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Making Room for Women Project

**Interview with Ann Evans
September 6, 2019**

Oral History Recording Summary

Interviewee: Ann Evans (AE) Interviewed by: Katherine Gear Chambers (KGC)
Date of Interview: September 6, 2019
Transcribed by: Katherine Gear Chambers Auditor of Transcription: Ann Evans

Time Log	Description of Content
01:00	Beginning of Interview; introduction, permission
01:13	Early life
06:07	Early experiences of gender inequality
08:38	Education and work experience at the Prairie Christian Training Centre
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KGC: My name is Katherine Gear Chambers, and today is September 6th, 2019. I'm interviewing Ann Evans as part of the Making Room for Women project with the United Church of Canada Archives. Ann, do I have your permission to proceed with this interview? 01:00

AE: Yes.

KGC: Wonderful, thank you. So if you could just tell me a bit about your early life: where you grew up, where you were raised, and what church you attended, your involvement with the church as you were growing up? 01:13

AE: Well, I'm one of those people that was born into the church, absolutely. I grew up in London, Ontario, and my grandparents were – particularly my grandmother was, and my grandfather was for a long time, too – they were the pillars of the church, and in fact I think they got this church built, which was Wellington Street United. So, they were part of the very early foundation of the formation of a particular church in London, Ontario. So, that's the church that I grew up in. My grandfather always lived in the house that they... I don't know when, like my parents didn't always live with her parents, but I'm a very late child, my brother was 16 when I was born, so there were two families and I was the second family and basically the only child in this family. And my grandfather always lived in our house. Yes, I could go on and on.

But anyway, Wellington Street United is the church in London where I grew up and attended as a child, and there's lots of stories about all of that. I was raised during the war, and our family was in a place where there were lots – like, my brother was in the Second World War, and so there were lots of soldiers in the house all the time, and I think the church was kind of a home place for me. It was a quieter place, a place I went a lot. My girlfriend, also, at the time, Ellery Donaldson, became a United Church minister much, much later, but the two of us – her grandfather was the church janitor, so we had pretty easy access to it. We kinda had a key. Via him, he was the key, but we could get in any time, and so a lot of our childhood games were there, so it was kind of a home place in the middle of a pretty chaotic home life. Due to the war, primarily. And we were a very poor family, we lived on the other side of the tracks in London, and this church was on the other side of the tracks.

KGC: So there was a community there that was grounding for you?

AE: At the church, yes, for sure. It was a very, yeah, I would have called it my second home, for sure.

KGC: And did you attend Sunday school? Or were you involved in leadership?

AE: Oh yes, oh yes. Yes, yes, yes. My father must have had, I don't know, fifty years of perfect Sunday school attendance, and I'm sure I had twenty-five. He just went every Sunday. He was the church treasurer, and that's what he did. And he was always there. So, Church School was Sunday afternoons in those

times, and I went. We went morning, afternoon and evening. And quite often they went to prayer meetings if they were Wednesday nights, I don't know. The church was pretty central.

KGC: Did you step into some leadership roles while you were there as well, or were you at that point a participant?

AE: No, I was just a kid when I was there. I went to Western, I went from high school to Western, but through high school I would have just been a kid going to that church, doing CGIT, and I did Guides and the Salvation Army, because I liked Guides better than CGIT, actually. And then when I got to university, I became the youth leader at Robinson United Church, which was just off campus, in the much wealthier area of London. And I was the youth leader there for the two years I was at Western.

KGC: So was that your first experience of being in a position of leadership?

AE: Probably, you know. I think I've always been in positions of leadership, but I don't know what you would call them. I got paid for that one.

KGC: Oh, great! [Laughter]

AE: That was the first one I got paid for, however little it was, I got paid for that job. It was important that I had that job, because I needed the money to stay in school.

KGC: Can you remember, sort of in all of this, an early, defining moment in the first sort of 25, 30 years of your life, that made you aware of gender inequality? 06:07

AE: Well, the first one that popped into my mind is not a very nice one.

