

Interview with the Reverend James A. Trimble by Clark Groome,  
Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania Oral History Project, Philadelphia,  
Pennsylvania, May 6, 2014.

CLARK GROOME: We've started.

JAMES TRIMBLE: Okay.

CG: You're a Philadelphian, right?

JT: Yes, born and raised in Philadelphia.

CG: Whereabouts?

JT: I grew up in East Falls and went to the Thomas Mifflin Public School.  
And from there I went to the Central High School, the 191<sup>st</sup> class;  
graduated from there.

CG: What year was the 191<sup>st</sup> class?

JT: Oh, God. I'm trying to think—191. I'm 82 now, so.

CG: It doesn't matter.

JT: I'll look it up.

CG: It doesn't make any difference. You then went to Penn?

JT: I went to the University of Pennsylvania, and graduated from Penn.

CG: What was your major?

JT: My major was history, and my minor was biology. And my mother  
wanted me to be a doctor, so when I graduated from there, I applied  
to—well, before I graduated, I applied to Jefferson Medical College,  
was accepted, and then I decided that that wasn't for me.

CG: Okay. When did you graduate from Penn?

JT: 1950, was it?

CG: '53.

JT: '53?

CG: Yeah.

JT: Yeah.

CG: And so when did you—are you a lifelong Episcopalian?

JT: My mother was, yeah. Yeah.

CG: Okay, so you grew up in the Episcopal Church?

JT: Grew up in the Episcopal Church, and also my father basically was Presbyterian, so we alternated between those. And then basically I got more interested in the Church when I was at Penn, because we had a wonderful chaplain there, whose name I can't remember, but I will look it up. And he was a great guy. And so I spent a little time in the Marine Corps, not very long, at the end of the Korean Conflict.

CG: Right.

JT: At the end.

CG: At the end. Is this after you graduated from Penn?

JT: Right. I was there for actually—I got my commission in Quantico, Virginia, and [laughs] when I got my Second Lieutenant bars, the Colonel at our graduation said to me, “Trimble, you will make the worst goddamn officer the Corps has ever had.” And I said, “Thank you, sir.”

CG: [Laughs]

JT: And so at the end of the Korean Conflict—

CG: Was he right?

JT: Well, I didn't believe they were God, so he was probably right [laughs] at that particular point.

CG: [Laughs]

JT: I did a stint before that in Paris Island, which was really hard, and then went to Quantico. And then I was out, I've forgotten. Anyway, it was about a year and a half, maybe, so.

CG: And then after that you went to—?

JT: Then after that, I went to the seminary in Virginia, the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary, in Alexandria, Virginia. Graduated from there.

CG: And according to the book that I looked up, 1956.

JT: 1956, and basically I hadn't really made up my mind as to whether I was going to be ordained or not. Finally, Albert Temish Mollegean said to me, "Come on, Jim. What are you going to do?"

CG: Who was that?

JT: He was the professor of Apologetics.

CG: Can you spell it for me?

JT: M-O-L-L-E-G-E-A-N. He was from Mississippi. He was a really bright man. Actually, when I was there, we probably had the best faculty of any Episcopal seminary in the country. I mean, they were really—Cliff Stanley was the professor of theology, and he was—I think he got his Ph.D. from—oh God, what was the big seminary in New York? Not ours, but it was the—

CG: Union?

JT: Yeah, he got it from Union. And then he taught at the seminary for, I guess, half of his ministry. He was really very good, excellent.

CG: So you ultimately decided to be ordained? Or he twisted your arm, or something?

JT: I then decided to be ordained, and the point to me is that Bishop Hart was very happy that I did that, and then I had to get through all the stuff, you know. And my first—I remember Bishop Hart gave me four choices as to where he wanted me to go, as an assistant. And one was in Jenkintown, and one was in Mount Airy, at Grace Church,

Mount Airy, where Charles Edward Eder was the rector. And then one was Saint David's, Radnor, when [John] Newstub was there. And I've forgotten where the other one was. Well, I met with all these people, and the person that I liked the best, or thought I could learn the most from, was Dr. Eder. He was really quite a nice human being.

CG: At Grace?

JT: At Grace.

CG: Which is now Grace Epiphany, but then it was just Grace.

JT: Yeah, then it was Grace Church, Mount Airy.

CG: Were you a curate there? Is that what they were called in those days?

JT: I was a curate there, yeah, actually for a year and a half. And the reason for that was that Bishop Hart asked me to go out and begin a new—a new parish in Southampton, in Bucks County. And when I went out there, I said—

CG: What was it called?

JT: It was called the Church of the Redemption, Southampton. And we were meeting—the congregation was very small, but that part of Bucks County was just growing like crazy.

CG: This was in the late fifties and early sixties, right?

JT: Yeah, yeah. So I was the vicar of that parish for two years, and then the parish grew so much, we built the whole church building and educational thing, educational wing, and what have you, and then I became the rector of the parish.

CG: When it became self-sustaining. It was no longer a mission church?

JT: It was no longer a mission church. We alternated; while the church building was being built, we met in the elementary school auditorium,

paid money to them to meet there. And then mid-week services we alternated between the firehouse and the Republican Club.

CG: [Laughs]

JT: Don't ask me why. But that—

CG: Because they had the space available?

JT: Yeah, because they had the space available. The only problem in the firehouse is that sometimes they would have a fire in the middle of a mid-week service, which was interesting. So then we finally moved into the church building, and the parish grew like crazy.

CG: You were rector there, then, for three years, I believe.

JT: I was rector there for three years, and then I thought, really, I had done the job that the bishop wanted me to do, and so I was looking around at other things, and I got an offer to be a chaplain at Duke University, the Episcopal chaplain at Duke University. And Bishop Hart didn't want me to go, so he said, "How'd you like to be the chaplain of the Episcopal Academy?" I said, "Well, I love kids," and I had two boys myself, and a daughter at that—yes, yes. And so I met Jim Quinn, and so the Bishop said, "What do you think?"

CG: He was the headmaster?

JT: Yeah, he was the headmaster. He's an old friend of mine, yeah. I mean, he was; he's dead now. So the chaplain's position was interesting, because it was—the chaplain was also the chairman of the department of religion and philosophy. So you had people teaching, and the chaplain taught, and what have you.

CG: Let me ask you a little bit about that. In addition to teaching and being the chaplain, and running services, and counseling, did you also—like a lot of prep schools, did you also coach?

JT: Oh, yeah, yeah. I coached the junior varsity baseball team.

CG: Did they do well?

