Interview with the Reverend John Midwood by William Cutler, for the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania Oral History Project, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, February 26, 2014. Minor edits for clarification purposes, made by John Midwood on April 2, 2014 to page 45, are in brackets.

WILLIAM CUTLER: We're here today, John, to talk about your career as a parishioner and a worshiper in the Episcopal Church, your career as a clergyman in the Church, your career in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. And I'd like to begin by asking you to talk a little bit about how you came up, how you were educated, how you became a priest in the Episcopal Church.

REVEREND JOHN MIDWOOD: Sure. Well, I was actually born in Trenton, New Jersey, but the early years, through fourth grade, in the midst of fourth grade, was in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, just on the other side of the Delaware River from Trenton. The family had been there for several generations. My mother died when I was in elementary school. My father remarried, and we moved to Lower Merion Township, to Bala Cynwyd. So I went to public schools in Lower Merion Township, Cynwyd Elementary School, Bala Cynwyd Junior High School, and then Harriton High School.

WC: This would have been in the fifties, sixties?

JM: Late fifties, early sixties. And my family on my birth mother's side were long-term Quakers, generations of Quakers, and so it was when my father remarried that I first went to an Episcopal Church. I'd gone to meeting before that, and I had never been baptized, so I was sixteen when I was baptized, at the time attending Saint John's Church in

Lower Merion, Bala Cynwyd. I was in high school by that time; was fairly active at Saint John's during my years in high school.

When I graduated from high school I was going to night school and working in the day. It was 1965, and Lyndon Johnson was drafting lots of people, and because I didn't have the requisite number of credit hours, I was drafted in 1965, shortly after graduating from high school—graduated in June; in November was drafted, so was in the Army for two years, and then came back. At that point, I started at Temple University, and I got my undergraduate degree from Temple, College of Education.

While I was at Temple I explored the process of ordination, and toward the end of that exploration process, I was accepted as a postulant for orders under—at the time, Bishop DeWitt was the Diocesan Bishop. Because I had spent—the exception of my two years in the Army, which were in Oklahoma, I had been in Philadelphia, the environs, all my life, and so Bishop DeWitt suggested getting out of town, and so I went to the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was ordained in 1974, and came back to the Diocese of Pennsylvania at that time.

WC: What are your recollections of Bishop DeWitt, other than your experience with him advising you to go somewhere outside the region?

JM: Bishop DeWitt stirred things up, I think, is one way to describe what he did. The Episcopal Church found itself in the local newspapers for things that weren't normally the case when Episcopalians got into the newspaper. One of the first things that he did that I recollect was he participated in the marching around the walls of Girard College which

at the time, [was a] school, chartered by Stephen Girard, or in his will, for white boys. There was a lot of work going on at that time to break the will and integrate the school. My recollection is it was more around black boys; it wasn't to get girls in any way into the school. But that went on for quite a well, so that was in the newspapers.

As the Vietnam War picked up, Bishop DeWitt brought a staff person on to work in that area, who—David Gracie was the priest's name—who would receive draft cards at rallies where young men would turn in their draft cards, and so that got some adverse publicity. There was also some racial strife in Delaware County; I'm drawing a blank on the exact name of the town. And Bishop DeWitt had a missioner on the staff for racial concerns, and urban concerns. So it was a very new way for the Episcopal Church to be the Episcopal Church in this area. There were those who were strong supporters of Bishop DeWitt, and those who were not at all supporting Bishop DeWitt, and I remember being at diocesan conventions where there would be some pretty contentious discussions.

WC: You had some personal contact with Bishop DeWitt?

JM: Mm-hm.

WC: He counseled you to seek theological education elsewhere. What are your impressions of him as a leader, as a person?

JM: For me, it was really a contrast, if you believe—not a question of what you believe, but in the newspaper, you thought you were dealing with someone of huge stature. He was probably my size, 5'8", 5'9", very slight, wiry. He was a hiker, an outdoorsman, and very personable. He puffed on a pipe from time to time. I remember being in his office; he had his feet up on the desk as we were talking. He came to

the seminary, Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, to visit with the seminarians, and we all had dinner together, and those of us who were married, our wives were there. He was just a member of the group, very unassuming, and very personable.

WC: Was he still the Diocesan when he returned to the diocese?

JM: He resigned at—let me get my year straight here. He resigned the end of December, 1973. Bishop Ogilby became the bishop, so when I was ordained in June of 1974, Bishop Ogilby was the ordaining bishop.

WC: So when you came back to the diocese, and you went to Ogilby for an assignment, what happened?

JM: I ended up—the Episcopal Academy is very near Saint John's Church, Lower Merion, and Jim Trimble, who was the Chaplain at Episcopal Academy at the time—Jim, although lots of times he did supply work, but his family attended Saint John's, Lower Merion. So I knew Jim, and knew the family. We had actually done some babysitting, my wife and I, when the Trimbles went away. So Jim approached me about the possibility of becoming a candidate, one among others, and through that process I ended up being the Assistant Chaplain for four years at Episcopal Academy.

WC: Was Trimble at Christ Church at that point?

JM: He was at Episcopal Academy. My final year, the academic year '77-'78, he left—I don't know why everything seems to happen in December. The first of January he became the rector of Christ Church, January 1, 1978. I finished out the academic year at Episcopal Academy, and then ended up joining Jim at Christ Church on a part-time basis, pretty close to four days a week. I was doing some graduate work at Teacher's College in Columbia, in New York,

thinking that my career was going to be in the educational world, which when I got to Christ Church and began working in urban situations, my career plans for myself changed.

WC: How did that happen?

JM: When I got to Christ Church, the neighborhood around Christ Church was just beginning to redevelop. The area was pretty much a commercial area, with not a lot of residential space. A lot of the old warehouses in the ‘60s and ‘70s had become vacant. And slowly but surely, a lot of those warehouses began to be converted to apartments and/or condominiums, and so the population was increasing. By and large, it was a younger population, roughly—I was in my thirties at that point—roughly my own age, and so it was a pretty dynamic place, pretty exciting, as things were beginning to take some life and take on some shape, both in the neighborhood and in the parish. For a couple of years while I was at Christ Church, I was president of the local civic association, which was always very interesting work, but also was a way to meet people and see if I couldn’t encourage them to attend Christ Church.

WC: What are the highlights of your time at Christ Church?

JM: Probably, we started a church school at Christ Church. Prior to that there had been a cooperative with a couple of other churches that were several blocks away, that was not working all that well, particularly was not working all that well for the newer, younger families that were coming in that were walking distance to Christ Church, and the other churches were seven or eight blocks away, so that really wasn’t working very well. So I guess it was my second year that I was there, we moved the church school full-time to Christ Church. I did some

work with the Old Christ Church Preservation Trust, which was the sort of non-sectarian unit that was set up to both raise funds and preserve the history, and that was some very interesting work, and got me involved in preservation work, both at the church and then in the community. Again, repeating myself a little bit, just the general revitalization of the parish.

Jim was very good about sharing, so we alternated preaching and those sorts of things, so I had the opportunity to do a number of things, and then participated in a couple of outreach projects that Christ Church was involved with—one for a drop-in senior center that a number of Center City churches sponsored, and beginning a little bit of work with the unfortunate phenomenon of homeless individuals, who were beginning to appear on the streets of Center City.

WC: Now, Christ Church went through a transformation in that period. Deborah Gough writes about how it lost many of its long-time parishioners and struggled to maintain its presence in the neighborhood and its viability as a parish. Did you experience any of that?

JM: I guess I was at the tail end of that, and in the early years of the transition, I guess I would call it. When I got to Christ Church, summer of 1978, one of the things Ernest Harding, who was the rector before Jim Trimble—there had been a Christ Church Businessmen's Association, which was one of Ernest's projects, to encourage support from the neighborhood, which was the business community which was not around on Sundays. There were luncheons—I think I'm remembering, but maybe not—that were on Fridays once a month. When I first got there, there were one or two of those, but those pretty

much went away. Again, there were the younger folks moving in, so there was a little bit of that happening. And slowly but surely, the vacant buildings became residential spaces, by and large—a little bit of revitalization; first floor, lots of times, would be a commercial structure, activity of some kind, and particularly galleries started moving in, which really, really changed the neighborhood.