KGC: That's okay. Gender inequality isn't very nice, so... [Laughs]

AE: My family was poor. I didn't have enough money to go to Western, so I needed to get some sort of grant, and I remember talking to the Dean of Men in terms of getting money to get some kind of grant to go. And it was quite clear to me that if I would become sexually involved with him that I could get my way paid to university. So that was, I was young, I would have been – I must have gone to university when I was 16 or 17, so that was maybe my first experience of discovering that yeah, the world wasn't the way I thought it was.

KGC: Yeah, that must have been quite shocking, at such a young age.

AE: It was, and I think it's all part of – I had to figure out how to, you know, tuition was \$335, I dunno, but to me it was monumental, and I didn't have \$335, or whatever it was, it was something like that. It was in the 300 mark. And I think at that time, the United Church... very soon I discovered that the United Church paid your tuition if you would serve the church for two years when you graduated.

KGC: That seems like a good deal.

AE: It was a good deal, yeah. Because I also wanted to be a lawyer and probably, equally as much or more, so that made it very “Oh, that was the way to go.” It was far better than sleeping with the Dean of Men. Something like that was how it all worked out.

KGC: Yeah, definitely. Well I’m glad it all worked out, but it must have definitely given a tint to your experience at university, starting that way.

AE: Well, I didn’t stay long at Western. And I don’t support Western, like I don’t send them money. [Laughter]. I dunno, all these many years later, I haven’t thought about that experience for a long time, but I found a way around it. I think I find ways around things, and I found the way around that.

KGC: Yeah, and through the church.

AE: In that case the church was a big part of it. Robinson United, and that small job I had. It took a lot of time, but through that job I got a small amount of money towards this whole business of paying tuition. And then, in the summers at Western, I was at PCTC. Which my mother knew what would have been the Dean of Women or whatever she was called, like, the female person in charge of the Prairie Christian Training Center, which is now called something else. What’s it called now? I don’t know. It has another name, because I visited it maybe five or six years ago, so I can’t remember what it’s now called. But it was the Prairie Christian Training Centre. And she knew this woman, Gertrude, Trudy, who had been an early childhood friend, and I wanted to go to something like Bigwin Inn and be a waitress in the summer, and my parents really were of the opinion that if you went there, you would come back pregnant. A big part of that particular era of my life was, “How can we get our girl through school and not get pregnant?” Because that’s what happened to my cousin, I think. And so there was a lot of emphasis on getting me to safe places, although Western didn’t turn out to be. 08: 38

But anyway, it was about that, so they asked if Trudy would take me on staff, and so I was lifeguard for PCTC for two summers. And they, I think they paid my train fare or my train, and I know I got a hundred dollars; this was my honorarium for the summer. Because it paid one third. Like it was all about, I’m getting the money together to ... so I only stayed at Western two years. I managed to somehow do an undergraduate degree in two years, by taking a lot of courses and getting out of there.

KGC: Oh my gosh, that must have been very grueling.

AE: Well, it was a way to do it. Again, to get around it. I didn’t have much money to go to university, so there had to be a way around it, and then choosing to go to Theology – oh, it was Theology School I got paid for, not undergraduate. They paid for your tuition if you served for two years, I think, after you graduated.

KGC: Right. So what was your undergraduate degree in?

AE: I guess officially it would have been Economics and probably... Economics and Philosophy or Economics and English. I don’t know, I took all the courses I

needed to get a basic BA degree. That was it. Most of the courses I took were Economics, because I got admitted to the London School of Economics after two years at Western.

KGC: And so is that where you finished?

AE: No, I could no more have afforded to go to the London – It was very nice, but I couldn't have afforded to go to the London School of Economics, so that option wasn't... but I did manage to.... I must have taken a lot of economics [Laughs] It's what I remember!

KGC: Right. So then right from graduating, did you go right into theology school then?

