t have anything to do, so I decided, like they were going to do, to be a substitute teacher in the Philadelphia school system.

CG: You were living in Philadelphia?

TM: Right. And so, I did that.

CG: What were you teaching?

TM: Teaching English at Audenried Junior High School, at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Tasker, which no longer exists. And as I tell people, I learned far more [laughs] teaching in the Philadelphia school system than I ever

taught any child, because it was really a mind-blowing alternate experience for me, just to be sure. But anyway.

CG: In what sense? Give me a little bit more than that.

TM: Well, I mean, it was just the whole—these kids were living in the projects in southwest Philadelphia. It was just unbelievably different from any part of life that I'd ever known. And so I started doing that, and I did get to a point where I became what they call "long-term sub."

CG: Right.

TM: And therefore I went to the same school. Because at first, you call the district office and you say, "I'm available today." And they send you somewhere.

CG: And they send you wherever they need you? Yeah.

TM: Yeah. And then after a while, the principal at Audenried said, "Well, we have a position, long-term sub. Would you like to take it?" And I said "sure." So actually, I ended up giving grades at the end of the year, and having a reasonably good experience. And then I think what happened was that the little seed that had been planted by the friend that was in seminary then grew, to make me think to myself that I wanted to do something in life that would be of service to others. Because I had never thought of being a teacher, for sure. That had never entered my mind at all. But this was just an expedient thing to do until I got called up. So I did get called up for Basic Training; went to Basic Training. And then Bishop DeWitt—before I went, I had had a talk with him. And I did that all wrong. You're supposed to go to your parish priest and say, "I'm interested in the priesthood," and then you and he discerned this, and so forth. And I did none of

that. I just called the bishop's office, and said, "I'd like to talk to the bishop." And he told me himself that I had gone about the thing completely wrong.

CG: [Laughs]

TM: But he said, "I'm glad you came in." And he said—now remember that he was anti-war, of course, but he said, "I think it would be good for you to do Basic Training." And I said, "Well, I'm scheduled to go." And he said, "Well, do that, and then come back, and we'll talk again." So I did, and I finished out the eight weeks, and all. And then I went onto—I was active duty for six months.

CG: That was the standard, right?

TM: That's the standard program. I went to Fort Knox for Basic Training.

CG: Where the money is.

TM: Where the money is all salted away. And then I went to Fort Dix.

CG: Oh, in the neighborhood?

TM: Yeah, and I got out—maybe this was a sign. Again, you know, you look at these things. But I got out of Basic Training on Good Friday, and I was the only person in our company that for some reason was given an air ticket to go to the East Coast, because [laughs] I was waiting for my name to be called, and it didn't get called, and it didn't get called. And everybody was getting these bus tickets. And all of a sudden, they were finished calling the names, and I didn't hear my name. So I went up to the sergeant, and I said, "You didn't call my name." And he said [with southern accent], "Well that's because you have an airline ticket."

CG: Where was this?

TM: From Fort Knox to the east. I forget; I guess I went into Maguire, or something like that. So anyway, I flew out on Good Friday, had the whole weekend, Easter weekend as it were—

CG: Were you going to church regularly at this point?

TM: Well, I was in the Army, actually. I started going. And I have to be honest. I went to Roman Catholic services in the Army, because the pan-Protestant services were so dreadful!

CG: What, were they bland?

TM: Oh! Horrible!

CG: Okay.

TM: And I tried one or two, and I thought, no, this is no good. So I went with the Roman Catholics. You had three choices: the Jewish, the—

CG: Protestant, yeah.

TM: And the Roman Catholic, so I went to the Roman Catholic. And then I came out, and then the bishop said—you know, it's always a provisional thing, but he said, "I'd like to enroll you as a postulant," and off I went to the seminary.

CG: Go ahead.

TM: Well, I was going to say, I thought it might be good to go up to Cambridge, Massachusetts. And he said, "Well, that's where I went, but I want all of my people in Philadelphia." And there were twenty-some of them. So he said, "I just want you all here."

CG: P[hiladelphia] D[ivinity] S[chool]?

TM: Right. And he said, "That's where you have to be." So I was given no choice, essentially.

CG: Did you have a parish at that point, in Philadelphia? In the Diocese of Pennsylvania?

TM: Not really, no.

CG: Let me see if I can clarify, for me, the process. Normally, a parish sponsors you through your postulancy, and until you—

TM: Oh, well that—yeah. Well, what I did at that point then is that since I was teaching in town, and staying there, then I just went to Saint Mark's on Locust Street.

CG: Okay, yeah.

TM: And so yeah, they sponsored me. They actually sponsored, I think, two or three at the time. I remember at least one other, and I think there were two others besides myself. So anyway, so that was seminary, and then the bishop furthermore had me become a candidate; that's the next step. And then there was ordination to the diaconate.

CG: When was that?

TM: That was in, I guess, 1971 or so. And then I went onto the priesthood. Then I had some assignments. I did teaching, as you know, at Chestnut Hill Academy.

CG: You were there for two years, 1970 to '72, and the whole time I think you were a deacon.

TM: I was a deacon, and then later a priest.

CG: A priest, because you wore a collar there.

TM: Yes. I guess I was still unclear whether—then I started wondering whether I wanted to do, as you intimated earlier, whether I wanted to do teaching, or parochial work.

CG: Right.

TM: So I did some parochial work at my parent's parish, and then I did some work at—well, I was at Saint Mark's a little bit. I guess I celebrated my first Eucharist at that church.

CG: At Saint Mark's?

TM: At Saint Mark's, yeah. It was a sung mass. And then I also went to—I'd get little assignments, you know, to go fill in some places as a deacon, and so on, so I had some variety of experiences. And then I went to Cambridge, England, and studied at the university.

CG: That's when you left CHA?

TM: Yeah, yeah. I studied at the university there.

CG: What were you studying?

TM: I was studying Reformation history. [Laughs] Which is a good place to do it.

CG: I would think so.

TM: Thomas Cranmer came down from Cambridge to London to be Henry VIII's archbishop. Anyway.

CG: First Anglican archbishop.

TM: Yes. So then I did church work over there, as I was able. And then when I came back—oh, then this is where Lyman Ogilby, the bishop, comes into it, because Lyman Ogilby really—well, both Bishop DeWitt and Lyman Ogilby, Bishop Ogilby, did not have a lot of enthusiasm for my being in England at all.

CG: Why?

TM: I think it was principally because they correctly assumed that I would want to have my ministry over here at some point. And they said, "The longer you're away from here, the more you are out of sight, and out of mind." And they felt very strongly that this—I remember,

distinctly remember getting a letter, an Ember Day letter from Bishop DeWitt, saying, “Cut it out!” Now, he was being somewhat facetious, but it was sort of like—this is in response to my saying I’m going to Cambridge. He said, “Cut it out!” And then one day, when I was coming back, I was talking to Bishop Ogilby, who was the bishop I was probably the closest with, and know his two brothers, and all that. And he said, “I think you’re going to be making a mistake if you really stay over there too long.”