WC: Episcopal Academy is one of the more prestigious schools, independent schools, in the area. Did you find the transition from working at Episcopal to working at Christ Church to be a smooth one, or not?

JM: I'd regard it as a smooth one. By and large, there wasn't a lot of difference between the parents and the children at Episcopal Academy and the parents and the children at Christ Church: lots of college-educated adults, students motivated. So there wasn't a lot of difference. There was a really delightful group at Christ Church which were families that had been displaced by the building of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge in the 1920s—I think it was 1928 that the Ben Franklin Bridge opened. There were families that had lived in the area right around Christ Church, a little north of where the bridge comes down, that had moved into the northeast, and these were the young adults who were now grandparents, and their children and grandchildren were still coming back from where they were now living, but had long associations with Christ Church. They were just a delightful group of people that provided oral history into life at Christ Church in the 1920s. I remember one man came in and had pictures from the neighborhood before the bridge was built and would share those—those things, so that was a happy, happy group to be a part of.

WC: Now, you worked with Jim Trimble for quite a few years, both at Episcopal and at Christ Church. What are your recollections of him, and his work?

JM: Well, I worked with Jim for ten years, so it was a very enjoyable experience, in two different settings. As I mentioned, Jim was very open to my sort of developing my own ministry both at Episcopal Academy and at Christ Church. There were certain things that you have to do at certain times, but Jim was not a micromanager in any way, and gave lots of support for things that I might want to do, some constructive suggestions along the way. I learned to pay attention to those suggestions after the first or second time. He was just a very delightful person to work with.

WC: So what kind of special initiatives did you undertake with his encouragement?

JM: Well, at Episcopal Academy, it was mostly—there were certain grades that I taught throughout all—Episcopal Academy was actually kindergarten to twelfth grade, so I would have taught in all: the lower school, middle school, and upper school. There were certain topics that were covered in each grade, but the materials that I would use, the teaching style, tests, other kinds of requirements related to the course, were all left up to me. Obviously, when I first got there, there were some things in place. I was grateful to not have to develop—I was probably teaching about four or five different grades, so to have to develop lesson plans for all of those different grades would have been a little overwhelming. As time went by, I did kind of specialize. I'd sort of concentrate on one grade at a time, to get it to where I wanted it, and what I wanted to do.

Similarly, at Christ Church, again, I mentioned that I was president of the civic association. Jim was very open to my participating in a lot of the neighborhood events, including being on the board, and ultimately the president of the civic association. Again, moving the church school back to Christ Church, he may have initiated that idea; I thought it was a good idea as well, but then left it all in my hands, the recruiting of the teachers, and setting all of that up. Preaching on a regular basis was very rewarding and fulfilling to me.

WC: So you took full advantage of your training in education as well as in ministry?

JM: I did, yes. Mm-hm.

WC: Now, Christ Church was your home for four years?

JM: Six years, actually.

WC: Six years. And how did you know it was time to move on?

JM: Well, by that time—let's see. It takes me a minute to get my years straight. I started at Christ Church in 1978. Probably by about 1983 I knew that it was time to move on, to have my own parish. I also knew that I was very interested in continuing work in the city, in urban ministry, and I was aware that Christ Church is not the typical urban parish that you would find in Philadelphia, or any city. So, there was at the time a man by the name of Franklin Turner, Frank Turner, [who] was in charge of many of the—he was on the bishop's staff, and a big piece of his work was with urban congregations. He convened regular meetings of that group, and I started going to those meetings, even though I was at Christ Church. And when one of the parishes opened up—I'm not remembering; I don't know whether he

approached me, or I approached him, about the possibility of going there. It was Saint John's Church that at the time was at Third and Reed Streets in South Philadelphia. And I went down and met with the vestry, as—

WC: Was this an aided congregation?

JM: It fell into that category, aided congregation. It received a grant from the diocese to supplement the income that it generated on its own.

WC: For the vicar?

JM: The process was that it went into the general budget, and so clearly without that grant from the diocese, they would not have been able to afford full-time clergy.

WC: So did you move from Christ Church to Saint John's?

JM: Yes, mm-hm. When I left Christ Church, again, summer of 1984, and started at St John's in September.

WC: So, how would you describe that experience, working at St. John's, especially after being in a wealthy parish, like Christ Church?

JM: Right, yup. Well, [pause] there wasn't a lot of difference, in terms of the people. They were all very caring, loving, committed to the parish and to the neighborhood. It was a local congregation; there weren't a lot of people that commuted in from long distances. They weren't the regulars. There would be some family members who would come back from time to time, but by and large the members of the congregation came from the immediate neighborhoods right around the church.

WC: Which is—?

JM: The two neighborhoods would be Pennsport, and then south of Pennsport is a neighborhood called Whitman. Most of the families were from either Pennsport or Richmond [Whitman].

WC: This is where, about?

JM: The church itself is at Third and Reed Streets. Reed is three blocks below Washington.

WC: So it's about halfway down in South Philadelphia?

JM: It was halfway down, and the interesting thing was it was just beginning, and this was mid- to late eighties, but there was just beginning to be some transformation that was taking place in that neighborhood as well. We had a young couple come in to the parish, and lived in the neighborhood. He was in dental school at the University of Pennsylvania. His wife was a social worker; she was working—I'm not remembering exactly where. They came.

WC: Do you have names?

JM: I'm not able to remember them right this minute. I can picture them, but I can't remember—it may come to me as we go along. Then there were some other younger members of the parish, and probably 50 percent were retirement age, so it was a mixture of generations, but probably half were retirement age, had lived in that neighborhood all their lives, many of them. There were even some that had been born in the home in which they were living. But all very dear people—I used to really enjoy getting out and visiting them in their homes. They were always very gracious. There were anywhere between six to eight shut-ins all the time, and so I would get out once a month to see the shut-ins. That was always interesting. I learned—a lot of the folks were great fans of daytime television, and I learned what hours

to not call and say I'd like to come by, while some game show was on, or while some soap opera was on in the afternoon. Took me a little while to get that drill down, but that was kind of an interesting thing to learn.

WC: Were these more likely to be the elderly?

JM: Yes, yes, almost exclusively.

WC: Who were the shut-ins?

JM: There were several who couldn't get out, mostly for physical disabilities of one kind or another. There were some people in their late eighties, early nineties. There was a man who was pretty blind, virtually blind, who also had a hip problem and was not mobile. I actually ended up managing his business affairs until he died, would pay his rent. I guess this is okay; he's no longer living. Initially his landlord would cash his Social Security check, take out the rent, and give the rest of the money to Bill, the cash. And Bill would keep it in a small box in his oven—a tin box, not a cardboard box. So as he got more and more infirm, I would run to the store for him, which was just the corner store, not all that far away. But I always used to laugh. He would go to the oven and get the metal box out, and give me five dollars, or whatever it was, to go do the shopping. So, he was a character. I would see him a couple of times a week, just to make sure; he was just a block away from the church.

WC: Was an important part of your ministry there dealing with elderly, sometimes infirm, not all that well-off people?

JM: Yes. Yeah. I want to be a little bit careful. A lot were—many had had—I guess you could say working class, but had been in supervisory positions. So they were comfortable, by and large, and

not destitute in any way. Again, lived in typical Philadelphia brick row homes, all very well-kept, and just a nice group of people.

WC: So what made this parish unable to pay its bills completely?

JM: It had fair-sized buildings, which were always a challenge, and then it got smaller and smaller, in terms of its membership base. The younger generation didn't contribute, may not have had the means to contribute in the same way that the older generation had, and so it was a challenge.

WC: Did many of the younger people move away, out of the neighborhood?

JM: Some did, and some didn't. The dentist and his wife, when he graduated from school, actually they separated. But when he graduated from school, left, and I don't whether he joined a practice or started a practice in New Jersey. And his wife left the neighborhood; I'm not sure where she ended up. Some others stayed in the neighborhood, but weren't as active as the older generation had been.

WC: So you described this as an urban ministry. What makes it an urban ministry?