JT: They did very well. Yeah, the only problem we had was that one time we were supposed to play Girard College, and I said, “You know, I have a problem, because they don’t like ministers to come to Girard College.” They said, “Well, they won’t know.” But I said, “I know. So you’re going to have to send somebody else with the junior varsity.” So they did that.

CG: All right, speaking of that—and we’ll get back to Episcopal in a second, but you’re talking about Girard College. Was that at the time when Bob DeWitt and others were marching to get Girard College to open itself up to others than white boys?

JT: That was basically around the time, because I remember marching with Bob DeWitt around Girard College, in protest.

CG: Yeah. And you were obviously, at that point, the chaplain at Episcopal?

JT: No, I was still at Southampton.

CG: Oh, you were?

JT: At the end of my tenure at Southampton.

CG: All right, so that was in the early sixties?

JT: Yeah, yeah. So basically, yeah, the chaplain of the Episcopal Academy also was the chairman of the department of religion and philosophy, and also, you know, the associate, or the assistants also helped. I had two assistants, and I inherited one from Gardner Hotter.

CG: H-O-T-T-E-R?

JT: Yeah. Yeah, he had been the chaplain for I don’t know how many years. A couple years, but then he went to be rector of a parish church

on the Main Line, a small church. God, it's on the way out, when you go out to near Ardrossan. But anyway, he went out there, and seemed to be happy out there, I guess. But he had no program that I could see, in terms of challenging the kids to do anything, or what have you. So we had to start from scratch, and that was kind of fun for me.

CG: What did you end up developing?

JT: Well, we developed a whole curriculum for kids from the middle school all the way through the upper school.

CG: And everybody had to go to chapel?

JT: Everybody had to go to chapel then, yeah. Middle school and upper school were there together, every day. And of course, I came, and I remember that very well. I came when they were just putting the new organ into the new chapel, Christ Chapel.

CG: Right.

JT: And I remember being there when we dedicated it, and it was Alexander McCurdy, Senior, who did the organ. It was very interesting.

CG: It was a beautiful chapel.

JT: Yeah. I liked the chapel very, very much, especially with the table in the middle, and what have you.

CG: Let me, again, a lot of independent schools, back in the day, were founded, and were related to the Episcopal Church in one way or another, boarding schools and day schools.

JT: Absolutely.

CG: Episcopal was one of them. What were the rules? How were kids who were not Episcopalians, or not even Christians, treated? Did they have to go to chapel as well?

JT: They had to go to chapel, too, but the point to be is they didn't have to participate. If you were Jewish, and felt—felt strongly about it—

CG: You'd just sit there?

JT: —I just made it clear that you just sat there. And that was hard to do, but the point to me is that—we had a long discussion about that, in terms of the headmaster, and some of the older members of the faculty. And they said that the chapel is there because it's proclaiming who we are. And if you don't want to be here, then you don't have to come.

CG: That's right.

JT: But, the point to me is we didn't—but I said, “You know, there are some Jewish boys here who are very nice kids, and whose parents want them to get a good education.” And I said, “I graduated from the Central High School, where 90 percent of my class was Jewish.” Okay? And so I said, “It seems to me that you give these kids the option of participating verbally, if they want to. And if they don't want to, they don't have to.”

CG: And they don't get scolded?

JT: They don't get scolded. So that worked out very well.

CG: Did you really enjoy teaching?

JT: Yes, very much.

CG: What courses did you teach?

JT: Well, I did several courses. I remember developing a course in—for the seniors, one elective course. We teamed up with the classics department, and so I taught the Gospel According to Saint John, in Greek.

CG: In Greek?



JT: In Greek, yeah. And that was fun; that was a lot of fun. We had about eighteen kids in that class.

CG: Wow! Different era.

JT: Yeah, different era.

CG: And so you were there until, according to my notes, 1978. At some point in there, you applied to be headmaster at Chestnut Hill Academy—

JT: Yeah.

CG: —in the early 1970s. How did that come about?

JT: That came about because Alfie Putnam asked me if I would like to be considered.

CG: And he was a board member at CHA?

JT: Right, and he was a very nice guy. I liked him very much.

CG: Wonderful guy!

JT: And at that time, I was on the Standing Committee, even though I was at the Episcopal Academy, and Alfie was the secretary of the Standing Committee.

CG: So you knew him well, worked with him?

JT: Yeah. I liked him very much.

CG: Well, you were one of the final three candidates.

JT: I didn't realize that, yeah.

CG: Yeah, you were.

JT: Then the other thing that happened to me when I was at Episcopal—Charlie Martin was retiring as headmaster of the boys' school at the Cathedral, in Washington, Saint Albans. And so the board of trustees asked me if I would think about this, come down and interview with them then. I did, and then I came down one more time, and met with

the chairman of the board of trustees, who was a retired vice-admiral in the United States Navy. And I met also with the faculty, and I thought they were very good. But I said, “You don’t have very much diversity here, in terms of race. Everybody’s white.” And he said, “Well, that’s because black people can’t afford to come.” And I said, “Well, then maybe we should do something to help afford them to come, right?”

CG: Scholarships, for instance.

JT: And he looked at me, and he said, “I don’t think that’s possible.” I said, “Oh. Well, then I don’t think it’s possible I want to be headmaster of this school.” That was it.

CG: Okay, so in 1978, you stopped being chaplain, and became the rector of Christ Church?

JT: Of Christ Church, right.

CG: What motivated that change?

JT: Well, I thought that I had been at Episcopal—I think I was there for twelve years, if I recall, something like that. Was it?

CG: It was fifteen years.

JT: Fifteen years. And I thought I had done my thing. It was funny, because I don’t know how that happened, except that Lyman was the bishop.

CG: Lyman Ogilby?

JT: Yeah. And Bob DeWitt was still around. And Bob called me and said, “You know, Ernest is retiring. You should think about—”

CG: Ernest?

JT: Harding.

CG: Harding, who was the rector at Christ Church?

JT: Yes, he was. And Bob said to me, “I think you would be great as the rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia.” He said, “It just needs somebody younger, and all that stuff, right now.” And then Lyman said to me, “Would you be interested?” And I said, “Sure. Why not?” So I interviewed with the vestry of Christ Church, and at that particular time Henry Watts was the Rector’s Warden, a very distinguished guy, and his wife was a member of the vestry at one time at Saint Paul’s, Chestnut Hill. Anna.

CG: Oh, okay.

JT: And we got along very well, and my last interview was when I was in Maine, so I flew down to Philadelphia, and then flew back. The next day I got a call from David Auten, who said, “You’ve been elected rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia. Would you accept?” I said, “David, I have to call Lyman Ogilby first. That’s the process.” So I called Lyman, and Lyman said to me—I was in Maine then, and I said, “Lyman, what do you think?” He said, “Come on, Jim. Do it.”