AE: Yes, because I did the summers at PCTC, and when I was there, those were pivotal moments for me. Not in so much the gender thing, but in determining that the church was a place that I probably – because you know in those days women didn't study theology and that wasn't a very acceptable route to go. In those summers, the leadership of the church in the United States and Canada met in PCTC in the summers, and what they were doing was Encounter Groups, because Encounter Groups had just hit the United States in Bethel, Maine, and the people in Bethel, Maine came to PCTC and let these very they were like extremely therapeutic, on the edge, personal dynamic groups. And all these ministers from head office – one time I was there, the whole of head office from the United Church was at one of these things, so I was like – all the kids were – like I was the lifeguard for all their kids. But they also were always falling apart because of these meetings, these intense meetings they were having. And then a person whose name is Olive Sparling, who was a significant woman in the United Church at that time in the era of education of children, discovered that I had a particular gift for reading some of these experiments that they were doing with the kids. And I just – these are all, I don't really know, I could on and on.

KGC: No, do!

AE: Well, you know, when I was little, my dad and I used to go to church fairs. And what we would do at the church fairs is we'd read tea leaves. And I got very good at reading tea leaves. And we were popular in the circuit, in the fall fair circuit. So I always had, I mean I guess my dad would have said I was "from away." That was the term my family would have used and how I technically understand that is that some people seem to be pretty interested in the unconscious and their access to it is seemingly stronger, and I demonstrated that from an early age with my tea leave reading thing. And they discovered that at PCTC, and it fit right in with all this crazy stuff that was going on with group dynamics and all this stuff, and so they had me doing a lot of these, reading a lot of these things from children's drawings. Like, I was interpreting their drawings.

KGC: Oh, wow. And you must have been quite young still.

AE: Oh yes, I wasn't twenty for sure. I was somewhere between probably seventeen and twenty. And so I had this job. I was the lifeguard, and I had this

other little job. And then people started to get interested in me in that regard, and in those days, like, young people that seemed to have this talent were interesting to the seniors around. In that Jung, like a lot of Jung's writings, he talks about having this very young medium, and so I was like this – so then they would all, all these characters would come out and I would row them around after their intense meetings when they would come out crying and broken and I'd row them around the lake, and that's when I first started to become a therapist, I know.

KGC: At age nineteen, eighteen.

AE: Yeah. But it really started at church fairs, you know. I mean, it started early.

KGC: And so those were groups of ministers that you were with?

AE: Yes.

KGC: Do you think that's what sort of inspired you to pursue theology?

AE: Well, you know, I guess you know they said, "What are you going to do with your life, and what are you going to be?" And there were two psychiatrists who were staying there, as well. I mean they were afraid that people were going to go crazy; they were pretty wild experiments for the United Church.

KGC: Wow!

AE: Yeah, it would be interesting to research that little period, what PCTC was actually doing at that time. It's sort of like – it's like the experimentation with LSD and all that was happening with Timothy Leary; this was a non-drug similarity. People were trying to attain alternate states of consciousness, and I dunno. Anyway, and they had two psychiatrists. It all started in Bethel, Maine. I know that was the source of it, was in the States, and again, I went out there to be a lifeguard. This was not what I went out there for. They just ... they didn't pay too much attention to me, they just... But they talked to me about "Well, have you ever thought about studying theology?" And at that time, I knew one woman minister, but basically any women ministers that I knew at that time were all celibate. They were all single women. I didn't know any married women. And I think eventually, maybe I met Lois Wilson, but she had had – her kids were all grown up. She wasn't going to have children. I was like, I wasn't married. I was...

KGC: Twenty!

AE: I wasn't exactly ready to be a nun, or I wasn't certain, you know, that I wanted to choose a life of celibacy, which seemed like the possible route if I was going to be serious about this. And yeah, pretty much that was the case. So, at any rate, they told me I guess, about "Oh, you'll get your way paid, and you have to give two years." And my friend, my best friend went into medicine and the other one went into law, and you know, it was difficult. But I decided I would do that, and then, I don't know. I was good at math and good at – and I thought, "Well, it's not going to hurt to understand money." And I liked my Economics professor, I think, basically, and I liked my Philosophy professor, so I took a lot of Philosophy and Economics, really. And my philosopher teacher was very

involved with the Student Christian Movement, with SCM. And eventually, he brought me back and I did a year at Western as an SCM secretary. Between my second and third year of theology, because I didn't have enough money. I was always not having enough money to go to school. So that was the...

KGC: The theme.

AE: I'm struggling to get enough money to go to school and do all the other things I wanted to do. But this isn't much of an answer to the gender question.