JM: I guess the simplest answer is that it's inside the city bounds! But, I would also say that there are some challenges connected to that which are—some of them are the financial things that I was mentioning. Some others are just coping with the change that is going on in the neighborhood, that has an impact, and that change lots of times has to do with ethnicity and race. There was a small black community about two blocks from the church, and we had a couple of families from that community. The other thing that had been going on for a while, but

hadn't really touched the church until shortly before I got there—there was a Spanish-speaking population that was moving in, and we had some folks—in some respects similar to Christ Church, we had a Sunday school, and tried to do some other activities for the youth. And so in a couple of cases, we would attract the children. We didn't have a lot of success with the parents, but we would see them on Sunday, and if there were other activities that were going on during the week, they would, chances are, would show up.

WC: So there was a youth program, a program for young people?

JM: Right, although I wouldn't characterize it as a traditional Episcopal youth program that met every Sunday night, or every Friday night, or something. It was more than ad hoc, but not a formal youth program that that conjures up in the minds of lots of Episcopalians.

WC: Were there any other programs at the church for people whose needs were unmet?

JM: Actually, my daughter, who because I started at Episcopal Academy, she started at Episcopal Academy, and that was the only—

WC: As a student?

JM: As a student, thank you. And that was the only elementary or secondary school that she knew. I guess she was in middle school, maybe early high school, but the students from Episcopal Academy would come down, and we did a tutoring program for kids in the neighborhood. Also, there was a group, and I'm not going to get the name entirely right, but anyway, the Evangelical Education Association, I think it was, which was started by, I guess it was, a religion professor, maybe a theology professor, at Eastern University, which had been Eastern—Tony Campolo? You know that name?

WC: Oh, yes. Yes, I do.

JM: Yup. Tony had started summer programs, and we had—it was a six-week summer program. College students would come live in the parish house, and do a summer program. And that got started—I was at Saint John's a total of five years. It got started either my second or third year there, and it continues today, although Saint John's Church no longer exists. It's actually been torn down, and some townhouses, I guess it is, are being built there. But the camp continues. Saint Peter's Church, Christ Church, some other churches, continue to support it. I'm not sure where they met last year; I think they're going to meet at Church of the Crucifixion, which is an Episcopal Church on Bainbridge Street, this year.

But it continues today. It has the name Camp Getalong. One of the things that we needed to do to get ready for the first year of the camp was come up with a name for the camp. So I got the kids all together on a Sunday after church. I guess we had cookies and juice, or whatever. And there were maybe a dozen kids, fourth grade through maybe high school, and they couldn't agree on a name. They just could not! And we went on and on, and my patience was getting thinner and thinner. And one of the kids said, "Well, we just need to get along." I said, "That's it! That's the name of the camp." I still remember that, just because I hear about the camp every once in a while, Camp Getalong. I always sort of smiled at myself when I remember how Camp Getalong got its name.

WC: So, kids from places like Episcopal Academy provided the—?

JM: The summer program were college students that were recruited. There was an annual meeting during the Christmas break, of students

in colleges, that was an evangelical gathering, and that's where Campolo would recruit for students to come and do a summer program in the city. So we had six students the first year, six college students. It was an interesting group. One of the six was an Episcopalian, who was the leader of the group, who is still active in evangelical causes, I think mostly connected with the Episcopal Church. He's based, I think, here in Philadelphia. He's actually from the area; his parents were here in the area. I see his parents from time to time.

It was three boys and three girls, three young men, three young women. [It] caused a little bit of a stir in the parish that young men and young women were living in the parish house without supervision, and we had to kind of work that through. That was one I wasn't really prepared for. The parish obligation was to supply the evening meal, you know, pasta, macaroni and cheese, and a salad, for the six weeks that the program was in session, and I think it was also a requirement that in addition to supplying the meal, you ate the meal with the students as well, so there was some reflection. I met with them on some kind of a regular basis, I think weekly, but I was in and out of the parish house, and saw the program, so I was around a fair amount.

WC: The program—literacy?

JM: It did literacy, recreational things. There was an evangelical component to it, not hard-sell, but it was understood, sort of like a camp meeting kind of thing, some songs in the morning. I think there were some prayers, and those sorts of things. Again, I did not participate in those directly. I may or may not have attended a couple.

I don't have a strong recollection. It was really a shot in the arm for the parish.

WC: Because—?

JM: Just, I guess from my point of view, so I need to say that, but because it added a lot of life. The summers—I always joke that the Episcopal calendar is nine months long, and doesn't include June, July, and August, so that's usually a slow time. And it got very active, and very hot, just weather-wise. We had a couple of fans, but there was not air-conditioning in the parish house. I don't know how they did it, but they did.

WC: So was Tony Campolo there?

JM: No, he was sort of overall, they had a number of sites, and there was a man who was responsible for the summer programs, so he was the person that we would have regular contact with. The Campolo component actually was after I left Saint John's, but Campolo, their mission, moved to focus exclusively in housing projects. So it was no longer—his program was no longer based at the church. There was a housing project not too far away, and they moved on site there. But again, it was after my time, but the decision was made by the churches that had been supporting it to continue Camp Getalong at Saint John's, without the evangelical—EAPE, Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education.

WC: I wonder if that still exists.

JM: I would think it exists in some form. Whether it has that name or not, I don't know.

WC: Tony has become quite the popular speaker.

JM: Right.

WC: Travels all over the country to deliver his message of uplift and outreach. So, he's come a long way from where he was when he was essentially starting the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education. Let's go back and talk a little bit about Frank Turner. You mentioned Frank's work with aided congregations. You know that he changed the name of the diocesan coalition that worked with these aided congregations? What were your connections to him?

JM: Well again, I was interested in the group that—with Bishop Ogilby, it was the Coalition of Aided Congregations. Frank did not like that name at all. It became the Diocesan Coalition for Mission and Ministry, DCMM. And they were meeting monthly, September through May or June, probably not at Christmas time, on a Saturday morning. I'm not sure exactly how I first got involved. I think several of the clergy that were in the parishes that were a part of DCMM were my generation, and I would see them, and enjoy them, and just started going to the meetings. I found Frank to be—

WC: Frank chaired the meetings?

JM: I think so. If he didn't chair it in fact, he was the driving force behind it. They would frequently have a speaker come in who would speak on a topic. It was basically a 9:00 to 12:00 meeting, with, say, the first half hour gathering around the coffee pot. There would be a formal program of some kind, and then there would be some business for the coalition to conduct. There was a couple of different diocesan endowment funds that were available for building repairs that needed to be made. All of the decisions—and I think Lyman Ogilby was actually the one who started this—but all of the decisions about

making a grant for—Saint John's had to get a new boiler while I was there, and so there was a formal process that you had to go through.

There was a man who was a registered plumber who was a member of one of the congregations, and he would review all of the proposals. You had to get three bids. You didn't necessarily have to go with the least expensive bid, but you would have to make a case if you didn't go with the least expensive. Jim Deme (?) was the name of the man who was the plumber, who was head of the group that did the work. He was a long-time Philadelphian. He knew a lot of the companies, vendors, so he would sign off. He would also look at the proposals, and say the proposal made sense. So he would make a report, and usually on the basis of his report and recommendation, things would be awarded. So that was a big piece of the business.

Then, the diocesan grant for all of the congregations from the diocesan budget was a single sum, that then the various congregations would make a request of the committee that did the initial review of all the requests, and then there would be a final sign-off on that. Again, a lot of the business of the committee that took place in the fall was related to the budget work. So, Frank was the driving force behind it. He had a delightful sense of humor. He was very encouraging of the group to take control of its own life, and so I think he really moved the process along. Lyman had started a whole different way of thinking about supporting diocesan aided parishes and missions, the structure to do that. Frank built on the structure that Lyman first put in place.

WC: Do you know, have you any feeling for why Frank Turner wanted to change the name from Coalition of Aided Congregations to Diocesan Coalition for Mission and Ministry?

JM: And Ministry? Well, I think sort of the aided parishes kind of had a negative connotation, so he wasn't keen on that. He thought mission and ministry was what every congregation should be about. He came to the diocese from the national church, where he had been the officer for black ministries, and I think mission and ministry was one of the—I'm hesitant to use the word "buzz-word", but one of those expressions that was getting used, and he would use it frequently. And I don't mean to put it down by using buzz-word, but it was one of those catch titles to talk about things.