CG: Just that simple.

JT: And I called David back and said okay.

CG: David Auten?

JT: David Auten.

CG: Spelled?

JT: A-U-T-E-N.

CG: Okay. When you got to Christ Church, this is an important part of your ministry. Christ Church is really two things: it’s a parish, and it’s a historic site.

JT: Right. Oh, yeah.

CG: And I gather that they didn't always play well together. And when you got there, I think one of the things that made it work—one of the things you did, from what I understand, is you made it work as both. What did you do when you first got there? What did you find at Christ Church when you got there, and what did you do going forward?

JT: Well Clark, the first service I had at Christ Church, I had more people from the Episcopal Academy there than I had parishioners.

CG: Yeah.

JT: And that was incredible to me! But you know, I said, "Okay, this is the way it is." I remember very well, my first wife, my late first wife and I had a reception after that first service, because Ernest Harding was living in the rectory, and had been the rector of Christ Church for a long time, so the vestry didn't want to get—he was waiting for the place at Cathedral Village to be finished.

CG: Okay.

JT: So I really technically had no place to live. So we found a house on Delancey Street for sale, and the vestry bought the house. And so we kind of—after that first service, I was still living in the chaplain's house at Episcopal, but the head of maintenance at Episcopal was so nice. He brought some tables down, so we had makeshift tables in an empty house.

CG: On Delancey Street?

JT: Yeah, and we invited everybody to come for a reception. We had coffee and tea sandwiches. We had some white wine, and what have you, and that was kind of a nice thing.

CG: Did you stay in that house for the whole time, or did you move into the rectory eventually?

JT: Well, we stayed there for about two years, and then Ernest moved to—

CG: Cathedral Village.

JT: So then we had two rectories, and I kind of liked the new house that we were in, but it wasn't as grand as the rectory of Christ Church. So we had a great discussion in the vestry about what we were going to do. Obviously, we didn't need two rectories. So this was at a time when the real estate was going like this [indicates it soaring upwards]. So they said, "We don't really want to sell the historic house, the more historic house, which is much bigger. So why don't we sell the house we've just bought?" And I said, "Well, we're not going to do anything until I talk to my wife, Nadine. Got that?"

CG: [Laughs]

JT: Henry Watts said, "That's a wise thing to say, Jim." So I said to Nadine, "What do you think?" Henry was with me when we were talking with my wife. And she said, "Everything is fine. I don't mind moving, but you've got to do something about this kitchen. It's absolutely awful."

CG: In the old rectory?

JT: In the old rectory. She said, "It's just ridiculous." And Nadine was a very good cook, and a baker, and what have you. And it was just—

CG: Well, kitchens are important regardless of whether you're good or not.

JT: Right! Now, the point to me is we sold the place that we were staying in, and we made \$200,000 on the place.

CG: In two years?

JT: In two years, 200,000 bucks! So we returned the cost of the house to the endowment of the parish, and we had \$200,000 to basically do what we wanted. And we only spent about 60,000 bucks to upgrade systems in the old rectory.

CG: The kitchen and whatever?

JT: Yeah, the kitchen and stuff. So it was a great investment! [Laughs]

CG: Yeah, it turned out.

JT: Never thought of it that way.

CG: And it was a short-term investment, too!

JT: Yes, it was a short-term investment, and we made that kind of money.

CG: That's a hell of a lot of money in two years.

JT: Yeah. Then the other thing is that living in the new rectory, which was so big, stretched us financially a little bit, in terms of trying to furnish it. It was a little tough, but we did.

CG: Okay, now that you're the rector, and you're settling in, regardless of whether you're living on Delancey Street or in the rectory, you've got a congregation that is tiny enough so that you're overwhelmed by Episcopal graduates, or Episcopal people, at the first service.

JT: That's exactly right.

CG: What did you do to build the congregation? I know you hired somebody, and I know who it is, but I'll let you talk about it. You hired somebody to come in to start a Sunday school.

JT: Right.

CG: A fellow by the name of John Midwood, who I believe you worked with at Episcopal.

JT: He was one of the assistant ministers, assistant chaplains.

CG: That seems to have been a pretty good breeding ground for people in the diocese, the chaplaincy out there! [Laughs]

JT: John is just a wonderful guy.

CG: And he was there to start the church school?

JT: Yeah, he started the church school, and one of the things that both of us did was we called in the neighborhood, which basically, at that particular time, was just starting to take off, in terms of converting old buildings into apartments.

CG: The gentrification of that part of the city was getting—?

JT: Yeah, the gentrification of that part of the city was getting—it was coming along. That was the big plan. And then we also developed some community things for people to use the Neighborhood House. We had a gym, a basketball court, in the Neighborhood House, so we got that fixed up, and we had kids from the neighborhood—not very many, but we did, and that was kind of neat.

Then also, we also had people from Society Hill, and we called on new people in Society Hill, and we got them to come to Christ Church. I mean, when Jim and Jean Bodine moved into town, I walked over. They were on the corner of—well, they were a block away from where I lived. I remember one afternoon coming from the State Store, and I had two bottles of wine, and I had a pair of shorts on and an old shirt. And I knocked on their door and said, “Just wanted to welcome you,” to Jean and Jim Bodine.

CG: That turned out pretty well for the church, didn't it?

JT: Yeah, it sure did. Yeah, so we did a lot of work that way.

CG: Okay, this is part of a history project, so let me ask you a little bit about history for a second, and then we'll talk about Christ Church as

a historic. When you got there, I gather, from what I've read in the history of the building, and also from what you've told me before, and what I've heard from other people who've worked there, or been involved, is that there was a whole lot of historical stuff, more or less just kept in boxes in the basement, in large measure. Some stuff was at the Pennsylvania Historical Society, but a lot of it, most of it, was there. One of the things that you found, I gather, and I've heard this from several sources, was the deed for Episcopal Academy?

JT: The founding letter.

CG: The founding letter, whatever it was called.

JT: Right, right.

CG: And you gave that to your former employer.

JT: No, we loaned it in perpetuity.

CG: Okay, so you still own it. But what did you do with all that other stuff that you found?

JT: Well, first of all, one of the nice things about it is that Charles Latham, who had been the assistant headmaster in charge of the upper school, and then the director of the libraries at Episcopal Academy, came in and became a parishioner.

CG: At Christ Church?

JT: At Christ Church, and he offered to start organizing that mess.

CG: Archives.

JT: Right. And he did!

CG: Wow!

