



# Christ Church Looks Back

by Joseph A. Tomberlin

Our story continues with the Vestry meeting on July 18, 1952. Following Fr. White's reading of his letter of July 13, 1952, and his explanation of differences between "low" church and "high" church and an ensuing debate, the Vestry moved to a motion by Mr. Dawson to repeal the portion of the May 16, 1952, agreement to increase Fr. White's salary over three years in return for his ending his V.S.C. teaching. Four of the six vestrymen present voted for the motion, while two abstained. The gathering ended with "a general discussion of details of the Service, and items of publicity which were not received with favor by various members of the Vestry because of their possible tinge of a 'high' Church interpretation on the part of the public." The Minutes become vague at this point and mention specifically only "the use of the title 'Father'" and "chanting during the service," and then add the generalized phrase "several other points." Whatever "several other points" meant, Fr. White "agreed to carry out wishes expressed" by Vestry members.

Vestry met in regular session on August 3, 1952, and again covered some of the same ground. To clarify Mr. Dawson's motion [see the paragraph above] for those absent from the July 18th meeting, Fr. White spelled out the decisive reason for his offer to relieve Vestry of its commitment to assume

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responsibility for his V.S.C. salary. He said he perceived that Vestry "would likely refuse the proposed \$16,000 loan" from the American Church Building Fund Commission "if they had the additional salary burden for him to handle also." He insisted that "he was more interested in the progress of this Church than in abandoning his teaching even though it still . . . [meant] more work for him."

The issue of Fr. White's long letter of July 13 to vestrymen then arose again owing to comments by two members about the missive. Because "they seemed to question his objections to caucus meetings," the Vicar asked to have the floor to address the points they raised. Here a sentence written by Winston Churchill in November 1940 comes to mind:

*"History with its flickering lamp stumbles along the trail of the past, trying to reconstruct its scenes, to revive its echoes, and kindle with pale gleams the passion of former days."*

History is not a science. The statements Fr. White subsequently made to the Vestry seem relatively clear, but the correspondence with the Bishop that he refers to does not exist in Parish records, so we actually can see only part of the story.

The Vicar declared that he had reviewed the correspondence that "had prompted the caucuses" and in doing so "had discovered that the Bishop's letters implied that he (the Vicar) was trying to trick the Vestry into carrying a heavier [financial] load than was wise." The first phrase quoted suggests

that the Vestry caucus after the regular Vestry meeting on July 6, 1952, was not the only such, but perhaps Fr. White intended to speak only of a single caucus. In any case, to counter the Bishop's charge Fr. White showed "correspondence between himself and the Bishop" which, he claimed, demonstrated that Bishop Barnwell knew the Vicar had rejected a "call" from a church in Salisbury, North Carolina. Fr. White also displayed documents from the Salisbury church to prove that the salary and car allowance there would be about \$400 more than he had told the Bishop would keep him at Christ Church. This aimed to rebut the Bishop's contention that Fr. White had told him the Salisbury salary and car allowance would be \$100 more than at Christ Church.

The materials offered by Fr. White seemed to show Bishop Barnwell had made errors, though we do not have the Bishop's letters to confirm so. Fr. White asserted that he made no charge against the Bishop of having deliberately maligned him, but because "the Bishop erred, and such errors seemed to reflect ill against himself, the Vicar wished to prove his record clear." Mr. Jamie Carroll then declared his intention to inform the five absent vestrymen "about these proofs of record." Vestry Clerk Robert Macks being absent, Fr. White not only transcribed the Minutes but placed an intriguing remark at the end: "Other discussions followed, not made a matter of record. . . ."

This story continues in the August *Vineyard*, and perhaps ends.