CG: How long were you over there all together?

TM: Two years. And he said, “I think you’re making a mistake.” And then what happened was that he had some ideas for me in this diocese. And I had done some traveling before, so I got some of that out of my system, because—now, wait a minute. I’m thinking something—let’s stop this for a second. [Laughs]

[End of Part 1/Begin Part 2]

CG: So you’d come back from Cambridge?

TM: Yes, I’d come back.

CG: And you were studying Reformation history over there, and then you came back?

TM: I came back, and I got a job at Saint David’s, Radnor, which—

CG: Full-time?

TM: Full-time.

CG: Was it a curacy then?

TM: Well, they called it associate rector, which is complete nonsense. You know, you’re a curate, through and through.

CG: You’re the puppy?

TM: And I was the third person on the staff. And I might say that all kinds of senior clergy, people who I knew, and liked me, and knew my family and so on, they all said, “Absolutely, a mistake. You’re making a huge mistake going to Saint David’s because the rector there is very unstable, and the people who’ve gone before you have had a miserable experience there. You would be better off trying something else.” Of course, I took the attitude: all of those people had a problem; I will not.

CG: Of course not!

TM: And I think it can be said that probably of all the people who were there as curates, I had the absolute worst time with this rector. I was locking horns with him constantly.

CG: You were also, relatively speaking, at those times, you were thirty-ish, or 32, at that point.

TM: Yes, yeah.

CG: You were older than most curates were, weren’t you?

TM: A little older, and I’d been around a little more in other church settings, so I sort of knew that a lot of the things he was doing were absolutely, completely without foundation, and were not part of our tradition. And that’s one thing I learned in England—you’ve got to kind of—the tradition is something that you kind of have to take as a given, and when you deviate from that, you have to have a very good reason for doing so. And so, he was very difficult to work with. Later, I learned, he was diagnosed as a bipolar person, and like a lot of people with that profile, he did not like to take his lithium, so he would often be off of that, and then he’d become very manic-y, and then very depressed. It was a wild time. And I have to say that one of

the things that was partly my salvation in the two years I was there was to be used at the Easter Vigil, and times like that, at the Good Shepherd, Rosemont, because the rector at the time was very hospitable, and he said, “Well, why don’t you come up? I know you’re having a difficult time, so why don’t you come up and help us at the vigil,” or different things.

CG: And the rector at Saint David’s had no problem with that?

TM: He had no problems because they didn’t do anything of that sort. These *Prayer Book* liturgies that we know so well now were completely—he was—

CG: Well, they were new, then, too, weren’t they?

TM: They were new.

CG: Some of them were new.

TM: They were new. But he had no interest in any of them. And I can remember the organist at Saint David’s asking me, “Can you sing?” And I said yes, and he said, “Well, I’d like to do sung Evensong sometime. Would you be willing to help me with that?” And I said sure. He had a very good choir at the time, and he put together Fauré’s *Requiem*, or Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, or something, and it would be preceded by sung Evensong. And then the Monday after the Sunday event, afternoon event, we had a staff—we had staff meetings every Monday morning, which were very dreary experiences.

CG: Staff meetings often are.

TM: Oh, well it was just interminable. It was from nine to twelve, and it was real navel-gazing sessions. And people would cry, and carry on about dreams they had had, and it was just awful. And we sat down that Monday after Evensong, and everybody was exclaiming how

beautiful it was. And then they said to Jerry, the organist, “Oh, that was just fabulous!” [Laughs] One person finally said to the rector, “You’re being very quiet.” And he sort of sat there and shook his head, and he said, “Well, I got some complaints.” Well, I knew exactly who had complained, because I had overheard the man say, “Well, I liked the Vivaldi or whatever, but I couldn’t bear that singing of Evensong,” or evening prayer, as he probably called it. And rather than say to this man, “Well, you are a Presbyterian at heart, and now you’re in the Episcopal Church, and this is part of our tradition,” he said nothing of the sort. He agreed with him. And that was part of the problem out there; he never challenged anybody. So, I said, “Well, I know exactly who it is that complained, and you probably only heard one complaint. And I know who it was.” And I said, “You missed an opportunity to do a little instruction.” So that was just a little capsule of the kind of thing that happened out there, that you tried to do things, and it would be—

CG: And you were there for two years?

TM: Yeah. And then during my time there, I did get to spend a lot of time, like a month or so, in Jerusalem, which the rector [laughs] was totally against. But I had banked continuing education, and I took myself over there. It was the second year I was there [at St. David’s], of course, and so I had the month. I remember that earlier that last year, the rector and I had agreed that really, two years was going to be just enough time for me to be at Saint David’s, that as he said to me, his exact words were, “Our relationship is not working out.” [Laughs] Well, that was abundantly clear to anybody, and certain to me, and I

said, “Yes, I agree.” So we agreed that after the two years was up, I would leave the next summer.

Well, it was in the spring that I went to Jerusalem, and the Holy Lands. And I had no job to go to after I left Saint David’s, and I can remember the Reverend Timothy Pickering at Redeemer [in Bryn Mawr] said, “Oh, I think it’s absolutely”——I don’t know what word he used. I think he said elegant, actually. “I think it’s absolutely elegant that you’re taking off on that long trip, and have no plans, no job, when you get back!” And I said, “Well, I want to go, and I’m not going to worry about it.” He says, “Oh, that’s wonderful!” I did go; I came back, and I did some supply work, and then eventually I made—— I was called as rector of Saint Mary’s.

CG: What about Saint Andrew’s in—?

TM: Oh, okay. Well, Saint Andrew’s, yes. Okay, you’re right. I forgot about it. That was when I said that I did some other things, and then I was [assistant chaplain] at Saint Andrew’s.

CG: And you were what, the assistant chaplain?

TM: Assistant chaplain.

CG: Was it Lyman Ogilby’s brother who was the chaplain?

TM: Brother, yes. He was——well, actually he had——

CG: Alexander.

TM: Alexander Ogilby, aka Sandy Ogilby, had been the chaplain. Now this is an interesting little ditty. He had gone off on a little sabbatical, and Saint Andrew’s brought in an Englishman who had been a monk named Simon Mein.

CG: M-E-A-N?

TM: M-E-I-N, I think.

CG: Okay.

TM: And Simon, who was a very able guy, got really in there, and the school decided that when Sandy Ogilby came back, he should become the head of the sacred studies department, and Simon Mein would continue as the chaplain, and just become the permanent chaplain. So I was there at that little beginning of that, and that was a little bit awkward, obviously.

CG: I would think so.