JT: And he did a very good job. And then later on, we got a grant to hire somebody to continue with what Charles was doing.



CG: It's fair to say, I think—we're talking about Christ Church as if everybody who's reading this knows what it is. It was really the founding church of the Episcopal Church.

JT: Yes.

CG: It goes back to 1695, I think, and it was there, and William White, I think, was the first Bishop of the Episcopal—was second, I guess, actually.

JT: Second Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States.

CG: But it all happened in Philadelphia. It became separate from the Church of England just at the same time, and the constitutions were written by basically the same people.

JT: 1789.

CG: In 1789. And so it has a historic element to it that works with—which is also part of being a parish. I think when you got there, if I understand it, I said earlier that they didn't play well together—there was some conflict between its role as a historic place, and its role as a parish. How did those two get married, because now it seems to work?

JT: Well, I think part of the problem was the fact that the emphasis—there was always something going on. For instance, there are seven signers of the Declaration of Independence buried at Christ Church, more than any other place in the country.

CG: World, yeah.

JT: And five signers of the Constitution of the United States, also buried there. And the point to me is all of these patriotic societies thought that they could come any time they wanted! You know, and do things. I said, "You can't do that. We're going to have to make a

calendar up. We have parish events, and the parish events and your events have got to mesh. We cannot turn a service over to you, just like that, if it conflicts with the parish schedule.” So we had to do that.

CG: Was that tough to do at first?

JT: It was tough to do at first, because some of the people, like the Magna Carta Society, thought that they owned the damn place.

CG: [Laughs]

JT: Pardon my language, but the point to be is it all worked out eventually. And then—

CG: How long did it take for it to work out?

JT: About eight or nine years. It took a while.

CG: It was a gradual process, wasn't it?

JT: It's a very gradual process.

CG: Were there physical changes made to the building during your time there?

JT: Yes, there were.

CG: The one thing I've heard about is the stained glass windows.

JT: Right. What happened, Clark, was that we noticed that there was rotting around the window panes on the outside. So we had to take the stained glass windows out in order to fix the clear glass windows. So in taking them out, we shipped them up to the Chestnut Hill glass company. What was that?

CG: Willett's.

JT: Willett's, and they refurbished all of the stained glass. We had that done. But, it was amazing, the light that came into that church when

the stained glass was not there. That was added much later to the church.

CG: Yeah, the original glass was clear glass, wasn't it?

JT: Clear glass. And I said, "What do you think? Are we going to put them back, or not?" And they said—the vestry was unanimous. They said, "We love it this way." And I said, "Well, I do, too."

CG: So what do you do with the stained glass?

JT: So, they were all crated, and we put them in the basement of the Neighborhood House. Now, the Magna Carta window has been resurrected, with what Tim has done.

CG: Tim Safford.

JT: With renovation of the Neighborhood House, and in the new entrance the Magna Carta window is over the entrance of it, so it's really good. But they don't know what to do with the rest. And the [feedback] that I got was incredible, nationally. I had a congressman from North Carolina call, and said, "What are you, a communist?" You know.

CG: Why would you be a communist for changing the windows?

JT: Well, the point to be is the windows depicted scenes from English history, of for instance the Magna Carta window. There was another window, and they also, in the bottom, had scenes from the life of Jesus, Jesus's life, but basically the Magna Carta window, the signing of the Declaration of Independence—all that stuff was there. The problem is that it was not original to the building, but was done I don't know when. Anyway.

CG: Doesn't matter.

JT: Probably 18—something.

CG: Yeah, it would have been during the nineteenth century.

JT: When probably the—what do you call it? The Oxford movement was taking place.

CG: Yeah.

JT: Stained glass was big.

CG: Wasn't that the late eighteenth century?

JT: Yeah, it was.

CG: 1800's—late nineteenth century?

JT: Yeah. And so basically, that was—and of course, the Magna Carta Society hated it. They didn't have their window there.

CG: They didn't have their window anymore.

JT: Right, right. Well, my point to be is that people had idols, so that's the way it is. Anyway, it was just wonderful to be able to bring the surrounding geography into the parish church, as well as being able to look out on it. The altar, where the altar was, or is, at Christ Church, the clear glass window, there's a pear tree that goes up and over it. It wasn't that big when we changed to clear glass. And there was a fire escape on the building across the street, and they used to come out to eat their lunch—they used to wave to me; when I was celebrating they would wave to me. [Laughs]

CG: [Laughs]

JT: That's all right. That was great.

CG: That's the building now that's the Arden Theater, I think, isn't it?

JT: No, no, that would be on the north side. This is probably on the east side.

CG: Okay. All right.

JT: Anyway, some of those things we did. During that time we also spiffed up the Neighborhood House, and made that available to—the

neighborhood association was growing then, and what have you, and they had all their meetings there. And we tried to be available for them, too.

CG: Okay, well let's get into while you were the rector there.

JT: Yeah.

CG: The Church, nationally—and you were, I gather, a regular deputy to General Convention for a number of years. But you also were one of the first, I believe, first rectors—not the first, maybe, but one of the first rectors—to hire a woman as an assistant?

JT: That's right.

CG: And you were one of the first rectors to hire an openly gay man as an assistant?

JT: Yeah.

CG: First of all, why did you do that? And secondly, how was it received initially by your congregation?

JT: Well, the first woman that I hired was Miriam Acevedo-Naters, and she was here with her husband, who was also an Episcopal priest, when Lyman was the bishop. I did that simply because I felt that she was a very good person, and I had voted for the ordination of women as a deputy to General Convention from this diocese, in Minneapolis.

CG: In '76?

JT: Yeah. I mean, that was a very interesting convention, because we did both that and the Prayer Book in one convention, which was incredible!

CG: [Laughs] Whoa! The women—did you go to the service at Church of the Advocate in 1974?

JT: I wasn't here. That was during—

CG: July.

JT: July. I was in Maine.

CG: And you had a long-term—we're going back and forth a little bit here, but you had a long-term ministry at—

JT: Saint Christopher's by the Sea in Winter Harbor.

CG: —by the Sea, in Winter Harbor, from 1960 until when, just last year?

JT: Well, 50 years.

CG: 50 years, 'til 2010.

JT: Right.

CG: And that was a month a year?

JT: Yeah. Actually, the rector of Christ Church got two months off, and I said, "That's ridiculous. We can't do that. We can't afford to do that, because we're trying to build this parish." So I never took it.

CG: So you took—?

JT: Just took the one month.

CG: And it was a working holiday, but Winter Harbor's not a bad place to work.

JT: Well, the point to me is it wasn't that hard anyway.