WC: So, to put a positive emphasis on it, to put it in a more positive way?

JM: Yeah. You want me to do it [in] my words?

WC: I'm asking you.

JM: Oh, yes, yes, very much so, that everybody and every congregation had work to do in their communities, and that's what he was encouraging the congregations that were part of that—

WC: Was Saint John's Church a part of this coalition?

JM: Yes. Yes.

WC: Was your—I think you said this, but just to confirm—your salary was paid more or less, at least in part, by money that came from the diocese?

JM: Yes, absolutely. Yeah, mm-hm.

WC: Let's talk a little bit about Lyman Ogilby, who was bishop in the diocese for quite a long time. What are your impression of him?

JM: Well, Lyman was another delightful person, great sense of humor. I remember him visiting Saint John's one time, and he was probably six feet, maybe even a little taller than that, and a bean pole. But he drove this little, I think it was a Renault. I just remember, he was there for probably an official visit of some kind, but it was an evening visit. And I think I was carrying his bags as things were wrapping up, and walked out. His car was parked almost right in front of the church, and I just remember being amazed, watching him get his big, lean body into this little car. I think his knees were up to his chin! But he was delightful. He always had a smile, very encouraging.

People talked about him as a healer, after the DeWitt years, and I think that's an accurate portrayal, although there would be those—and I guess I would put myself in this category—I'm not sure that healing was what was called for, or the way to characterize it. Maybe it was more unifier than a healer, and he certainly did that.

WC: During this time in the history of the diocese, women priests began to show up as candidates for jobs in the diocese. When you were at Saint John's in the mid-eighties, it had been perhaps ten years since the first ordination of women. What are your impressions of women in clergy from that period? Did you have association with many of them?

JM: Mm-hm. Actually, 1974, which I was ordained in June of 1974—it was August of 1974.

WC: July, actually.

JM: July, thank you, thank you—that the ordinations took place that were later described as irregular. I just remember hearing about it on the

radio. I'm not sure I was totally plugged in to what was going on, so just—

WC: So you didn't attend the ceremony?

JM: I was not at the ceremony. I was [in] a group of six that was ordained to the diaconate, June of 1974. Three of the six were women, and the other three were males. At that point, they could be ordained deacon, but could not be ordained priest. One of the three was with me at the Episcopal Theological School. She was actually from Michigan, but went to Swarthmore College, and so that's how she ended up in the Diocese of Pennsylvania process. She was married to a man from Michigan who was also in seminary, and so she did not stay in the diocese. She went to Michigan. The five of us did stay in the diocese. I went to Episcopal Academy, and the other four all went to parishes, in one spot or another, in the diocese.

WC: Were there women among them?

JM: Yeah, two.

WC: Who were deacons?

JM: Two of the five that stayed in Pennsylvania were deacons, women. And I'm not remembering. One, I'm pretty sure, was at Saint Asaph's Church in Bala Cynwyd. I'm not remembering where the other person served for a while. Both were eventually ordained, when that became a possibility. Neither is active here in the diocese. One is teaching, I think, at the Episcopal Seminary in California, and the other, I'm not sure—was working as a consultant, the last I knew.

WC: So these are the first women that you worked with, as professionals?

JM: Yeah. Now, there were women in seminary as well. I'm trying to think of percentage. I can't really put a percentage on it. Before that,

I knew a woman by the name of Suzanne Hiatt, who was, again, one of the missioners on Bishop DeWitt's staff, who I think continued for a while in the Ogilby years—no, she did not. She was one of the first women hired to teach at—1974 was the year the Episcopal Theological School and the Philadelphia Divinity School merged, and Suzanne went and was teaching at EDS.

WC: So you knew her—?

JM: I knew Suzanne from the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

WC: She was one of the ones who was ordained at Church of the Advocate in July of 1974.

JM: Correct, right. My guess is she was one of the organizers of the whole event.

WC: That's true.

JM: [Laughs]

WC: What are your impressions of her?

JM: Oh, I thought she was great! I liked her very much. I'm sort of remembering—I think maybe she was even doing a little teaching on a part-time basis at ETS, now EDS, and I would always make a point of seeing her when she was on campus. Again, I'd had some contact, I wouldn't say a substantial amount, and I'm not remembering. It was various projects of one kind or another, but no specifics are coming to mind.

WC: So, you were at Saint John's from 1980—?

JM: 1984 to 1989.

WC: And what prompted you to move on from that job?

JM: Well, Bishop Bartlett had been elected bishop. He was about two years into his episcopacy, maybe eighteen months and wanted to have

someone on staff to—let me back up for a second. I'm pretty sure I've got this right. Frank Turner had been elected the Suffragan Bishop, and so some of the work that Frank had been doing with the urban congregations was no longer going to be a part of his portfolio, given the new work that he picked up. So there was an opening. Again, I had done urban ministry; was pretty clear that's where I wanted to stay and be, so I expressed interest in the position, and went through the—

WC: In what position?

JM: The position was archdeacon . . . was the position. And at the end of the process, I was the one who was selected.

WC: So what were the responsibilities of the archdeacon?

JM: Well, mostly they were to work with the urban congregations. It was Archdeacon for Mission Strategy and Urban Ministry; I think I've got the title right. In the eighties, in the early eighties—I think it was actually 1980—as there was a lot of focus on urban congregations and what should be done to them, or about them. A seven-year moratorium was declared by the Diocesan Convention. I think it was 1980, but could have been '81.

WC: A moratorium?

JM: On the closing of urban congregations. The moratorium was up, or about to be up, and something needed to be done, and so that was one of the issues that I think was kind of confronting Bishop Bartlett as he began his work. So that was something that was very much on the minds of lots of people. And so I think having an archdeacon specifically focused on that task, among a couple of others, was a high priority for Bishop Bartlett.

WC: Did you have any preconceived views, or established views, about the process of decommissioning churches?

JM: No. Over the twenty years or so of the time—well, it would have been longer than my ordained ministry—there had been a series of instruments that had been developed, or commissions that had been commissioned, to do parish evaluations, to put in place structures and processes related to closing, linking, merging congregations. And while there had been lots of reports, there wasn't, in my opinion, a lot of action on those reports, and the situation had gotten pretty dire. Again, I was one of the ones, and as you've highlighted, that the grants that were going to the congregations from the diocesan budget were pretty critical for the salaries, but also for the pensions and the health insurance premiums for the clergy. At times, there were problems with the paying, particularly either of the pension assessments, or the health insurance, and that could create problems both for the individual and for the families. So really it was a situation that needed some addressing. It was pretty clear that while the diocese was very generous about increasing the budget, it couldn't keep up with the need as it was getting more and more acute. So it was reaching the point where something needed to be done.

WC: And did you, as the archdeacon, do something about that?

JM: I spent, I think it was, probably the first eighteen months or so. . . I put in place—and I can't remember. I don't think Frank Turner had meetings exclusively with the clergy. The Saturday mornings were open to everybody. I started meeting with the clergy as a group pretty quickly after I became archdeacon, and we dialed back the Saturday meetings, I think to maybe every other month, or maybe even once—

once a quarter. I also got out and did visiting, and got into congregations, and slowly but surely worked on a process to deal with the problem, and eventually came up with a process where we had—let me stop for a second.

Another part of my responsibilities as archdeacon was new congregations, and so I started attending some workshops on starting new congregations. The National Episcopal Church's officer for congregational development sponsored the workshops; it would be a week long at a time. So I got some principles related to starting new congregations, and began to think about: what if we tried to apply those to urban congregations, I guess is the simplest way to talk about it. And slowly but surely got to the point where initially, when a new congregation is started, the vicar, priest in charge, whatever the title is, would be paid through the office of the bishop or the diocese.