KGC: No, it's very interesting. So when you were in school, was the student body mostly men, or were there other women, like your friends who studied medicine and law?

AE: No, no. When I got to theology, it was just me. And there were not bathrooms for women at Emmanuel College. I had to go over to Victoria University to go to the washroom. I think that there was another woman, Marilyn, who had studied theology, but I don't think with any intention of becoming a minister. And I didn't have any classes with her or anything like that.

KGC: So, when you were studying theology, did you have the intention of becoming a minister? Is that what you were working towards?

AE: Yes, yes. Because I was going to have to pay this back and I was going to get ordained to pay this back. And you know, that's what I wanted to be. I thought I had lots of talent and ability to do that. And certainly, the people at PCTC were saying so. It was a very, you know, it was a – people choosing to study theology at that time were pretty edgy characters. Like some of the people I worked with were pretty edgy; they were pretty far out in their ideas. Not all of them, by any means, but a lot were. And so, we were kind of a colourful group I would say. And one of my classmates, Jack War, he was a medical doctor, and he decided that baptizing babies was entirely wrong. So we had these great – and finally they ordained him, and they sent him out to a parish not far from where my parish was. He was maybe a year or two younger, or a year or two behind me, not younger. But I was clearly the youngest. I was really – people thought I was a CGIT representative. I was really a young kid. I looked young for my age as well, at that time, I certainly didn't look... I just looked at a picture of myself. [Rustling] Here's one that was in the newspaper. I have a few clippings, there's not many. Like there's a picture of me.

KGC: Wow, and this is when you were –

AE: Trying to get ordained. So this is after I graduated from theology! Just a sense of – I don't know where the rest of that article is, but that's an article that was talking about when they were trying to stop my ordination. But I look like a young girl. So anyway, you asked me something about...?

KGC: Just the experience of being the only woman at Emmanuel College.

AE: Right. Just a funny story about that was, I was going to say that Gregory Baum, who was a famous theologian in the Catholic Church, was giving a lecture over at St. Michael's, I guess, and we all went over to it. So, I was in this room, and I

sat near the front of the class, I don't know why, maybe not too far from the door. And it was a lot of – the room was full of male would-be clerics, and Gregory Baum came along, and he looked in the room, and he came in to give the lecture and he turned right around and walked out and left, and checked, and said, "It can't be that room, there's a woman in there." So that's just a funny story about....

KGC: Wow. And how did you find out about this? Did someone tell you?

AE: Yes, afterwards. Because somebody I guess in the office had to redirect him and tell him no, there was a woman in that class. And he did come back and give the lecture, but that would have let him know that this wasn't a room full of clerics, because there was a woman in there. Now he's Catholic and so on, but you know. And anyway, those are things that are just kind of part of the woodwork at the time. And I always knew it was going to be really difficult.

KGC: Did you find support with professors and students?

AE: There were certain people that supported me. Angus McQueen supported me, Ernie Howells, both of them had been moderators and both of them gave me a lot of support. Like they tried to... and my own parish, my own from Wellington Street United, the minister there always was supportive. His sister was a minister, her name was something Curry... his name was Eldridge Curry and her name was [something] like Elda Curry, like they had matching names. But, she was a minister, but she again was a single minister who had become a minister later in life, which is really what I found out is pretty much what was going on.

KGC: So, women had been ordained?

AE: Yes, I wasn't the first woman ordained, but clearly, I think probably... I think was the first woman of childbearing age ordained.

KGC: Right. When you were studying at Emmanuel, and you were studying theology surrounded by men, did that shape your understanding of the theology that you were studying, and your own faith?

AE: That's a good question. We fought a lot with the Dems, we didn't like David – Oh, no that's when I was teaching at Emmanuel, that was later. No, that's later. Certainly later, when I went back to teach there, that was quite an experience. And I taught there for ten, fifteen years, but that's much later. When I was there I liked the principal. He was a historian, and he was very gentle. Cowsmard was his name, and I like history, so I liked him, and I liked church history. And he was a good friend of A.B.B. Moore, who was the president or whatever of Victoria. My first day there he introduced me to A.B.B. Moore, who turned out to be really quite a lovely man, and was very supportive. I think he felt, this woman, "You're going over there across the campus into this whole male bastion, and what's that going to be like for you?"