TM: But Simon was a great teacher. He was very good, as was Sandy, because Sandy was a very steady, kind of introverted, but very sweet person to me. I will always be grateful for his friendship. And so I worked with both clergy.

CG: Were you teaching as well?

TM: I was teaching, yes.

CG: Were you still at that point doing some minor coin-flipping about teaching—

TM: Yes. Yes, I think so.

CG: —versus parochial work?

TM: And what I found out was that being in a boarding school setting if you were a teacher—if you were a student, you were going to be moving through, and you're going to be out of there before you know it. But something about being a teacher there seemed very stultifying to me, because you were just in this part of the country that was very backwater.

CG: Where in Delaware is this, Saint Andrew's?

TM: Middletown.

CG: Middletown. Okay, thank you.

TM: And it's a beautiful setting. I mean, it's a gorgeous place, and of course you know *The Dead Poet's Society* was filmed there.

CG: Yeah.

TM: But it was very, very, very—

CG: Isolated.

TM: —isolated. And then I guess I'd have to say that as bruising as the Saint David's experience was, I sort of missed some of the excitement.

CG: So how did you get into the mix for Saint Mary's, Cathedral Road, or whatever it was called then?

TM: Bishop Ogilby said—having persuaded me to come back in the first place, get back here, then he said, "I have a church that I think you might be good for," and that's when he put my name in. And he clearly was promoting me. I mean, there were other candidates they looked at, admittedly, but the bishop definitely, I think, wanted me.

CG: Okay, let's divert from Tom for a second and talk about Saint Mary's, and the cathedral.

TM: Right. When I got there—

CG: First of all, when had that been built? When did they decide to put the cathedral there?

TM: Okay, that was done in—the decision was started in the late twenties. Up 'til then they had some plans to do a cathedral on the Parkway. And Bishop Rhineland was the perfect definition of a prince bishop. He was very learned, but he also was very—had had some big plans for the diocese. And as typically happens sometimes in these cases, he was shot down pretty severely. And one of his big plans was to have an enormous cathedral.

CG: Out?

TM: No, on the Parkway.

CG: On the Parkway?

TM: Yeah. He wanted to have it down where everything else was. And that plan pretty well was shot down. And then, under Bishop Garland—

CG: Who succeeded Rhinelander?

TM: Yes. Under Bishop Garland, who was an Irish—basically was born in Ireland. He came over, and he decided that—and others decided, the cathedral chapter decided, that they would secure land in Roxborough, and abandoned the idea of the Parkway. And it's very complicated why that wasn't going to work, but it just didn't. And then they decided on the site that they bought. They purchased it from the Houston family for half a million dollars, in the late twenties, I guess.

CG: Before the crash?

TM: Before the crash, indeed. And then, when Bishop Garland decided that this is where the cathedral would be—and he also was pretty committed to the original plan, which would have been a very large neo-gothic cathedral. Well, they started later, of course, than Saint John the Divine, later than the Washington Cathedral, and they got very little accomplished, and then the crash of 1929 happened.

CG: Right.

TM: And they continued; some building continued. As you probably know, the real grim part of the Depression came—

CG: Later, in the thirties, yeah.

TM: —later, in the thirties.

CG: And then the war.

TM: And then the war. So what happened was that we figure one day the men were just given an envelope on Friday, and said, “This is the last day you’ll be here. We’re closing down the project.” And so it languished all through the thirties.

CG: Was there a chapel there that was used as a church?

TM: So yes, they had built and completed what was to be the Lady Chapel, which would have been east of the high altar.

CG: Which is now the church?

TM: Which is now the church. And that had been—the cornerstone was laid, and they had built on a monumental scale, unlike, say, Bryn Athyn Cathedral, which is like a doll house. It isn’t on a monumental scale. Pitcairn became his own architect, and he wanted to get finished, so he did it quickly, and so it’s small. It’s out of scale with the environment around it. But Saint Mary’s was done on a monumental scale, so what they built there was the way it would have been built had they completed the whole thing. And worship was conducted by lay leaders and clergy canons who were assigned by the bishop to work there part-time. But there was a small group that would gather in the Lady Chapel, and when the building was completed, Bishop Garland’s body, his remains, were brought from Saint James the Less, and he was exhumated [sic] and then brought up and buried in the floor at a later time.

CG: He still is there?

TM: And he’s still there. And Bishop Taitt, who was very much—

CG: Was he Garland’s successor?

TM: He was Garland's successor, and Bishop Taitt was also very eager to see a cathedral built there. But by the time they came along, the very ambitious original program had been scaled way back.

CG: Okay.

TM: And the cathedral chapter had other plans. By the late thirties they had other plans to build a cathedral, but they would have incorporated the Lady Chapel, but it would have been far less ambitious than the original scale. And then after Bishop Garland came along, Bishop Hart.

CG: He was after Bishop Taitt, right?

TM: Taitt, right. And he showed some interest in the cathedral, but I think, again, the realities were that there just wasn't—I mean, this is Quaker Philadelphia, after all.

CG: There wasn't the money for it?

TM: There wasn't the money. There wasn't the interest. It was out of sight and out of mind. Perhaps had it been started down on the Parkway, and people would have seen it on a regular basis, coming and going, they would have said, "Well, that building needs to be finished," like they did with the art museum, which was in the same category; it hadn't been finished, but it eventually was. So finally, the project languished pretty significantly, and then, as you know, under Bishop DeWitt, the final decision was made in Convention that we will not build a cathedral there.

CG: So that was when, the late fifties, early sixties?

TM: That would have been the sixties, I think, yeah. And they made the decision.

CG: There was some talk—and we will get back to your ministry, and you at that church, and the diocese in a second. But there was some talk after that, or maybe even leading up to that, about turning one of the existing parishes in Center City—

TM: Oh, yes. Yes.

CG: —into—it could have been Christ Church, or Trinity.

TM: Oh, yeah, that was always held out as a possibility.

CG: Holy Trinity, on Rittenhouse Square. And that's what ultimately happened?

TM: Right.

CG: Okay.

TM: And Church of the Advocate had been mentioned at one time. Yes, you're right. Holy Trinity, I think, was even spoken about. Certainly Christ Church, and so on. But there was not a lot of interest in the building in Upper Roxborough, and there were mite box ingatherings there, under Bishop Hart, I'm told. Some people who are still alive say to me, "Oh, I remember being out there in a big event, outdoor event." And they had to be outdoors, because there wasn't enough seating space inside.

CG: Inside, right.