And so part of the structure that I came up with was to identify a number of congregations in the diocese that were strategic. They were in particular locations around the geographic area. They were strategic because of specialized ministry of some kind. They were strategic in the sense that if we didn't have congregations in those neighborhoods, we would be a diocese that had congregations in Center City, that had endowments, and then congregations out in the suburbs. One of the phrases that Frank Turner used, maybe only once with me, but stuck with me, was, he said, "Episcopalians can have whatever they want, as long as they pay for it." Obviously, that has stuck with me for a long time. So I began to work on: how can we find a way to pay for some congregations, so that we have them not

just in the suburbs and Center City, but throughout the diocese, throughout the areas of urban stress?

WC: Strategic locations?

JM: Strategic locations. So I spent a long time sort of working on that. And the first step, I did—again, now back to the clergy meetings with the clergy. The first thing I did, once I got all that together in my head, I'm sure I met with the bishop and he endorsed it, was just state the overall structure, without identifying any parishes, to not get into that until we did that and I probably, over the course of a couple of months, rolled that out, and they agreed to that.

WC: Who agreed?

JM: The clergy, the clergy that were part of the group. I suspect that around the same time, [I] also shared the proposal with the Diocesan Council, which was the group that would sign off from the diocesan policy perspective. A funny thing that I just remembered, the meeting where that happened was held at the Episcopal Academy [laughs], so it was kind of a step back for me. So having done that, and gotten those approvals, then went to work on identifying a group of parishes, congregations that would fall into that strategic category.

WC: Such as which ones?

JM: Initially, I think—I can remember all six of the initial ones: Church of the Advocate in North Philadelphia, historic congregation. The rector had retired. A new rector was just beginning. But it was where the eleven women were ordained back in that July of 1974. Some of the early meetings of the black power movement took place in Church of the Advocate, so that was clearly one of the ones that needed to be included in the group. A very vibrant Hispanic ministry had

developed at Christ Church and Saint Ambrose, so that gave us an ethnic ministry that needed to be supported. The Free Church of Saint John in the Kensington area—a vicar there by the name of Don Graff, who had been there a long, long time, had done a lot of work. Had a very creative ministry, so that clearly needed to be one of the congregations.

All Soul's Mission for the Deaf, again, a unique—a man by the name of Roger Pickering was the vicar there. He had been there for quite a while. It was a unique cultural ministry, I guess I would call it, not really an ethnic ministry. But Roger was a believer that the deaf community was a distinct cultural community, judging on some controversies that came up from time to time in the deaf community. It would be interesting to hear about those. I guess I'm missing two. Who am I missing?

WC: Saint Mary's, Chester.

JM: That was a little bit later. Saint Gabriel's on Roosevelt Boulevard was one. Again, had a community-based ministry that was going great, great guns. And I guess it was Saint Mary's, Chester. The more I think about it, you're right. That gave us some geographical diversity. That was also historically an African American congregation. So those were the initial six. Church of the Advocate was just calling a new rector with Paul Washington's retirement, and all of the other clergy were already in place. We did put in place [that] the clergy would be paid directly. I guess this is the case—they were on the diocesan payroll, and also the health insurance and the pension premiums were all paid by the diocese, through the diocesan

treasurer's office. Then the congregations were responsible for taking care of their buildings.

One of the reasons why all of these congregations were strategic was the relationship that they had to the community, so they also needed to fund the ministry that they were doing in their community. Now, some of them did that by getting grants from one place or another; there weren't any restrictions on how they funded their ministry, but they were expected to do that component. The maintenance funds were still available, so for maintenance needs we could help out with that. So those six congregations took the bulk of the diocesan dollars that were available, so that then triggered: what are we going to do with—at the time there were probably eighteen or nineteen congregations that were a part of the Diocesan Coalition for Mission and Ministry? In some cases we were able to continue grants at a reduced basis, and that was fairly important, but we also began working on, in most cases, just doing some linking, some yoking of congregations, and slowly but surely some of that yoking led to actually four congregations also becoming strategic missions, or diocesan missions.

WC: Four additional ones?

JM: Well, four additional congregations, but the congregations were paired, and served by a single priest. So it was one person who was—

WC: What churches were those?

JM: Those were two in West Philadelphia, Saint George-Saint Barnabus, which was actually—I can't remember now. They ended up merging. It's now Saint George-Saint Barnabus Church, and I can't remember whether they became a diocesan mission when they merged, or

whether—the sequence for that. Then the other was, Bishop Turner, Frank Turner, had moved Saint Dismas, which was the congregation that was at Graterford Prison. Frank was a character, and one of the things that bothered [him] was that when he would go out and do confirmations at Graterford, they got entered into the parish register of Saint James Church in Collegeville. And so one time Frank came back; I don't know whether it was that afternoon, or shortly after. Said, "Why can't they have their own register?" And I said, "Well, they have to be a parish to have a register," or a congregation—whatever word I used. And he said, "Well, let's do that." So we went through this process, and so Saint Dismas moved from being a fellowship to being a congregation, and I yoked Saint Dismas at Graterford Prison, with Saint Mary's Church on Bainbridge Street, and that was the thing.

WC: Any reason why you chose Saint Mary's?

JM: The main reason was, there was a vacancy at Saint Mary's, and with the yoking situations, there was always a struggle about Sunday morning—who got what hour to have Sunday worship. So I went through that a couple of times, and I've preached about this when we did the celebration. I was actually on the Schuylkill Expressway. It was on a weekday. I was on the Schuylkill Expressway somewhere between Valley Forge and Gulf Mills, and I was just kind of thinking, and it suddenly dawned on me that Saint Mary's was looking. We wouldn't get into the business—the worship service at Graterford was on Tuesdays. The prison chaplain had a Protestant service on Sunday, so that was not an option. Again, Tuesdays or Thursdays—I can't remember which—were the days for the Episcopal service.

So I thought, well, we wouldn't have the Sunday challenge. And Saint Mary's was looking for a vicar, and it was going to be a part-time position. So again, after I had this brilliant idea driving on the Schuylkill Expressway, I went back and met with the vestry. I had been meeting with them regularly, as they were kind of working things out, and sort of said, "Have I got a deal for you!" And they thought about it for a while. They weren't sure. And the interesting thing was, then I went back out to Graterford, and talked to the men out there, and they weren't so sure they wanted to—my takeaway was they wanted their own person, even if they could only have the person part-time. They didn't want to share, and that was kind of an interesting thing.

But we worked out a time to go out on a Sunday afternoon, where some members of Saint Mary's could go out to Graterford, and there would be—I guess maybe we did evening prayer, and some fellowship time in the chapel. And it was—again, it was interesting. It was more the Graterford men—they wanted to know just who these people were that they were going to be related to!

WC: And who were they? The people at Saint Mary's?

JM: Saint Mary's? Historically African American congregation, mixed in terms of male-female. Graterford, obviously, was all male, and there were some very attractive young women that were a part of the group that went out on that Sunday afternoon. I think that's what sealed the deal. But they really did. Music was a very big thing for the men at Graterford. They had their own band that would play for services. It was always a very energizing experience, to be with them on their principal worship service. Again, I think maybe there were a couple

of guys that sang, and it just turned into a great afternoon of fellowship. So then we had to put together a job description, and search. We actually found a man who was doing prison ministry as a part of his work as rector of a parish in Buffalo, who was very interested, and ended up becoming vicar of both.

WC: Who was that?

JM: Julius Jackson is the name of the man, and he was committed to both Saint Mary's and to Graterford. Did a great job.

WC: Saint Gabriel's, you mentioned. This was about the time that Mary Laney took over as the rector there, or the vicar there. What are your recollections of her, and her work there?

JM: Well, Mary was a woman of great energy. Her background was urban work. She had been active as a lay person at Saint Elizabeth's Church in South Philadelphia. Went to college about the same time her children were going to college, and then went to seminary; did a residential program at General. Came back, and because she had done all urban work; I think it was Bishop Ogilby. She was at Saint Thomas Church, Whitemarsh, a suburban church, for a while, but was itching to get back into the city. And I'm pretty sure that she was there at Saint Gabriel's by the time I became archdeacon.

WC: Or just shortly thereafter.