He kind of stayed in touch a bit with me. I think eventually everybody knew I didn't have any money, and he arranged for me to be a don. So that is the lowest member of faculty, and what you do is you look after residents. So, that got me a room to live on the campus, and so I went to live in Ansley Hall,

because I became the Don of Ansley Hall. And I know he brought that off, and that paid for me to have room and board. And I had to take care of the people, these young girls, safe and straight and not jumping out windows at night, and all those things that now don't even matter, but then really mattered. "We mustn't get any girls pregnant." Big thing, you know.

He also, like, he knew that I really wanted to go to a European university because I really did; I'd gotten into both the London School of Dramatic Art and the London School of Economics, and I had this whole other thing that I might have been an actor. I worked at Stratford Festival and all that stuff, and trained with really some of the best people. And that was a whole other possibility for me, because from a very young age, my parents had always put me in theatre. So, I don't ever remember not being on stage and in theatre. I must have started when I was three or four. And there's a very good theater in London, Ontario called The Grand, and very good people came out of The Grand, and I had a lot of good – that was good experience for me actually, all of that stuff of being on stage and doing all this, it was always part of my... it ended up with me being at Stratford. And then I could have gone directly from Stratford to the London School of Dramatic Art, and then I would have pursued a career on the stage. But I'm not musical. And it wasn't such a big deal then, I mean there were actors, Shakespearean actors who didn't sing and dance, and I certainly wasn't able to sing. I tried singing lessons, I mean I tried and tried; people tried to teach me. My mother was deaf and I think that's the problem, because I just don't have an acute ear, and I couldn't get it.

And so A.B.B. Moore knew that I wanted to study in Europe, and so he helped me figure out how to do that. And so, then I decided that New Testament was ... New or Old Testament were my thing; that's what I was going to do. I also liked my New Testament professor, Kelly, I think his last name was Kelly. And I think I decided, "Okay, I can do this." And for whatever reason I had taken, in this crazy little two-year stint at Western, I had taken Classical Greek all the way through. Which in those days was necessary. So, I had the Greek basics. By the time I got to theology I had more Greek than most people there. And then, I had to learn other – then, anyways, he helped me, and I went to St. Andrew's in Scotland. And I went to study with Matthew Black, who was the leading professor on the Dead Sea Scrolls. And the leading New Testament professor, probably in the world. And so, I got to go there and study with him for my second year of theology. Which is basically what I did in St. Andrew's. I didn't do much other than New Testament. First of all, because in European universities, they don't teach anything other than church history, Old and New Testament... that's pretty much it. So, I did a lot of everything related to that, and in that context, I had to really begin Aramaic studies and Eucharistic and I couldn't tell you a word in them, but I spent a lot of time in that year in Europe.

KGC What was it like being a female student there? Did you experience the same pushback that you did in Canada, or was there different...?

AE: Well, it was even funnier there, I think. Like it was even – it just was like, you were just so odd. So, the school paper would write me up. In St. Andrew's, everybody wears a bright red wool gown with red velvet inserts. Do you know this about – ?

KGC: I think I've seen –

AE: Yeah, they're beautiful and they're warm, and you can't go to class without one. You can't be seen on the street without it. Like you have to ride your bicycle with the damn thing on. But when I got there I couldn't have a red gown, which broke my heart, because I was a divine. Because in Europe, if you go to theology, you're called a divine. So, I was a divine, so I had to wear a completely black gown that had a big purple cross of St. Andrew's on it. Big! The cross was *big*. [Laughter]. So everywhere I went, I was completely odd, and so everybody would stop and ask me why I was studying theology and what I was going to do with a theological degree, and I mean nobody ever thought about me being a minister, like, I must be going to be an academic or you know, which is basically, I think, the U of T situation as well. Anybody studying theology, especially Roman Catholics, were going to become professors of theology; they couldn't ever be priests, and so Anglicans couldn't be priests, and so you basically... but I was like *really obvious*.

KGC: Were there any moments that you questioned your decision to continue with theology? Did it really affect your vocation and your choices there?