TM: But under Bishop DeWitt it finally was established that there will be no cathedral. Now, this may be an apocryphal story, but I'll tell it anyway. It sounds like it could be true. I was told that like with Denbigh and Church House on Rittenhouse Square and so on, their ultimate goal was to sell the whole property. The diocese wanted to get rid of it, because this was also the time that because of anti-war activity in the diocese, and other things, the giving had gone

significantly down, and there were financial issues. So, they sold Denbigh. They did complete that sale. They completed the sale in Rittenhouse Square. And the word I got is that they had their sights on the site of the cathedral. The story that is interesting is that they were just about to take that decision, and Bishop Tsu, Bishop Andrew Yu-Yue Tsu—

CG: Could you spell his last name?

TM: T-S-U, I think. He was an assisting bishop in the diocese. He had been run out of China at the time of the takeover of the Red Chinese. And he was a remarkably active person, even up to his late nineties. And he was supposed to have come to this chapter meeting, uninvited, and but just appeared. And the story I got, as I say, perhaps apocryphal, was that he said, as they're planning to take the decision to real estate agents, to see if they could unload this property, Bishop Tsu said, "Well, I'd like to say something." And he said, "You know, I come from a country that has been taken over by the communist Chinese." And he said, "They have suppressed religion at home, and the churches are now underground churches." And he said, "I've been up to Saint Mary's, and I've done confirmations there. I know the rector there and everything." And he said, "I just feel that this is terrible, to take that church away from those dear people." Well, according to my sources, he sabotaged the meeting, basically. And so what happened—

CG: Good for him, right, from your point of view?

TM: From my point of view, it was a very welcome addition! So he finally, well someone said, "I move we table this decision." And then honestly, what happened was that I think this gave wiggle room to

some of the people on the cathedral chapter who had in mind some ideas about developing a retirement community on the unused property.

CG: Which became Cathedral Village.

TM: Cathedral Village. So this gave them some time, and the cathedral chapter eventually paid for a feasibility study to decide whether or not this would be a feasible plan up there. Then simultaneously, as that was going on, laws in terms of nursing facilities were changed and upgraded, and strengthened, so that nursing homes had to have sprinkler systems, and they had to have doorways certain widths, and they had to have this, and they had to have that. And a number of these places that had been in existence for quite a while didn't have the money—

CG: To upgrade? Yeah.

TM: —to upgrade. And those places would have been Druim Moir, behind Springside [School] in Chestnut Hill, the Leamy Home for women of the Episcopal Church.

CG: L-E-A-M-Y.

TM: L-E-A-M-Y. And the Presser Home, also in Mount Airy, which was for retired church musicians. Not church, necessarily, but musicians.

CG: But musicians, yeah.

TM: And the church ladies were definitely the group at the Leamy Home. And Druim Moir was for a lot of retired clergy, and their spouses.

CG: Cathedral Village became necessary?

TM: So that became something that appealed to the planners, because they could then meld the resources of those three places, eventually.

CG: And build it to code?

TM: And build it to code. And so eventually all of that came into existence. And I think to be fair, I don't think that the Presser—I don't think their resources were melded in the same way that Leamy and Druim Moir were. I think they made some provisions for their people to be brought to Cathedral Village, and they paid for them while they were there.

CG: But I think Presser is still there, in some form.

TM: Presser still exists, yes.

CG: All right, so when you got to—you were called in 1978?

TM: Yes, that's right.

CG: And by then it had been an established parish for a while.

TM: That's right.

CG: Cathedral Village was there.

TM: It was, yes. It was not open, but it was in existence. It was getting ready to welcome the first residents, and also it was waiting to have all of the inspections done, so that they could get in there.

CG: Right. Was there any official relationship between Saint Mary's and Cathedral Village?

TM: Absolutely none. And that's a story in and of itself, because my predecessor, and I've have to say, Bishop Ogilby, and cathedral chapter all had this vision that the worship of Saint Mary's would take place in a multipurpose room at Cathedral Village. [Sighs] The idea was that this auditorium-type room, which today is called Cathedral Hall, would function as joint usage, and on Sunday mornings it would be worship in there. And I had a really clear sense that this wouldn't work. And I argued for a couple years about it, because I said—meanwhile, we were worshipping in Saint Mary's, but I said, "This is

going to be a problem, because who's going to set up?" All this kind of thing.

CG: Logistics would have been a nightmare, I would imagine.

TM: But I foolishly did not—I didn't cut to the chase. What I talked about was more—I didn't get to the housekeeping problems. I started by saying, "You know, if it hadn't been for Saint Mary's, and the flicker of Christian life still alive there over these decades, this place would have been lost to the church, and therefore there wouldn't have been any possibility for Cathedral Village. It would have long since been a mall, or something else." And I said, "The architects have obviously been inspired by this sort of ruin, because they've incorporated this in a lot of their design, in the public rooms—unfinished ceilings, that kind of thing." And of course, it was simultaneously a time in architecture when the deconstruction look was very avant-garde, so it kind of worked well with that period.

But at any rate, the architects and the planners, and they all had used this as a hub. And I said, "We really need to honor this building, and use it." Total waste of time. Made no impression whatever! And then finally, after beating my head against a wall, I finally decided, I think I'm going to try a different tactic, which I should have done right away. I started saying, "Who's going to set up? Who's going to tear down? What about Holy Week? What about weddings? What about funerals?"

CG: Funerals!

TM: And then I started saying things to the head of the village, such as, "Where would the hearse—?" presuming, of course, every funeral would be a casket, which of course is not the case. But I said, "Where

would we park the hearse? Where do you think that would be a good place to park?” Well, within weeks, I got a call from Bill White.

CG: Who was the chancellor of the diocese?

TM: Who’s the chancellor of the diocese, and at the same time he was the board chair of Cathedral Village. And he said, “Well, if you did a renovation of Saint Mary’s, I hope you wouldn’t guild the lily,” I think was the term he used.

CG: In other words, you’d won?

TM: Yes. He said, “But I think maybe you’re right. This might be a problem, having everything in that multipurpose room.”

CG: You didn’t have an official relationship with Cathedral Village, but you did have an informal one, as I understand it?

TM: Yeah. And I developed that over the years.

CG: Did you celebrate once in a while?

TM: What I did was right at the beginning, almost from the get-go, the Leamy ladies, as they were always known—never the “Leamy women”; always the “Leamy Ladies”—and they were an interesting group of people, believe me! One was a deaconess. They had several deaconesses at the time, and one was from China. I mean, she was American, but she had gone to China, to be a missionary out there. She brought back a Chinese crèche, which we now have at Saint Mary’s, and a delightful woman named Katherine Putnam, Deaconess Katherine Putnam. And she lived to be 99.

CG: How are you spelling her Katherine?

TM: Oh, Katherine with a K. And she was a very, very lively person, and she used to have morning prayer for the other Leamy ladies at the

Leamy Home, which was modeled, by the way—modeled after Hampton Court, I mean, sort of a scaled-down version.

CG: Right.