JM: Okay, right. She quickly organized a youth program. There was a group of drummers, Watotos I think they were called, that generated a lot of interest and support. There was a man by the name of George Clymer who was a layman, very active, and one of the things that I learned from the new congregational workshops and things that I did was that there was always a layman or lay woman, or two, that were

really critical in sort of bringing about change in congregations. George was a long-time member of the congregation, and was very enthusiastic about the new—my words; I don't know that this was necessarily the case—but the new, younger, different, that is to say, African American kids.

I remember Mary at one point saying that in the neighborhood, thirty-some different languages were spoken, that it was a real mixture. I guess a lot of different immigrant groups were moving into that area. Saint Gabriel's became a gathering place, and a place where lots of neighborhood activities would take place. While I was still the archdeacon, they developed a program which became Urban Bridges, which was an opportunity for people from the suburbs to come in and work with folks in the community. There were some after school programs. There was also an adult education program. I can't remember whether it was specifically tied to a GED program, or not. Eventually, Urban Bridges incorporated as a separate organization, to be eligible for grants and various other funding mechanisms, and then purchased a couple of commercial combination storefronts that had apartments above, and established a computer center there. So they had a very dynamic and active ministry, and Mary was always in the middle of it.

I got to know Mary quite well, and her husband Earl, and one of the stories that I remember—I hope I'm not in trouble for telling this one. Slowly but surely—Saint Gabriel's had a modest church building, and the undercroft for program space, and so they pretty much filled that space. The rectory was right there on the grounds, and slowly but surely more and more activities began to happen in the

rectory as well as in the house. From when Mary was at Saint Thomas, Whitemarsh, they had a house in the suburbs that they held onto.

WC: They being—?

JM: Mary and Earl. Again, Mary's the one who told this story. It was when Earl came home one night from some activity, and found that there were—some group was meeting in the bedroom when it was time for him to go to bed. He decided he was going to go back to Lafayette Hill, where their home was. So I guess about that time, Mary moved back to Lafayette Hill with Earl, and they converted the rectory to full-time program space and when they outgrew that, that's when they bought a couple of houses around the corner to continue to grow the program. So Mary just was very dynamic in that neighborhood, and respected, and looked to for leadership in that community.

WC: This was a key congregation in this whole activity that you put together of trying to have congregations in critical areas.

JM: Right. And again, geography, so that gave us another piece of the metropolitan Philadelphia area, where we would have a congregation.

WC: Were any of the other five as successful?

JM: I think each was successful in its own way. Don Graff, at Free Saint John, the change that started taking place in that area, neighborhood, was both a combination of African American families moving in, as well as Spanish-speaking families. Don worked very hard to incorporate those new communities into the parish, started doing some very interesting things with youth in the neighborhood; had some support from Saint Christopher's Church, Gladwyne, and Church of

the Good Samaritan in Paoli, for a summer program that was very creative.

The other interesting thing about Free Saint John's—they, in probably the 1920s, maybe, or a little bit earlier than that, built a huge parish house next door to the church, that they outgrew and eventually sold. And it was actually an annex that the School District of Philadelphia used for the local high school, I think. It might have been the middle school. The rectory had been a row house across the street, and they were able to buy the row house next door, after a period of time, and they broke through the walls and put the two houses [together], and so the parish house was the two row houses. And they had some tutoring activities in there; they had the summer program activities in there. They did a food cupboard. They had a thrift shop in the basement, so they were doing a lot of different things.

Just a little aside—some of the preservation work I did, particularly when I got to the diocese as the archdeacon. There was a . . . the final name was Partners for Sacred Places, which was dedicated to preserving church buildings, particularly if they were doing important work in their neighborhood. They had a national focus. There was a local group that was a part of that. I think it was the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation, and they had a religious facilities program, or something—I'm not going to get the names right. I was on their advisory committee, and we did a study and used the Episcopal churches in the Kensington neighborhood for trying to help establish what the value might be for the ministry that was going on. If it wasn't there, what the impact would be, and to put

a dollar amount on that. But we had an architect—another part was the evaluation of the buildings, and what their needs were. And [we] had an architect doing that work, a young fellow that was delightful to work with. Congratulated me on the great strategy of selling the huge building, and having the two row houses. And I sort of scratched my head and said, "First of all, it happened before my time, but I'm not sure it was a well thought out strategy."

WC: How long were you archdeacon?

JM: I was archdeacon for eleven years, from 1989 to 2000.

WC: During that time, didn't the bishop change hands?

JM: In, I think it was, 1997.

WC: '96.

JM: '96, okay. Bishop Bartlett called for the election of a coadjutor, with the idea that he would retire soon, and Charles Bennison was elected bishop.

WC: You were a candidate for that position?

JM: I was, mm-hm.

WC: You have thoughts on how that all worked out?

JM: Well, this interview might belie what I'm about to say. I think I'm pretty much an introverted person, and so I, at the end, found that sort of my natural inclinations did not lend themselves to going through Episcopal elections. It's a very rigorous process, and [pause]—I'm searching for words. I mean, I don't want to say you have to be a politician, and I want to say I'm not a politician. But, it wasn't what I was expecting, I guess, in a sense, in terms of the process. I had no idea how things would turn out.

WC: Of course, the election takes place at Diocesan Convention.

JM: Right.

WC: But there's a lot of ground work that goes into that, leading up to that. Isn't that the case?

JM: Yup, yup. I'm not remembering real clearly, but what I remember is some kind of a written statement, probably a response to questions, along with maybe an autobiographical statement that all gets submitted, and that then a committee goes through that. At the end of receiving all the written information, there is a cut down to a group of, I think it was five. No, it was more than five that then would come in for some oral interviews, and then the final list was a list of five. Then after that, there's an open nominating process. I think there were seven candidates altogether in the process that I went through.

WC: We've talked to Allen Bartlett. We've talked to Frank Griswold. We've talked to Barbara Harris—all of them who have become bishops, and the one thing in common that seems to describe their feelings about the process is that they had convinced themselves that whatever happened would happen, *que sera, sera*. They weren't going to invest too much of themselves in—in the possibility of their becoming bishop, and would live gracefully with whatever the result was. Does that describe your—?

JM: Yeah, I think so. Very much so. I guess maybe what I was saying a little bit earlier, there were people who would encourage me to get involved in other elections. I had served on a national church committee, and somebody wanted to put my name in for Bishop of Utah. Having spent all of my life in Philadelphia or Boston, I guess with the exception of two years in Lawton, Oklahoma, Fort Sill, I just couldn't see myself in Utah. But there were a couple of others.

[Pause] I wasn't willing to even go through the process, because I was happy doing other things, I guess is the simplest way to put it.

WC: The people who encouraged you to put your name in the running for the Diocese of Pennsylvania—were they from churches that you—?

JM: Yes, sure. Mm-hm, yup.

WC: Now, you left the position as archdeacon to take over at ECS. Can you talk about that?

JM: Actually when I left the diocese, it was to be the Associate Director at ECS, not to be the director, initially. I had done a lot of community work; that had been my diocesan responsibilities. At the time, there was a push for social service agencies to become more involved with their communities, so Bob Betts, who was the Executive Director of ECS, talked to me about the possibility of coming on to the staff of ECS as the Associate Director, to look at possibilities for community work. Bob and I started working together.

It, I guess, grew out of my responsibilities as the archdeacon. I was on the board of Saint Barnabus Mission, which was a program for the homeless that was at Saint Barnabus Church that was the Saint Barnabus of the Saint George-Saint Barnabus that we were talking about earlier. Saint Barnabus was a huge structure, and they opened their doors initially to homeless men in the eighties, probably—maybe a little earlier than that. Later, they shifted to homeless families, mostly single-parent, female-headed families, and slowly but surely I ended up as president, or chair of the board, whatever the title was. And we were in a rough time of making a go at Saint Barnabus, and I went over and saw Bob Betts, and said, "Can you help us out?" Again, there was some of this talk about getting more community-

oriented, so I think Bob saw it as an opportunity. In addition, ECS had just received a sizeable bequest, maybe within a year, maybe two at the most.

WC: This would have been about—?