AE: I think I'm very practical. I had to get ordained and I had to pay that money back. Or, I had to pay the money back. I'm pretty practical, too. And I would be starting out with a big debt that I would have to pay back, and I didn't know how I would do that. So, once I signed up...

KGC: You didn't really have the luxury to question it.

AE: I really signed up, you know. It was interesting. I mean, I don't know what it would have been like if I had failing grades or if I had been, you know. And whatever the level of abuse was, because I was a woman, I dunno, I think they kind of indulged me. They kind of... Because you were coming, I looked up some stuff, and this is one of the... they did this. So this is an article on my first parish charge where they – it's got a lot of stuff in it that you probably would be interested in, because it's about all of the women who were – other women who they went around and interviewed as well, who had parishes. But they were all single women, and they were not my age. So like this says, the way they handled me was that they called me "Our Beauty Chorus Candidate." I just think, like in today's world...

32:43

KGC: Yeah... And it's entitled "Would You Want a Woman in Your Pulpit?"

AE: Yes...

KGC: Shudder.

AE: Just to give you a sense... and again, I'm just sort of interested, even that, because they have pictures of this woman, Winifred Bridges, and then they have this whole thing of me, you know?

KGC: Oh, is this all you?

AE: Yes, that's all pictures of me.

KGC: Oh my gosh. So there was a lot of focus there, a lot of attention and pressure there.

AE: Yes, lots of attention, which I can talk about, for sure.

KGC: Did you feel pressure to be...

AE: Exceptional? Yes.

KGC: Yeah [laughs].

AE: Absolutely. And I think it cost me. I can tell you a lot about how much that cost, but it cost a lot. But that's... they followed me. My ordination made news all across Canada. I was on the front pages of all the papers, and so this was a follow up, I think maybe that's even ten years after I was ordained, and they must have gotten the follow up to see what was going on. I didn't really put down all the dates and stuff.

KGC: That's alright. And did I hear you say earlier that there was pushback against your being ordained?

AE: Oh, it was huge, yeah. That's why I thought you were coming to interview me.

KGC: Oh, there's a lot. There's a lot. So could you tell us more about that?

AE: So finally I graduate, and I thought, you know, and at that point I thought I was in love with the man I married, who's the guy in those pictures. When I was in St. Andrew's, he was at Oxford. We were both from London, Ontario, and I had gone all through high school with him. So I knew...

KGC: You knew him very well.

AE: I knew him very well. And his brother very well as well, who just died seven days ago. So, it's brought all this stuff up, because Ed Bartram is a very famous Canadian artist and it is big news in Canada in the art world that he has died, and my kids, because he's their favourite uncle, I mean it's all –

KGC: Oh, I'm so sorry.

AE: Yeah, so this week it's been all about that. So, it's brought up all this stuff from back then. But, I thought, I'm going to get married, I'm probably going to have kids, this is not going to work in the church, but I've got to pay this back. And how am I going to do all this? And I thought, well, maybe – so what I did was, Bill and I did get married, and we both decided to teach high school. And we taught high school for a year. And I taught British history. I mean, it was just bizarre what I taught: British history to French-speaking kids in Northern Ontario. It was nuts! I didn't like it much, to say the least, and it wasn't what I was trained to do, and I didn't like it.

And I also got pregnant, because in those days we didn't use birth control, and I was married, and I got pregnant. I didn't really want to, but I did. Failed birth control method, whatever. And I had a child, and so then we left that, that was in Kirkland Lake, which was in Northern Ontario, but we made lots of money. That's why we went there to teach, because you didn't need a teaching degree, you just had to show up at a teaching fair and be live and vertical! [Laughter]. And if you were live and vertical, they put you in a teaching position, and Kirkland Lake paid the highest salary. So we just went around the fair and picked the one that paid the highest salary, because I was still trying to pay the church back, and I think I had some kind of window, they gave me some kind of window before I had to pay this money back, which I thought maybe that's what would be the solution. And at that time I was 25, maybe. Cause I notice I'm 26 when...