CG: Yeah, that's what I mean. Anyway, go back to your hiring of this first.

JT: So I hired Miriam Acevedo, and we had a committee of the vestry who also participated in interviewing her. And I asked them what they thought, and they thought she was really a very lovely person. So, and that was when women were just coming to the fore.

CG: Yeah.

JT: And I felt as though we should—we should do that; we should help them in their ministries. And she was the first Hispanic woman ordained in the Episcopal Church.

CG: Anywhere?

JT: Anywhere.

CG: Wow! All right, and you also hired, again, not the first, because Rodger Broadly had been at [St. Luke and the Epiphany] on 13<sup>th</sup> Street, for years. But when you hired Jim Taylor, you hired him, and he was already out as a gay man.

JT: That's exactly right.

CG: And that was a rare thing, at a time when people were getting into trouble. Bishop Walter Righter got into trouble because he ordained somebody in New Jersey, and Allen Bartlett almost got into trouble, if Righter had, because he was next in line to be spanked by the Church for ordaining Jim Robertson. But—

JT: Oh, that's right, Jim Robertson. Yeah.

CG: But was there any resistance at your church? I assume it was a fairly progressive parish?

JT: Yeah, it was progressive. We had very little opposition. I had appointed a committee of lay people to help interview some of the people that were coming through, and we narrowed it down to two people, Jim and somebody else. I remember taking Jim to dinner. Where did I take him? Someplace down there, near there, when it was—after he had met with the committee. And he said to me, “Jim, why would you hire a gay person?” I said, “I’m not hiring you because you’re a gay person. I’m hiring you because you’re the *best* person, and you happen to be gay. Let’s just say that to you.” I said,

“I would not hire a gay person or a heterosexual person just because they are heterosexual or gay. But you are the best person for this job, okay? And the committee thinks so, too, so do you want to come, or don't you?”

CG: [Laughs]

JT: He said, “Absolutely!” And he was a deacon then.

CG: Yeah, and he was ordained to the priesthood while he was working for you.

JT: That's right. He was ordained in the National Cathedral by Bishop Lee, the Bishop of Virginia.

CG: Oh, Peter Lee?

JT: Yeah. Peter's a good guy.

CG: Because there's a Bishop Lee in our diocese now, who's also a good guy.

JT: He's a very good guy. He's an old friend of mine.

CG: All right. Take me forward now to 1997. General Convention is going to be in Philadelphia.

JT: Right.

CG: And it's going to be a year when there's going to be the election of a presiding bishop. One of the candidates for that is a former priest in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, Frank Tracy Griswold III.

JT: Right.

CG: And they have decided that they want to have the election—

JT: At Christ Church.

CG: —at Christ Church. But the rector at Christ Church has decided that he wants to retire. Tell me what happened.



JT: Well, I felt that it would have been a good time for me to retire, because I guess I would have been 66. I'm just trying to think whether I was 66 or 67. And so I got a call from Ed Browning, saying, "Jim, you can't retire."

CG: Ed Browning's the Presiding Bishop at that time.

JT: Yeah. He said, "Because we're having the service in your place." So I said, "Well, I'm usually in Maine then, but I'll fly down for that week." And he said, "Well, that would be great, if you'd do that." I said, "Yes sir, I'll do that." So that's how that happened. So I postponed—

CG: Your retirement by a year.

JT: —my retirement by a year, which made—which was fine.

CG: What have you been up to since you retired? I know you've done a couple of interims, but—maybe you've only done one interim. You did that at my church, I know.

JT: No, actually I only did one interim, basically, and that was here at Saint Paul's, Chestnut Hill.

CG: Right.

JT: And that was basically—that was for a year plus, because Peter [Sipple], your interim, went to Saint Paul's.

CG: Went to the Redeemer.

JT: Redeemer, Bryn Mawr, right. He's a nice guy.

CG: Wonderful guy.

JT: And so I said to—Charles asked me if I would do this, Charles Bennison, and I said, "If you really want me to, I'll do it." I said, "I'm not chomping at the bit to do it, but if you want me to do it, I will

do it.” Because I was helping out the rector, the lady who was the rector at Media, Christ Church, Media.

CG: Right, which is where our rector had come from, who had left, John Francis.

JT: Yeah, yeah. And I liked Sara [Batson] a lot. I would go out there on—it was limited. I told Sara I didn’t want anything full-time, because I was trying to do some other things, like taking a course at Penn, and all that business. So I went out there on a Sunday, and helped her with the celebrations and preaching, and also did an adult class for her. And then on Wednesdays I went out and celebrated, and one Wednesday a month I went to one of the elder places where people move to, to celebrate.

CG: Right, like Cathedral Village.

JT: That kind of stuff. And then when Charles said this, I said, “Well, I’ve got to square this up with Sara, if you really want me to. And of course, I have to meet with the people there, if they really want me. I don’t know whether they do or not.” So Sara was disappointed, but I said, “Sara, I’ve been doing this with you now for almost five years, so I think that maybe they need a new person.”

CG: Okay, so.

JT: So I came here.

CG: Yeah. Here is Saint Paul’s, because that’s where we’re doing the interview.

JT: Right.

CG: In addition to all of your parochial stuff, and your school stuff at Episcopal, you’ve been involved in a lot of other organizations that

have to do with the diocese. You were on the board of Episcopal Hospital, I believe, for years.

JT: Yes, yes.

CG: Episcopal Community Services.

JT: Yes.

CG: You were also, I understand, whenever it was that Allen Bartlett was elected, you were a candidate for bishop?

JT: Right.

CG: How did that feel, and how did it feel afterwards, when somebody else won, and you were still in the diocese? Was that embarrassing, or didn't you care?

JT: Well, I did care. I think that, you know, I've been in three episcopal elections.

CG: Okay.

JT: And after the third, I said, "That's it. I'm not doing it anymore."

CG: Where were they?

JT: Well, one was Maryland, and the other—of course, the one in Pennsylvania, and then the other was for the Diocese of Los Angeles. I came in second there. Fred Borsch got to be bishop out there.

CG: Oh, okay.

JT: And after that, I had people from Rochester come down and ask me, and I said, "I'm just not going to go through this again. That's it." How did I feel? I felt disappointed about Pennsylvania, because this was my diocese.

CG: Your diocese.

JT: Yeah. Maryland was, again, I came in second. [Laughs] But the point to me is, you know, I just decided that I guess maybe the Lord doesn't want me to be a bishop, and that's probably good.

CG: Okay.

JT: And I just said, "That's it."

CG: All right. You have served, since Bishop Hart and Bishop Armstrong, in those days.