JM: Well, I started in 2000. The bequest was probably ’98, maybe ’99. At the time, they didn’t have anything specific in mind, so they created an Opportunities Fund. So when I went over and talked to Bob, probably not initially, but he was very open to being supportive, and slowly but surely. One of the things that we were up against—when Saint Barnabus and Saint George merged, the decision was made to use the Saint George’s property. They were about twelve, fourteen blocks apart. So the church buildings were sold, and as part of the agreement of sale there was a five year lease for the continued use of the portion of the facility that Saint Barnabus, the homeless shelter, was using. As we were getting toward the end of the five years, we were not having any success raising capital funds of any kind, and again, that’s when—and I was not a part of these discussions—the ECS board agreed to use the Opportunities Fund to fund a new facility for Saint Barnabus.

WC: For the homeless shelter?

JM: For the homeless shelter, sorry.

WC: Not for the church?

JM: Not for the church, for the homeless shelter. And that was about four blocks away from where the church is. Sorry for the confusion, but the confusion, the Saint Barnabus Mission stayed as the name of the shelter when it—when it moved to its new location. Eventually, Saint Barnabus [Mission] merged into ECS. The merger took place before I

started on the staff, but that's where Bob and I started working fairly close together, and I then had some experience with the ECS board, and other staff members.

WC: So you're saying that the mission of ECS began to evolve under Bett's leadership, taking a greater interest in homelessness, and community outreach?

JM: Yes. Historically, ECS had been what's called a child welfare agency, running programs related to foster care, and families where there were family troubles, parents didn't have all the skills they needed to raise their children, family counseling—those sorts of things. Alongside of that, there was interest in doing more community-focused kind of work. In addition, the homelessness was becoming an issue that had sort of shown its ugly head, and particularly, I just remember in the transition from single men to families, while the homeless shelter was still in the old Saint Barnabus. I just remember one day being out there for a meeting of some kind, and someone commenting that a woman had just come in with a newborn. So again, sort of the homeless phenomenon, and its impact on families.

WC: So now we're talking about working with homeless families, not just homeless men?

JM: Right, right. The homeless men just went away. But because of ECS's longstanding working with families, it was a natural fit. That was the reason for doing it. And just about the time that I started at ECS, it was one of the first projects that landed in my lap. There was a lot of interest in starting some fairly significant after school programs on the part of the city. The city researched it, and came up with—following the model called the Beacon Program, which had

been developed, I think, first in San Francisco, but was in San Francisco, New York, and several other places. That became the model, and they were to be school-based programs, run by social service agencies.

Back to Saint Gabriel's—one of the things any agency that wanted to bid on becoming a Beacon needed to find a school, in a neighborhood, and the neighborhoods were specified, I think, by zip code, but somehow identified. And Mary Laney's the one to go to, because that was one of the neighborhoods, and so through Mary we got involved with the principal of the Feltonville Middle School. I think at the time it was called Central East Middle School; it became—there was some construction. There were all sorts of things. So ECS was one of six or eight, or ten agencies that initially got contracts to run Beacon centers in the schools. It was an after school program, and summer program.

WC: That would certainly have fit nicely with the work that they'd been doing at Urban Bridges all along.

JM: Right, exactly. Exactly, mm-hm.

WC: So ECS was working with homeless women and children, homeless families. How about home care?

JM: ECS had had a home care program that initially developed as a response to the AIDS crisis, and was in-home, not skilled nursing—housekeeping. The home health aides could help set up the medication regime. They could run errands, like I used to do in South Philadelphia, do some shopping, and those sorts of things. Again, not skilled care. As AIDS moved from being an acute life-ending disease to a chronic disease, a lot of the medical institutions developed their

own home care programs, and would just refer the folks that they were seeing as patients in their institutions to their own programs.

So the ECS home care program moved into providing home care services to the elderly, through work with the Philadelphia Corporation on Aging, PCA. The dollars that ECS had available—ECS had some restricted dollars for services to the elderly—could supplement the PCA funds, so that if we got a referral from an Episcopal Church, and the person would be eligible for funding through PCA, but it might take three or four weeks to get all the mechanics worked out, we could take them in right away. So we could use private dollars, and we could use private dollars if our staff felt as though someone needed some additional services that PCA wasn't willing to pay for. So it made it possible for us to run a high quality home care program for—

WC: Were home health aides going in?

JM: Yup, exactly.

WC: Helping them with their medication, perhaps with cooking, and things like that?

JM: Exactly, yup. For a while it was a volunteer program, but tied in with our home care there were some parishes that would prepare meals, and freeze the meals, and we would deliver those. But it got to be a problem as—I don't know if it was the Health Department or PCA, was tightening up on the rules about the preparation of the food, and the storage of the food. PCA was running its own program, had certified kitchens, and all that business, so we got out of the home meal preparation and delivery.

WC: So during your time at ECS, first as Associate Director, and then as Director, would you say the focus of ECS was on reaching out to communities, especially in home care and the homeless? Leaving behind the old mission, or not?

JM: No, for my time, and I've been retired less than a year.

WC: That's fairly recently.

JM: Yes. Child Welfare had continued for all of the time that I was there. However, the last couple of years, the city Department of Human Services went through, and is now doing a planning process for transitioning to a whole new way of delivering child welfare services. ECS was one of forty to fifty agencies that was providing child welfare services, sort of disbursed throughout the city. There were supposed to be territorial assignments, but families moved around a fair amount, so you couldn't count on—if you had a particular geographic area, shortly after you were assigned a family, they could be living in another geographic area.

So I guess it kind of contradicts what I'm about to say, but the city was moving toward divvying up the city into ten districts all together, and contracting with one agency to provide all the services for any individual who came to them from that district. So I was a part of some of the early planning that was going on. It was a joint planning, city, private agency task force—although the city was making all of the decisions—and it was pretty clear that—ECS made a decision early on; the board made the decision based on staff recommendation to not try to become one of the agencies that would be responsible it was called a Community Umbrella Agency, that would be responsible.

WC: For a particular area?

JM: For a particular area. ECS did what was called general foster care. There were several higher levels of foster care, treatment foster care; there were some residential foster care programs, particularly for teenage youngsters. All of our experience was either general or a specialty called medical foster care. And the risks of trying to take on all of the additional responsibilities, when we had no experience with those programs—

WC: So that's why you didn't want to be a general purpose agency for a particular area?

JM: Exactly. We didn't have all of the expertise, and to try to develop it just felt like way too much. There were also some concerns about whether it was going to be funded at an adequate level. What the city is doing is part of a national movement, and at the national level, it's been a very mixed bag. There are states that have been very successful, and there are states that have not been successful at all. One of the, through the peer agency association, Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth, and Family Services, [the] Lutheran Children and Family Services was a part of that, and the Lutheran Agency in, I think it was Nebraska or Kansas, had gone bankrupt trying to—they just blew through all of the private funding that they had available.

So that made me fairly cautious, and other members of the Pennsylvania Council were cautious about how far to be involved, given the variety of work that we do, and plenty of work to do in the other areas. ECS is not going away. There had been some thought that maybe ECS could be a subcontractor to one of the agencies that

became the Community Umbrella Agency. I just know, because I have a little, a good relationship, with my successor, that it's looking like that's not going to work out. So, foster care, again which is something ECS has been doing since the 1930's, is probably not going to be a service that ECS offers in the not-too-distant future.

WC: ECS was for a long time a United Way agency. Was it still a United Way agency when you became associate, or director?

JM: ECS was receiving United Way funding when I arrived. While I was there, the United Way went through a fairly significant change in the way that it was going to go about its funding. It used to be that allocations were for a year at a time, and probably about seven years ago they made the decision to go to a three-year funding cycle, where you went through a competitive process. If you were successful in obtaining a grant for the first year, subject to the United Way raising the funds that were needed to fund all of the agencies at the level at which they were funded, you were guaranteed that same funding for the next two years, so it became a three-year cycle.

ECS was successful at the first three-year cycle. The third year [of the second] three-year cycle, . . . —is ending now, and . . . , we were not funded, and I don't know what the agency has decided to do with respect to submitting a proposal for the next round of funding.

WC: Now, ECS, of course, is a very old agency, going back to its days as a City Mission in the late nineteenth century, so it's been a part of the work of the Diocese of Pennsylvania for a very long time. Do you have a sense as to what its significance is, how important it is, in the eyes of the diocese now?