TM: And she would call upon clergy to come in, and I had been one, once or twice, to come in and celebrate the Eucharist in their chapel. And they were deeply distressed when they heard that the place they were moving to, namely Bishop White Lodge, named for Bishop William White—

CG: Bishop White, right.

TM: —was not going to have a chapel. They were very distressed about this. So I went over to the Leamy Home and talked to them, and I said, “You know, when you get over there, when they finally move you in, we’re going to have weekly chapel services, and it will always be the Eucharist. And yes, you’re right; there isn’t a chapel there, but we’re going to use a room there.” So in a way, that became our multipurpose idea. And I think they were skeptical that this would be a temporary thing.

CG: You did it the whole time you were there.

TM: I did it the whole time, and if I couldn’t do it, why, it still went on, with other clergy. Oddly enough, sometimes visiting clergy would say to me, “My gracious, I don’t see that many people on a Sunday morning!”

CG: Isn’t that interesting. Okay.

TM: So about a third of the population of Bishop White Lodge would actually go to the service once a week.

CG: Yeah. So when you were there, from ’78 through 2014, your relationship was informal, but it was constant?

TM: Yeah.

CG: All right. Also during that period, the church changed a lot. There were a lot of issues. You mentioned the *Prayer Book*. Women, gays, all these major issues that affected not only the diocese and Saint Mary's, I'm sure, but also the National Church, and the whole worldwide Anglican Communion. As a guy in the priesthood at a time when there were only guys in the priesthood, what was it like as things began to change? Were you in favor of it? Were you wary of it? How did you feel?

TM: Well, I didn't really feel strongly for or against. Now, having said to you that I was occasionally helping at the Good Shepherd, Rosemont, under Father George Rutler, it's very clear where his position—he's now a Roman Catholic priest.

CG: And very conservative.

TM: And he was very conservative, and also he was very outspoken *against* women clergy. And he went all over the country proclaiming this. He'd go to Canada, he'd go the West Coast—everywhere. And he was a very, very effective speaker, I must say, so he really was called upon quite often. I remember he made the *Evening News*, Walter Cronkite, because he was the one that stood up at the ordination of the women forty years ago this month. And he said, "I sense the smell of perversion in here." And I knew, you know, that's the kind of sound bite that the news media cannot resist. So he was on the *Evening News*. Well anyway, I did not feel anywhere close to the negative attitude that he had.

CD: Did you go to the service?

TM: I did not, and I don't remember why I didn't go, but I wasn't there. He, of course, went. I heard about it later. But I heard what he had to say, and I listened to what he had to say, but then I also heard the other side. But I think in my own mind, I decided that a lot of the push to get the women ordained was really the outcome of another issue which was that seminaries were having trouble. They were having trouble, and so they needed students, so they started taking women as students. And then, they found that the women were doing very well academically. In fact, not a few of them did far better than the men. But at the conclusion of the three years, the men were being ordained.

CG: And the women weren't.

TM: And Jane Simpson was not being ordained. So people started saying, "Well, this is strange. Why aren't we ordaining her? She did better than everybody."

CG: Than Fred Smith?

TM: Yeah! So, and it became sort of a fairness issue. And I don't think a lot of—I honestly, to this day, don't feel that a lot of careful theological work was done to prepare the church for this, so therefore I think the initial rockiness—but then I also can argue, as people do, that if you don't do something bold, it doesn't get done.

CG: Exactly!

TM: So you have that to look at. I don't think I was terribly—I know I was not terribly disturbed that women were being ordained.

CG: And what I understand, and one of the things that I think speaks to what you just said, was Bishop Ogilby, in whose diocese this

happened, was basically in favor of ordaining women, but professionally he couldn't—

TM: Right.

CG: He couldn't approve it. But he also never took his Episcopal authority and forbade it. So he helped the process in a very gentle, quiet way.

TM: Right.

CG: To move forward, as I understand the history.

TM: Well, yes, he did that, but at the same time, Bishop Ogilby was very traditional in terms of—I can remember whenever he was going to do something, when I was the Dean of the Wissahicken Deanery, when Bishop Ogilby was going to be at another parish in the deanery, he would call me—totally unnecessary.

CG: And say, "I'm going to be at Saint Martin's," or whatever.

TM: He'd say, "Dean McClellan," and it was sort tongue-in-cheek, but he'd say, "I'm going to be at Saint Paul's, Chestnut Hill," or, "I'm going to be at Saint Timothy's, Roxborough. I'm going to be wherever."

CG: Wherever.

TM: "I want you to know I'll be in your deanery." And it was a courtesy thing. I happen to know, because I knew Bishop Ogilby pretty darn well, I have to say—he did feel sandbagged, that the ordination was done without his real permission. And I think he always found that difficult.

CG: Yeah.

TM: So I think he was enough of an old-school traditionalist—

CG: Well, he followed the rules.

TM: He followed the rules. He was aware that canonically, this was done in the wrong way, and therefore although his heart was clearly in favor of doing this, he also didn't particularly appreciate the way it was done.

CG: Like the way it was done. And was there another piece of that, in that his immediate predecessor as diocesan was one of the consecrating bishops?

TM: Possibly. I think he was—

CG: One of the ordaining bishops.

TM: Ordaining bishops, yeah. I think he felt a little bit blindsided.

CG: By DeWitt?

TM: By all of them.

CG: Yeah.

TM: Corrigan, all of them. But I also know that he obviously was in favor.

CG: Yeah, because he could have forbidden it.

TM: Of the ordination of women.

CG: And he didn't do that.

TM: Right.

CG: It's interesting.

TM: Another thing, I think this is where he and a lot of other bishops made a terrible mistake. Just as I had said earlier that I was strongly influenced by a slightly older friend who became interested in the ordained ministry, I think Bishop Ogilby and a whole host of other bishops tried very hard to show everybody how much in favor they were of ordination of women, after it became the official policy of the church. So they were very welcoming of women who wanted to be ordained, wanted to go into the process, but a younger man who was

just out of college, who was interested, was sidelined, sidetracked, and he was told, “Well, you know what you need to do? You need to get some life experience.”

CG: Was it two years, I think they said?

TM: Oh, it was not stated.

CG: Oh, okay.

TM: I don't think it was stated. They were just told. Because I was one of the last people that went through that were told, “Well, maybe you ought to have done something else,” which I had done.

CG: Including military.

TM: Yeah, including that little military stint. But you could still be in your twenties, and be considered a good candidate for this. Whereas, not that many years later, I think probably this would have been even true, maybe, of women, but certainly of the men. If you were in your twenties, and showed an interest in the ordained ministry, quite honestly you were not encouraged. You were told, “Well, you need to get some life experience.” What happened was that they went out and did something else, and they never came back. So the Church ended up losing, in my opinion, a generation of younger clergy. And then I found it very entertaining—not entertaining, but rather ironic, that I would go to meetings then later, and a lot of the bishops and people were wringing their hands, saying, “Oh, isn't it sad that we don't have younger clergy!”