JT: Right. Bishop Armstrong ordained me a deacon, and Bishop Hart ordained me a priest.

CG: And then after that, it was DeWitt, and then it was Ogilby, and then it was Bartlett, and then it was Bennison, and now we have this sort of interim thing. Tell me how they were different, and what your memories are of them, and their effects on the diocese?

JT: Well, the first bishop I knew was Bishop Hart, and he was kind of patrician, and a kind of nice person, very much of a gentleman. He lived in Chestnut Hill, if I recall, and took the train down to the diocesan offices, which were on Rittenhouse Square. And I liked Bishop Hart very, very much. I thought he was a very good man. And then I think the diocese—Gillespie Armstrong was the suffragan bishop, and then was elected bishop.

CG: He died very quickly after he became.

JT: And he died very quickly; I don't know what happened, but anyway, he did. When he was a suffragan bishop, he called for the election of a Coadjutor, and that's when we elected Bob DeWitt. And Bob was not here that long before Gillespie Armstrong died. Bob DeWitt just appealed to me, in terms of his openness, and I thought he was a

terrific bishop, and he got all kinds of crap, and I felt so bad for him. But we always stood up for him.

CG: And I gather, Jim—I may be wrong about this, but I gather that even people that disagreed with him violently, liked him.

JT: Well, you know, I think a lot of people did. I mean, he was a very gracious person. He took abuse beautifully. He never responded in real anger. He had a wonderful way about him, in terms of being a gracious human being. And he believed in certain things that I happen to think were good. But anyway, Bob was really a great person. And so we had Bob, and then we had—Lyman was helping out in the diocese at that particular point. I think he had resigned as bishop of the Philippines, and came and helped Bob DeWitt. That's when we had several bishops helping Bob DeWitt. One was Brooke Mosley.

CG: Yeah, I remember Brooke very well.

JT: Yeah, he was a good guy, and so was Lyman. I remember at the Episcopal Academy when Lyman would come; I always had him come to preach once during the year, and it was always a hockey story, you know.

CG: I remember he was a big hockey fan.

JT: He was a big hockey fan, and it's another hockey story. I thought, oh, here it comes. And Bob took an interest in the Episcopal Academy, too, and that was interesting. And then after Lyman came Allen, and I liked Allen Bartlett, and I liked Jerrie, too. Allen was very precise in everything. He had to write everything down when you were talking to him. I said, "For God's sake, put that notebook away, will you

please?” He said, “Does that bother you?” I said, “It bothers anybody. Stop that!”

CG: [Laughs]

JT: “Don’t do that!” And he said, “Okay,” and put it in his—I said, “Good. Now we can have a talk.” And so we actually became fairly good friends. His son and my son, Philip, went to Kenyon College together.

CG: Oh, what a small world.

JT: So they knew each other, and so it was very good. Allen always—there was a tradition in the diocese that the diocesan bishop was always at Christ Church on Easter Sunday, for the eleven o’clock service.

CG: Okay.

JT: And that remained that way until we got a cathedral.

CG: And it was Allen who named the cathedral, wasn’t it?

JT: Oh, I said, “Allen, what do you want a cathedral for? Give me a break.” And that was the only real disagreement I had with Allen. I was a canon of the cathedral. I don’t know why, but I was; I was on the cathedral chapter. And he wanted to put this cathedral of his out near Penn, in this parish church that had very few people, and I said, “If you want a cathedral, Allen, you put the cathedral on Rittenhouse Square, at Holy Trinity, because you own—that church owns that property. And you don’t put it out in the University of Pennsylvania area, because basically you think that that parish church has got a lot of money. They don’t.” He said, “Well, they do. They have an income.” I said, “They have an income after the first proceeds are dedicated to some arts things.” And I said, “You get the rest of it.”

The parish church gets the rest of it. And I said, “They have about 40 people out in that congregation.” He said, “Well, I know that, but we could make it.” I said, “Okay, you do what you want.”

CG: Church of Our Savior, wasn't it?

JT: Church of Our Savior. And I said—we had a vote in the chapter, and I was the only one who voted against it. I said, “Allen, this is not directed at you. I just cannot believe that you want to go out there. First of all, I don't think we need a cathedral. The second thing is, if you're bound and determined to have one, go persuade the rector of Holy Trinity that you want it there.” That's in Rittenhouse Square. The Romans own the other square; we own that square.

CG: It's interesting. And of course, he did like the idea of a cathedral, because he was dean of one before he came here.

JT: He was dean of a cathedral, yeah.

CG: In Louisville, Kentucky.

JT: Oh, God!

CG: And then, you were the co-chairman of the committee that found his successor that searched for his successor, were you not?

JT: Yes, I was. I was the co-chair of that.

CG: Was there a lay chairman and a clergy chairman?

JT: Yes.

CG: And you were the clergy?

JT: Yes, I was the clergy chairman, and there was a lay chairman, and there was a committee of 24 people, which was almost impossible to do.

CG: Herding cats?

JT: Huh?

CG: Like herding cats?

JT: Oh, my God! We had people on that committee who were process people. A lot of people were process people.

CG: What do you mean by that?

JT: I mean, like you can't do anything unless you have a unanimous vote.

CG: That's Quaker-ly.

JT: I said, "We're not running this joint, this committee that way," I said, "Because we'll never get anything done." So it was interesting; it was a very frustrating kind of thing.

CG: And the ultimate winner of the election, Charles Bennison, became fairly quickly upon arrival a major source of controversy within the diocese.

JT: Yes. The point to me is the thing that happened at that particular point, Clark, was the fact that we had a difficult time recruiting people who want to come and be bishop of Pennsylvania.

CG: Why?

JT: Because most of the people—a lot of the people who were recommended, or people whom I knew, when I didn't get a response from them, I called them, because I knew them. And they said, "Well, I don't really want to be a bishop right now. I'm very happy doing what I'm doing."

CG: Right. So it wasn't necessarily Pennsylvania, it was just—

JT: No.

CG: It was being a bishop.

JT: Yeah, it was being a bishop, and it was not necessarily just Pennsylvania. So I think we only had five people we nominated.

CG: Yeah, I think that's right.



JT: Because there was a dearth of people wanting to do this. And then we had one or two people nominated from the floor. That's about it.

CG: I remember that there was a guy from Rhode Island named Burke?

JT: Right.

CG: And there was John Midwood from here. There was Bennison, and I don't remember who else. Was there a Sister Adele Marie? Was she a nominee?