JM: Well, I can tell a story on our new provisional bishop, Bishop Clifton Daniel, Bishop Dan, who's been with us just about a year now. I forget; he started maybe the first of March.

WC: Yeah, it was March.

JM: But right in that neighborhood. But anyway, he moved here to Philadelphia from North Carolina, and moved into an apartment about a block and a half away from ECS.

WC: In Society Hill.

JM: In Society Hill. And I don't know what caused this to happen, but I know he's a walker, and he walks through the neighborhood. So whether it was his first day in the neighborhood, or first afternoon in the neighborhood, or evening, he walked past—somehow he knew that ECS—and on the top of our building there's a sign: Episcopal Community Services. So that first morning that he woke up in Philadelphia, he was in shirt and tie, not in clericals, and he showed up at nine o'clock in the morning, or 8:40, wanting to just see the place; I forget. I got a phone call in my office that the new bishop was downstairs, so I immediately went down.

WC: You hadn't retired at that point?

JM: No, no. I went down and introduced myself; he introduced himself. And the man who was at the reception desk at that point was very flustered. We had tightened up our security policies and were discouraging just drop-ins, and here this man showed up, just dropping in. And the receptionist was being a little stand-offish, and finally Bishop Dan said, "Well, I'm the new bishop," which then flustered this person to no end, and he was very apologetic. But anyway, Bishop Dan showed up on his first morning in Philadelphia

at ECS, so I take that to be a sign of interest in ECS. I just know again, from my very good, positive relationship with my successor, that Bishop Dan is continuing to be very supportive. Actually, in another week there's going to be a conference, an ECS conference, on parish outreach, and he has been promoting the conference, so I think that's a good, strong, positive relationship, and I look forward to it.

WC: Now, while you were at ECS, perhaps, or maybe just before, you pursued a doctoral program?

JM: I did. In the church world, I guess, ecclesiastical world, there is a degree, Doctor of Ministry, which is not a research degree—in common parlance, a professional degree, which provides an opportunity to kind of explore an area of some kind. I used it as an opportunity to reflect back on my work—I was still the archdeacon at the time, to kind of look over the developments—I looked at the period 1970 to 1995.

WC: You looked at it in what way?

JM: Well, at the history of the diocese, how it worked, trying to develop policies for urban congregations, structures that were put in place, the impact of the changes that we made creating the diocesan missions, the strategic locations, what the impact had been on those parishes. So, Arlin Rothauge, who was the man, the national church staff man who was the congregational development person, and whose workshops and seminars I had attended—he was starting a doctoral program in congregational development at Seabury Western Theological Seminary, which is Evanston, Illinois. And asked if I would have any interest in the program, and I did. I talked to Bishop Bartlett about the possibility of having some time to do the work, and

he was very, very supportive. So it was basically you did reading and writing during the year, and then you would spend June at Seabury Western, with other students and faculty, and then do a paper at the end of the three years.

WC: Similar to a dissertation, or a thesis?

JM: Yeah, yeah.

WC: And the thesis, as I recall, reflected on your work in the diocese and its relationship to parishes in need, community outreach.

JM: Correct, mm-hm. The diocese, beginning in the 1970s, and probably before that, but again, what I focused on—really struggled with what to do with congregations in the city where the demographics had changed in such a way that the—I'll put it this way: the natural constituency that has an Episcopal trademark was no longer the constituency that was living in the communities where these churches had been. And so, a number of different iterations of trying to do something about this—sort of, with each bishop there would be a new effort of some kind. So I kind of placed the work that I did, we did, all of us that were involved in it, in the context of what had happened during the episcopacy of Bishop DeWitt, and then Bishop Ogilby, and then in my time, Bishop Bartlett. It was a fun project.

WC: And what did you conclude?

JM: Well, I concluded that unless there was diocesan support along the lines that we've talked, there would not be vibrant ministries in most of the neighborhoods that I was focused on.

WC: The neighborhoods where there had been significant demographic and economic change?

JM: Exactly. Exactly.

WC: So the diocese has to take charge of that?

JM: Well again, in the structure, and I guess I talked about it in the paper, we had new missions and diocesan missions, but mission was the operative word, maybe back to Frank Turner. And in both cases, the expectation was the diocese would play a significant role. The expectation for new missions was that they would eventually become self-supporting. That was not the expectation for diocesan missions; it was a strategic ministry, strategic mission of the diocese.

WC: Right. Saint Christopher's, Gladwyne has been a suburban parish over the years that's been very active in helping or working with urban parishes.

JM: Right.

WC: Is that a model that you think needs — has it been successful, generally? Or has it been something that's been unusual, rare?

JM: Well, I think [pause] unusual. I was debating unusual versus rare, I guess, in a sense. [Laughs] But there are some parishes that are very oriented toward being supportive of urban missions, and have been doing that all along. So I wouldn't want to use the word rare. But the issue that I was dealing with in the nineties was sometimes those relationships can support programs that might not be strategic; I guess that's how I would put it, in terms of what should be going on. Again, I'm not saying this very well. But, a parish could maybe keep itself afloat, and maybe—I'm being overly judgmental—but not doing too much more than, say, having Sunday morning worship services, and maybe another thing—again, that's an extreme example, but maybe didn't fit into an overall strategy about what we were trying to accomplish.

WC: When you say a parish, you're talking about the aided parishes? Or are you talking about the suburban parishes?

JM: I'm talking about the relationship between the two could be something that wasn't in line with what was the diocesan mission strategy. I guess that's the easiest way to say it. I'm not saying that anything nefarious was being done, so much as there might have been ways to better use the resources, in terms of an overall strategy.

WC: That suggests the need for not only localized decision-making, but diocesan-wide decision-making?

JM: Yeah, I would agree with that.

WC: Something that in the Diocese of Pennsylvania has been a bone of contention over the years, has it not?

JM: Absolutely. Right, yes. No, I agree with that. I guess it was hard for me, having been in an aided parish for a period of time, and then having tried to work on a strategy, and I think we were pretty successful. But you know, to have somebody trying to go around the side, and have success where maybe success would have been better in another location. Again, I'm not saying it real well, but. . .

WC: Well, maybe the idea here is that you need to work together.

JM: Yeah, yeah. Absolutely.

WC: Now you say you've been retired for less than a year?

JM: Correct.

WC: How did that happen?

JM: Well, we were doing some strategic planning at ECS, sort of looking down the road. We had some consultants from the outside assisting with the project, and at one point the consultant—I'm not sure who put her up to it—said, "Well you know, you're getting old." Didn't

quite put it that way, but said, “Everybody’s aware that you’re in your sixties, and if we’re talking about the next five years, you need to be sort of thinking about whether you’re going to be a part of those five years or not.”

Up until that point, retirement seemed like a good idea, but I hadn’t really done any concrete, specific thinking about it, and the more I thought about it—and oh, one of the foundations has done a lot of work on executive leadership in non-profits, and I latched onto some of their information, and it said that once you start strategic planning around retirement, or change in executive leadership, if it’s a planned retirement, it shouldn’t be less than twelve months worth of work, or more than 36. So we put into the strategic plan that we would begin to write a plan for leadership succession, and that was one year. And then again, by that time I’d discovered that it shouldn’t be less than one, or more than three, so I split the difference and came up with two years. So that’s how, sort of, the date got established.

And I think it was a good process for everybody involved. I think the board worked real hard. We put a planning committee together, not on the strategy, the overall strategy, but specifically related to the new executive director—how was I spending my time? What did I see the future to be looking like? The committee interviewed some peers here in Philadelphia, and a variety of other things, and came up with a plan, and we moved ahead on it.

WC: You’re still volunteering at ECS?

JM: One of the programs that we started again, resulting from working with the homeless families, some of whom had been with us for quite a while—working with the teenagers in those families. And so it’s

been a very interesting, creative program, related on keeping them in school, and getting them jobs, employment. And so Tuesday evenings I go in and work with the kids, and I enjoy it very much.

WC: So is there anything that we haven't covered that you think we should?

JM: No, I think it's been a pretty thorough conversation.

WC: Oh, good. All right, well then, let's conclude with that.

[End of Interview]