CG: Yeah.

TM: Well, I know why. I think I know why. Because younger clergy, then, are more apt to be ones that can influence other younger people.

CG: To come to church.

TM: To come to the church.

CG: Right. Talking about Lyman Ogilby, you served basically as an ordained person for three bishops over lengthy periods of time.

TM: Well actually, four.

CG: Four. DeWitt—

TM: Ogilby, Bartlett.

CG: Yeah, but DeWitt was just at the beginning.

TM: Yeah, right.

CG: Tell me about each of them, and when we get to the most recent diocesan, Charles Bennison, we can talk a little bit about some of the troubles.

TM: Right.

CG: But tell me what Lyman Ogilby did for the diocese, and then what Allen Bartlett did, and that kind of thing, very briefly.

TM: Well, sure. Lyman Ogilby, as I said, I was probably, at least during his episcopate, the closest to him of any of them. And I just fundamentally liked him very much, and I thought he was trying to steady the ship during some very difficult times.

CG: Yeah.

TM: I mean, we had all of the things with the ordination, and we had social issues, and a lot of people in the ramparts, in various ways. We had *Prayer Book*. We had the whole beginnings of the thing at Rosemont, remember, with the departure of Father Rutler, trying to get the congregation to leave the Episcopal Church, which they never did, under him. So these were areas that Bishop Ogilby had to deal with, and I think he did a reasonably good job. He certainly was a hard,

diligent worker, and I always respected his—he was very traditional, in many ways. [Pause] He had a bit of a healing ministry, I think.

CG: Well, he came after a rough period of time, and in retrospect a lot of people say, “Well, Bob DeWitt was right,” but at the time, it was anything but easy. So then, following him was Allen Bartlett, who came to us from Louisville.

TM: Louisville, Kentucky, exactly, where he was the dean. And I guess one of his contributions right off the bat would be that he created the Cathedral at 38<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut, and having been a cathedral dean, he saw the value of having a cathedral. So that was one of his contributions. I think like Bishop Ogilby he was a steadying influence. I will say this about him: he really took his preaching seriously. His sermons were always fresh and original, and thoughtful, and I always appreciated that about him. He was a very—your best way to communicate with him was in writing, so if you were going to meet with him, the best thing—and I was head of the liturgical commission at the time.

I remember when the archbishop of Canterbury was going to come for a liturgy here—and I don’t remember what the liturgy was, necessarily, but I remember there were these hew and cries: “It’s got to be Rite One,” as though to say, “Well, the best we have is Rite One, and therefore if the archbishop of Canterbury is here, we’ve got to use the best we have, and that would be Rite One.” Well, I felt very much that that’s ridiculous. The archbishop is all over the world, and he’s going to use whatever rites are available, and he doesn’t need to use Rite One. He’ll be perfectly fine with Rite Two. So I wrote to Bishop Bartlett, and I said what I thought, and I think that was the way to go.

And then you sit down and talk about it. I'm delighted to say, he agreed. He said, "Yes, I think we should use Rite Two."

CG: One of the things that one hears about Bishop Bartlett in terms of the social issues is that when he came here, he said that he was opposed to the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals.

TM: Yeah.

CG: And very quickly in his ministry here, he began to shift his view, and ultimately got himself almost into trouble because he ordained somebody who was partnered, and gay.

TM: He did.

CG: Was he responding—I mean, it was growth on his part, I guess, but was he also responding to the way the diocese was going?

TM: Well, I think he was responding to—one would like to think he was responding to the urgings of the spirit, but also he was in a metropolitan area, of Philadelphia—this is part of that, I think. He was certainly involved in a church that was moving in that direction.

CG: And in a progressive diocese.

TM: And in a progressive diocese. And therefore, it most definitely represented growth on his part. He's an introspective person, and I think he thought through the issue with care, and I think he began to conclude that this is the way to go. And then he acted on that, and as you pointed out, quite correctly, he became very close to being—

CG: If Walter Righter, who was tried for doing the same thing in Newark, hadn't been found not guilty.

TM: Yeah.

CG: Bartlett was the next one on the runway.

TM: Yes, I agree.

CG: Okay, so Bartlett's here until 1997, through the General Convention here, when a former Philadelphian is elected presiding bishop, Frank Griswold.

TM: Right.

CG: And then it's Charles Bennison. And almost from the beginning, as I understand, Bishop Bennison was controversial in the diocese. Tell me what your impressions were of him, and why he was controversial.

TM: Well, I think first of all that he came in and [pause] he was somebody who [was] definitely a kind of mover. He had a lot of ideas of the things he wanted to do, and he made it very clear that he was going to attack—attack, maybe, is not the right word—but he was going to put attention to a great many areas. He possessed a lot of energy, and right away I think people got nervous. They got to thinking, well, you need to sort of get the lay of the land and get to know how we do things here. And he didn't show any particular interest in doing that. And then, I noticed, since I had organized and run the consecration for Franklin Turner to be bishop, and I was asked by the bishop-elect if I would do the same thing for him.

CG: Franklin Turner was a bishop suffragan.

TM: Suffragan, the last one that we've had, under Bishop Bartlett. That was another good contribution I should have mentioned earlier.

CG: Was Frank Turner?

TM: Was yes, that he called for the election of a suffragan.

CG: And we got Frank Turner from that.

TM: He had some degree of confidence that the diocese would make a good choice, and so he let the process work.

CG: And the general feeling is that the diocese did make a good choice.

TM: Yeah, they did make a good choice. Anyway, he, Bennison, then wanted me to help with the consecration, which I agreed to do. And right away, right away, I could see a big contrast, because all of a sudden I would get calls from people, like standing committee members, saying, “Now, don’t let the bishop-elect do this, that, or the other thing.” In other words, there was more micromanaging. And so I could tell that there was some problems right away, just before he was even the diocesan bishop, before he was bishop coadjutor.

CG: Coadjutor, yeah.

TM: And there was this friction, I guess is the best way to put it.

CG: What do you think created the friction?

TM: Well, I think that Bishop Bennison was the kind of person who came across as being ready to do things in a certain way that he wanted to do them.

CG: Could he have been more sensitive?

TM: He might have been more sensitive. I think he would probably have benefited from a little bit of a watch and wait approach, but that’s not the way he is. And I continue to tell people, [laughs] as I’m saying now, that when he was being vetted, and we were out at Episcopal Academy, and it was a Saturday.

CG: This was for the dog and pony show?