JT: No, she wouldn't stand for it. I mean, a couple of people wanted her to do that, and I said, "That's fine by me." I mean, I knew Adele Marie very well, and I said, "Do you want me to ask her?" And they said yes, and I asked. I called her. I said, "Are you interested?" She said, "Oh, God, no, Jim. I'm not interested in being a bishop. I've got too much on my plate right now."

CG: She was running Saint Margaret's.

JT: Yeah.

CG: Why do you think Charles had such difficulty?

JT: First of all, Charles was the son of a bishop, brought up by a person who believed that—his father believed that a bishop in the Episcopal Church is a monarchical bishop. In other words—

CG: Yeah, an autocrat.

JT: An autocrat. And that basically is what Charles thought. I told him one time; I said, "You've got to understand, Charles, that the American Church instituted standing committees because they didn't want a monarchical bishop." It's the only part of the Anglican communion that has standing committees, that I know of, so that both the laity and the presbyterate have a say in how money is spent, how

the endowments are handled, who gets ordained and who doesn't get ordained.

CG: Checks and balances, just like the United States Constitution.

JT: Checks and balances. Well, it came out of the same era.

CG: And the same people.

JT: Same people. And I said, "You know, that's what you have to live with." Well, he didn't want to live that way. That was part of the problem.

CG: Ultimately, he was inhibited because of something that happened in his past, that many people think was just another excuse to try to get him to retire, but that the cause of some of his difficulties in the diocese itself were financial, and the need for the campsite in Wapiti, that some people thought: nice idea. Maybe the wrong place, but nice idea, if we had enough money to do it.

JT: Right.

CG: And that some things were lost because money was spent there. Like aided parishes, I gather, were angry at him. Was he just tone deaf?

JT: I think that—

CG: Or did he really believe what he was doing was in the best interest of the diocese? I do think he did probably believe that, but—?

JT: I think that basically he had an agenda, and I don't think he wanted to deviate from that agenda, period. I mean, I think he thinks literally. And the point to me is that in any position, in order to get things done and to keep an organization healthy, you've got to compromise. And he was unwilling to compromise.

CG: And as it turned out, at times it seemed, looking from the outside, that the standing committee was equally dug in.

JT: Absolutely.

CG: I mean, while most of the blame is placed on the bishop, it seems to me that both sides had a lot to atone for.

JT: It's like the United States House of Representatives and the president of the United States. It's ridiculous! I mean, you cannot have a government function without some kind of compromises.

CG: Right. You are a man of great compassion, and a sense of what it takes to heal. What's it going to take this diocese to heal? First of all, there was DeWitt—and I mean, I've read the history. This ain't the first time we've had—

JT: No, I know.

CG: No, I mean, DeWitt was controversial. You go back to Onderdonk, and way back into the—far back.

JT: Oh, yeah.

CG: Are we doing the right thing to come out of this as a more unified, a more peaceful, more loving diocese?

JT: I think that pretty soon they're going to have to look for a new bishop. I think that things have calmed down enough so that it's okay.

CG: Maybe another year with the provisional bishop, or something like that?

JT: Maybe not. I mean, talk to them, but I think that—you know, I guess he's done well.

CG: Did you know him before he came here?

JT: No, I did not know him. He came from eastern North Carolina, or something.

CG: Yeah, and he had a good reputation there. I experienced him a little bit; he was a press-briefing bishop in Denver when I was a reporter

out there, and I liked him very much. And then when I knew that I had had contact with him before, I emailed a couple of friends in the House of Bishops, and they all said that we were in very good hands with Dan Daniel.

JT: Mm-hm.

CG: But this diocese is an elephant. It has a very, very long memory, and I wonder how long it's going to take to get over some of the things that they've disliked and distrusted about Charles' episcopacy, because I still think there are people that are angry at Bob DeWitt, and move forward. And there's so much that needs to be done. Like Pope Francis is saying, there's so much that needs to be done; let's get away from all the petty stuff.

JT: Well, I think that basically you're going to have to—the next bishop of this diocese is going to have to be people-oriented, period. It's going to have to be that way.

CG: A pastor?

JT: Yeah, a pastor. [Pause in recording]

CG: So during your ministry, there have been huge changes in the church.

JT: Right.

CG: There's been a new Prayer Book. There's been the addition of women in every rank, including a Philadelphian as the first bishop of the Anglican—female bishop in the Anglican Communion. The dealing finally, and the accepting of partnered gay people at all levels of the church. It's no longer an issue. The understanding that our church is better served by being in communion with our Lutheran friends, and other denominations. What has it been like living

through all of that, or has it just been day to day? Has it just been what you—was it exciting?

JT: Oh, yeah! Some of it was very exciting.

CG: And you were involved at General Conventions for I don't know how many of them you went to.

JT: I think I went to six or seven.

CG: That's a lot.

JT: That's a lot. Finally I said, "I'm not doing this again." No, it's actually been very exciting. I mean, exciting just—one of the things that I love about the Episcopal Church is that you don't have to check your mind at the front door, when you walk in. You can use it, okay. And I think that the Episcopal Church has taken some very controversial stands, but I think they've been stands that have been fairly well thought out, and have made sense. I mean, for instance, take the ordination of women. What is this business from the New Testament that all of the disciples were men? Well, of course they were men! They lived in a society, a Jewish society, in which men were the movers and shakers. But the point to be is, who discovered the fact that the tomb was—?

CG: Mary and Mary.

JT: Mary and Mary, right! Paul being our first great theologian in the church, maybe if he had lived longer; he reconciled the Hellenist with the Jews, the Gentiles and the Jews.

CG: He was a Gentile, wasn't he?

JT: He was a Jew!

CG: Paul was?

JT: Paul was a Jew.

CG: Oh, Saul of Tarsus, of course.

JT: Saul of Tarsus came from a very distinguished family. And the point to me is that he had first persecuted the Christians, because basically he felt that they were deviants. And then he had that experience on the road to Emmaus, and his eyes were opened, and the whole of the Book of the Acts is the widening of the church's scope. It wasn't going to be a Jewish sect; it was going to be something bigger than that. And I've always thought that the Episcopal Church was a church that used its mind as well as its heart, and has that kind of expansive understanding of who are God's people?

Well, we're all God's people. And to say that because you're a woman, you can't be ordained as a priest? Nonsense! It doesn't make any sense. Now, in maybe the first century, or second century, it made sense, because there were priestesses who were involved in idol worship, and that was anathema to the Jews, and I understand that. But not today.

As far as the ordination of gays are concerned, the first part of anybody's understanding of who you are, you are baptized, and you become a child of God. So, how come gays can't be children of God? That's stupid! My daughter was gay. I mean, I don't understand this kind of stuff. And the Episcopal Church says, "We don't understand that. They're all children of God," you know? Well, okay.