TM: This was for the dog and pony show, exactly, and all the candidates were there. And when his turn came, he said the very words, “I sinned down in Atlanta, Georgia, at the parish down there.” And he put this in his book about congregational development. He said, “I did a miserable job down there in Atlanta,” and after saying a few more words about it, he said, “I’d have to say I sinned.” Those were

the words he used. And I heard those words, and a lot of people seem to have forgotten that he said that, because later they said to me things like, “Well, he’s acting the way he did down in Georgia!” And I said, “Well, that’s what he told you, that he wasn’t”—but see, they assumed that, oh, well, he’s telling us this because he’s changed, or he’s different now, or something. But he didn’t really say he was that different. He just said, “I didn’t do a very good job down there, and I made mistakes.” Well, we all make mistakes. But he was very clear at that Saturday session, and the following Saturday he was elected.

CG: Right.

TM: So there wasn’t a big time lapse for people to forget those words.

[Laughs]

CG: No.

TM: But on the other hand, I think what happened was that I think this diocese said to themselves, “Oh, doesn’t that feel good, that he’s being so hard on himself here?” This fits in with the narrative, I think, of a diocese that likes to celebrate—I don’t know how to put it, but they like to celebrate the flawed. They want to sort of say, “Oh, well this person is very flawed, therefore we have to help their self-esteem a little bit.” And I think it actually worked into that narrative a tiny bit, I really do, because I think people enjoy hearing someone say—the only candidate who was even slightly hard on himself. And just like a politician, it’s called hanging a lantern on it. You know, George W. Bush would say, when someone said, “Can you speak Spanish?” he said, “I have enough trouble with English!” And people would laugh; they’d love it. They’d love to hear this self-deprecation.

So I think there was something in this diocese that said, “That feels good.”

CG: Okay. Let me—

TM: Historically, this is nothing new.

CG: No. Oh, no, there’ve been bunches of these.

TM: Because bishops going back to Bishop Onderdonk, the second bishop of the diocese, had a miserable time.

CG: Oh, yeah. And DeWitt, even.

TM: And DeWitt.

CG: And DeWitt was still on some people’s minds. But I think one of the questions that a lot of people have is that—and certainly there was enough blame on both sides of the issue to go around.

TM: Oh, very definitely, yeah.

CG: But that at some point after the standing committee called for him to retire, in 2006, and he didn’t, and then there was all the inhibition for something that had happened 30 years ago, which seemed a little bit, to some people—

TM: A little strange, yeah.

CG: A little strange, an “out-to-get-you” moment. And then he came back. Do you think he and the diocese might have been better served if he had left a little earlier than he did, if he had retired a little earlier than he did? Because clearly, his presence was a source of conflict and pain for the diocese, at a certain point.

TM: Well, I think we won’t know for a while, but I think that this: there is a possibility—there is a possibility that he may have done this diocese a favor.

CG: How so?

TM: In a couple ways. One is that all the other bishops who ran into the buzz saw of standing committee in opposition, they all caved and went away. He simply refused to do that. He fought. And that was a change that had never been experienced in this diocese. They had never had that experience, where the bishop put up a fight.

CG: Right.

TM: They always left. The other thing is that the diocese got a taste of how it would be to be run by the standing committee, as the ecclesiastical authority. And that was pretty clearly a disaster. Witness the fact that most of the people that I talked to in the diocese said, “Well, that was a horrible mistake. That really didn’t work.”

CG: That’s the way the canons work, right?

TM: That’s the way the canons work. But as much as they didn’t like one man, [laughs]—

CG: They didn’t like ten, either.

TM: They didn’t like ten running things.

CG: The old saw about a camel is a horse designed by a committee.

TM: Right. And so, I would like to think that years from now, when a group of people, as they seem to always want to do in this diocese, start to get the long knives out after the bishop—see, I took the attitude as I could see where he had made mistakes. I could understand all of that. I could understand some of the criticisms. People would tell me, “Oh, he doesn’t do this. He doesn’t do that.” But I always said, “Yes. He told you, though. He told you about this, and you elected him, and now he’s your bishop, so make the most of it.” And as my friend Charles Carter used to say, he said, “This man

is a rank amateur! I have worked with autocratic people. I worked with many autocratic people, and this man is a rank amateur!”

CG: Bennison is an amateur?

TM: Yes. He said, “He’s a rank amateur. Get over it.” And so, years from now I would like to think that when history tries to repeat itself in this diocese, and people say, “Well, we’ve got to get the bishop out of here. He’s just obviously not what we expected. He’s not the person we were hoping for. He’s not blah, blah, blah.” I hope that someone will say, “Oh, my God! We don’t want to repeat the horror of what happened when they tried to unload Bishop Charles Bennison.”

CG: Bennison, yeah.

TM: So that could be a contribution that he’s made. In other words, this could be something, some legacy that he leaves behind, that says, “This diocese is over 200 years old. It’s going to be, presumably, here long after we’re all dead. It isn’t the end of the world to have a bishop that isn’t exactly perfect, and we can work with this person, and try to make the most of it.” And maybe, maybe, if they had been more accommodating, he would have been less difficult.

CG: You don’t know.

TM: You don’t know.

CG: Different personalities are involved.

TM: I know one thing, the people on the fringes who weren’t really too involved with the diocese, but one of the things I heard constantly is, “Well, people are not being very Christian in the way they’re treating one another.” Well, that was quite true!

CG: Yeah. Do you think, now that Bennison has been gone for two years, and Bishop Daniel has been the provisional bishop, which gives him all the Episcopal authorities—

TM: Responsibilities, right.

CG: —and responsibilities, do you think the diocese is beginning to heal?

TM: Well, I think it is, but on the other hand, I think it shouldn't talk so much about healing.

CG: Interesting.

TM: I think it should go on to do the work of Christ's church, and I think the trouble with our church today is that it spends an awful lot of time on itself.

CG: Navel gazing, again.

TM: Navel gazing. And William Temple—and I like to quote him, because it's exactly what he said. He said, "The church is the only institution that exists for people that are not its members."

CG: William Temple was—?

TM: Archbishop of Canterbury.

CG: That's what I thought.

TM: During World War Two. And he was very, very strongly of the opinion that—and so much of the church today, and I go to some of these meetings where you talk about the pain you've experienced! Oh, good heavens! When you think of people in parts of the world that are being chopped up and thrown into gutters, I mean, that's real. That's pain.

CG: Yeah.

TM: And this dwelling on ourselves, and psychic pain, and all of this, I think, is very self-destructive. And all these self-referential sermons

about, oh, I went through such an experience in my life! You know, what is that all about? What is that going to do to advance the Kingdom? And if the church is supposed to be preparing people for eternity, I think this is a very poor way to do it, because by concentrating on ourselves, we fail to concentrate on the Christ in other people. And I think the train has come off the tracks, when you come to any diocese, or any parish, that says, “We need to work more on ourselves. We need to study ourselves. We need to find out where we are hurting.” No.