CG: The other thing about the Episcopal Church, and you've got a very strong position which I happen to agree with, but you have a very strong position. There are other people who have strong positions, and the Anglican Communion at its best allows them to co-exist, and go to the altar together.

JT: That's fine.

CG: Is that an added part of what we are, as a church?

JT: Absolutely, and that happened in the early church with Paul and Peter, and the followers of our Lord's brother in Jerusalem. They didn't all agree. But Peter finally had the vision of the clean and the unclean, in the Book of the Acts, which of course was written by a Gentile, as you know. [Laughs] Not a Jew. The Gospel According to Saint Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles was the Gentile work. So the horizon for the Christian Church has expanded, then, to understand that God loves everybody. I mean, for instance, we're still hung up on various situations, such as all of this stuff that the Romans have been doing for years, about abortion and all that kind of stuff. And yet, they support the death penalty. That's an oxymoron. It doesn't make any sense!

CG: I didn't realize the Roman Church—does it officially?

JT: Yeah, it still accepts the death penalty. For instance, I served as a juror in Pennsylvania, two juries, about robbery, but there's always a little note: do you agree or disagree with capital punishment? I always put: I disagree, not because I don't want to be on the jury, but the point is, if it was a capital case, they wouldn't want me, anyway.

CG: No.

JT: Because I'd vote against it, just on principle. So you know, all of those things are there. But I mean, for instance, one of the problems with where the Church—not a problem. The Church is growing like crazy in Africa, okay? Part of the problem is that the Church is faced with militant Islam there.

CG: Very conservative about women.

JT: And so they're conservative about sexual matters, period.

CG: Right.

JT: And they're coming out of a tribal situation in which the men officially run the joint—officially.

CG: Yeah.

JT: But we all know who runs the joint ultimately—not men. But that's part of the problem, so that they take—also, the other problem is that they take the Bible literally—I mean, literally, some of them—most of them. And that's where you have the problems with gays, because, you know. So, I don't know.

CG: Well, one of the things that's always amazed me, and maybe you could help me explain it, is that you and I would probably be capable, would be eligible today to be stoned to death, because we're wearing clothes of mixed fiber, which is prohibited in the Bible. And yet, that's ignored. Explain to me how you think that—is it just selective?

JT: Oh, yeah. People read the Bible selectively.

CG: I like this part; I don't like that.

JT: There are all kinds of things in the Bible. I mean, the Book of Revelation has caused more hell in the Christian Church than any book around, you know, when the end is coming, and all that what have you? [Sighs] I guess one of the things is that when you're up against a really militant Islam, you don't deviate very much from what it says in the Scriptures. I mean, for instance, when Gail and I were in Morocco, one night we were invited to go—this was the World Affairs Council, and we were invited to go and listen to a Muslim Mufti, or whatever they call them, explain their positions on things. And it was interesting. He had written this all out, and he read it.



It was kind of boring at times, but other than that, he got to the point where he said, “Christians and Jews are okay, because they’re in the book.” And this one gal, who was wonderful [laughs]—she’s a lawyer. She said, “What book?” He said, “The Koran.” “Oh.” “So we believe that they’re okay, because you’re part of the book, as a Christian. You’re in the book, so you’re all right.” She said, “What about all these other people that aren’t in the book?” “Well, they’re all going to hell.” She said, “Give me a break! Like the Buddhists?” “Oh, yeah, they’re not in the book.” Who else is not in the book?

CG: So you have to be one of the descendants of Abraham in order to count?

JT: Exactly. That’s exactly.

CG: One of the three?

JT: Yeah. Jesus is in the book. Got it?

CG: Mohammed’s in the book.

JT: Mohammed’s in the book.

CG: Abraham’s in the book.

JT: Mohammed wrote the book! [Laughs] And Abraham’s in the book, because he’s the father of us all. Oh, God! I went out of that, and I said, “Oh, my God! There we are.” And this is in Morocco, which is a fairly progressive place.

CG: Relatively speaking.

JT: Relatively speaking, yeah. I mean, they hired their first woman cop. I was in Rabat. It was in the newspaper, and we saw her. And Gail said to her—she smiled. She had this burka, or whatever it is, over her head, or something. But it wasn’t a big deal. She was dressed like

any other policeman, except she had a head covering on. So there you go.

CG: Okay, I'm going to turn this off.

JT: Right. [Pause in recording]

CG: Back on tape for a moment. You were called as a witness to—

JT: At his first trial, yes.

CG: Charles Bennison's first trial?

JT: Charles Bennison's first trial. And I was asked by the church advocate whether I knew anything about the accusations that were being made at the present about Charles' involvement with his brother, and his involvement with a young lady in his parish. And I said, "No." And he said, "Did anyone else know?" And I said, "I have no idea," and I said, "But as far as I'm concerned, we didn't know. The committee wasn't told." He said, "How about the bishop from the national church that helped you? Did he say anything about it?" I said, "Absolutely not." He said, "When did you learn about it?" I said, "When I first read it in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*." I knew nothing about it.

CG: You knew nothing about it. What did the committee do? How did the committee that was looking for a bishop when Bennison was elected—what was the process that you undertook, the context?

JT: It was a standard process of the Episcopal Church, that you did due diligence in terms of their background.

CG: So you did as much background check as you could, and this never came up anywhere?

JT: No, no. And we used the people that the National Church recommended.

CG: If it had come up, would he have made the cut, do you think?

JT: I think it would have posed some real questions.

CG: Questions that he may or may not have been able to answer?

JT: Yeah, exactly. No, he was perfectly honest. He did talk to us about the—

CG: He had some difficulties in Atlanta, didn't he?

JT: —situation in Atlanta, yeah. And I personally said to him then, “Well, this is a problem that you had as rector with the vestry, and that happens quite often.”

CG: It's been known to happen!

JT: And I said, “You know, it's a shame that it happens, but it happens sometimes.”

CG: It ain't exactly new.

JT: No! And so it didn't—it wasn't a great big red flag there.

CG: Yeah. And as you said, you didn't know anything—nobody on the committee knew anything about it until they read about it in the *Inquirer*, when it was exposed?

JT: Well, there were some accusations that were made before it came up in the *Inquirer*, I understand. I didn't hear them, but one member of the committee said that he had heard that. But nothing was in print, nothing, etcetera. The first time I heard about it was when I read about it in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

CG: And that was several years after he'd been elected bishop?

JT: Yeah. Yeah.

CG: OK, that clarifies that.

JT: OK.

[End of Interview]