And I can tell you this: Father Paul Washington—I don’t remember a lot of sermons over the years, but I remember one that he delivered. When he said, “When I was first ordained as a priest of the Episcopal Church, I was so proud of myself,” something to that effect. And he said he would be so horrified when he was at a place where he was confused, maybe, with the sexton.

CG: Because he was black?

TM: Because he was black, and people would assume, oh, you can’t be one of the clergy. And he said he would be very angry about this. Maybe he didn’t use the word angry, but very upset. And he said he finally began to realize: stop worrying about how *you* are treated, and worry more about how *other people* are treated. That should be your job. Stop sniveling and whining about the fact that you weren’t shown the respect you think you deserve as an ordained person, and start worrying about other people. I thought it was a marvelous sermon! And I think it needs to be told over and over again because I think the church falls into this trap, of stroking itself, and saying, “Oh, you poor soul. You’ve had such a hard time!”

A person I know very well, who teaches now at Villanova University—his legs were blown off in Vietnam, and he was very, very sick, and he was very close to death, but he pulled through. He was evacuated, and he came to this side, and he finally went to a rehab place. And he was feeling extremely sorry for himself. [Laughs] And he whimpered to a nurse, “Could you get me a cigarette? I can’t reach it.” And she said, “Oh, get it yourself! It’s just over there on the table.” And he was so shocked that she showed absolutely no pity for him. And it’s a principle of good therapy. All of a sudden, she started giving him some challenges.

CG: And treating him everybody else.

TM: And treating him like everybody else. She ended up—they ended up getting married, and having children. He went on to graduate school. He became a professor. And he tells anybody who will listen, “This woman saved my life!” And she said, “In our community every weekend the fathers have to take the kids to McDonald’s.” And she said, “And for him, it’s a big effort, because he’s got to get out the wheelchair, and fold it up, and put it in the car, da-da-da.” But she said, “I said, ‘You’re no different than the other dads. Get out there and take them to McDonald’s.’”

CG: Take them to McDonald’s. Well, maybe you could take them to a place that has healthier food! [Laughs]

TM: Healthier food. But at any rate, the point is that I think the church needs to learn, and this diocese, especially, honestly, that a lot of concentration on self is the death.

CG: There’s one thing I’ve often wondered, Tom, and that’s if because of the nature of this diocese, and its history, and its importance not only

in the Episcopal Church in the United States, but as the first diocese in what is now the worldwide Anglican Communion, and all that, if we don't view ourselves as being special, which in many ways, we are—first black clergy.

TM: First black priest, yes.

CG: Priest, and first female bishop in the Anglican Communion really came out of this diocese—a whole lot of firsts, and we are the mother diocese of the Episcopal Church, and of the Anglican Communion, in a way. Do you think we feel special because of that, this diocese feels special because of that? Or is that just not something people even connect to?

TM: Well, I'm not so sure they do connect with it. I think at one time it would have been a little stronger. Today, people have such a very, very sketchy understanding of history. I continue to be amazed that more people aren't interested in the fact that Absalom Jones was the first black priest anywhere! I don't know. To me, it's odd that that isn't more celebrated.

CG: Yeah. And part of the reason that this oral history project is happening is that the book that was written, and I guess came out three years ago now, two years ago, couldn't include everything, so we're trying to do—I was amazed at the number of people who really didn't seem to care about the diocesan history.

TM: Sure.

CG: Not the book—not spending the 30 bucks to buy the book, but just on all of the things that are in there that are really neat to know about our history.

TM: Right, yeah.

CG: Is that a reflection of what you're talking about, do you think?

TM: I think so. I think so, yeah. I think so. I think it is. It's a pity, because it is a rich history.

CG: It's a very rich history, and if you forget history—

TM: You repeat it.

CG: You repeat it—whatever the term is.

TM: And mistakes. You repeat them as well.

CG: Yeah. And as everybody said about the Bennison years, this wasn't the first time there was conflict.

TM: No, it's been 160 years in the making. You have different characters, but what happened was Bishop Ogilby had a man come to the clergy conference several times. He was a rabbi, and it's Edwin Friedman, now deceased. He had a practice in DC. He had been on staff, I think, at the White House, in the Ford administration. But the bishop heard him at the House of Bishops, and was so impressed he invited him to the clergy conference, the yearly clergy conference, which doesn't exist anymore in the same way, at Hershey, [Pa.]. But he said, about institutions—you can be a hospital, school, church, whatever. They all have a culture. And he said, "Be very aware of that culture, because it repeats itself. The characters change, but the behavior is much the same. And they work out of the same playbook."

CG: Right.

TM: And that's why I was saying a moment ago that I'm hoping that maybe, just maybe—

CG: What Charles did—?

TM: The Bennison opposition challenged that playbook in a new way, because it had always worked before, and it didn't work this time, in the way it was intended to.

CG: Interesting.

TM: And I think that that maybe possibly a contribution, because all these bishops have had, to some degree or another—well, I will quote Bishop Ogilby. I should have done this when I talked about him initially. Bishop Ogilby said to me these very words, “The standing committee is driving me crazy.”

CG: So it's always thus?

TM: It's always thus. I said, “Really?” He said, “Their idea of mission and my idea of mission? Very different.” And he talked with some degree of pain about this, talk about navel gazing! But he was very distressed.

CG: Well, I'm sure it's not unique to any individual bishop and any individual standing committee.

TM: It's been happening, off and on, in one degree or another.

CG: Forever.

TM: Forever. And part of the problem is, according to what I've been told by canon lawyers, is that William White actually didn't want standing committees, or a standing committee. But the southern dioceses did. Ironically, Pennsylvania's standing committee, as anyone from outside the diocese will tell you, is a far stronger organization than exists in other dioceses.

CG: Because each diocese's canons are different.

TM: Has some unique quality. So as a result, this standing committee of our Diocese of Pennsylvania is particularly strong, and canonically

it's very murky, the authority lines of the ordinary—the bishop, in other words, and the standing committee. The delineation is murky.

CG: Right.

TM: And in that murkiness, the standing committee can exert itself—assert itself.

CG: Right.

TM: And that's what has historically happened. They throw their weight.

CG: And then when the bishop dismisses them as being just advisory, they get angry.

TM: Right, they get angry.

CG: And then you have built-in conflict.

TM: Then you have conflict.

CG: Interesting.

TM: And what some have told me needs to be done is that the canons need to be looked at very carefully, and possibly rewritten, to make things clearer, so that there is not this confusion. Now, whether that ever happens, I don't know, because both—there was a desire on the standing committee's part to do some of that rewriting [laughs] during the inhibition, during the Charles Bennison inhibition, but then everyone recognized that if they're rewritten at that time, it's going to be in favor of the standing committee, probably. Or the danger would be that it would be. So it's very Byzantine.

CG: Thank you.

[End of Interview]