So, we came back down to Ontario, and my husband wanted to be a writer, and his family was extremely well connected in Ontario, and we house sat a farm for a family outside of Toronto. So we were just outside of Toronto on this farm, and I was just bored out of my mind, but I was pregnant. So I have this baby, and then I get really bored. I'm like really, really bored. I said to my husband, "I don't think I can do this. I think I have to work."

KGC: Yeah, you had two degrees by that point.

AE: Yes [Laughs]. "I just can't stay home!" But I had agreed, when I married my husband, that I would never work outside the home. Because that was required at that time, by his family and by him.

KGC: Really?

AE: Yes, that was not uncommon. That I would be a housewife, I mean I was making the decision. That's also partly why I didn't stay in the church, like I was deciding to be a housewife. And so once I had a child, then that was really...

KGC: That was what had to happen.

AE: That was a done deal. And I was going more than a bit batty. [Laughs]

KGC: Yeah, I can imagine why.

AE: It just wasn't working! So, at that point in time, he finally agreed, and I started teaching high school. I started substitute teaching high school and the only thing I could teach was family studies. In those days, you could teach anything that you had any... and I had been raised to be a needle woman, totally, like that was required in my family from childhood, and so I could definitely teach sewing and design and that kind of stuff. Because that's something that came with.... that's what I had to do when I was little, so it was there. And again, you didn't have to have any training. So, I was doing that, but again I said, "I really don't want to do this."

So, we began to talk about well, and I began to talk with Ernie Howells and Angus McQueen, well, "What if I put money forward for ordination?" Like, "What

do you think? What would happen?" So, with support, I put my name forward, and after that then just all hell broke loose. Because the church was not about to ordain me, that's absolutely for sure. And they called me, as you can see in the paper, they called me names like "frustrated woman." Oh, I don't know what they called me, it was kind of awful stuff. [Paper rustles].

KGC: And you were trying to be ordained into the United Church, specifically?

AE: Right. The United Church of Canada. [Paper rustling]. That's later, but ... because they kept following me up, right, over the years. [Reads from paper] "Attractive young Toronto mother seeks ordination as United Church minister, heard herself described by the church conference yesterday as a "frustrated housewife who might flunk the job." And they said many, many nasty things.

And Gordon Sinclair, who was a total secular person who had a big radio show across Canada picked up on this. He thought it was – Because when I had gone to the university to study theology in my first year, I had lived right across the street from him. So, he had met me, and so he kind of knew my story. So, he picked it up and he really was, you know, like he was mounting a condemnation of the United Church for this action on my behalf, is what you might say he was doing. Because they were saying, "Oh we can't have somebody in the pulpit who could be having sex." And this was Trudeau's whole sex in your bedroom kind of thing, and so people were standing up on the floor of conference arguing, you know, like, "No, we can't."

And then there was a secret underground group that got together that figured out that they could block this, that my grades weren't good enough and I hadn't been a good enough student. Well, I'd been an exceptional student. So, they pulled all that out and that had to be... it was just, it was a nightmare. And I felt, that week when all this was happening and it was breaking in the news and so on, I sort of thought, well, I'll quit. And so they do quote me as saying, I say things like, "Get the hell out of here." I dunno. I must have said to somebody "I gotta get the hell out of here," and so that's what appeared. So then that was easy to get, "Look, she said she's going to get the hell out." I don't know, it went on like this.

But Ernie Howells and Angus McQueen, who were both deeply respected former moderators of the church, got together, the two of them – they're not the best of friends – they got together and they said, "Listen, there must be a way to do this. To get this through, because there's nothing wrong with this woman. We know her. She's young, yes, but so are some of the guys. I mean this is not okay. We should be able to change this around." And so then they decided at one point they had to have a secret ballot.

And for a day and a half they argued about whether or not they could decide to ordain me or not by secret ballot. That was a big deal. Because of course those who wanted to vote against me didn't want anyone else to know so they wanted it to be a secret ballot, and the others, you know... And people took sides. And then it became very political. And really, I sat down with those two guys and they said, "Okay, we have to have a map here. You're to shut up your supporters, because they're not doing you any good." Because some of the

people that were supporting me were the ones, very edgy characters [laughs] from Emmanuel College, who indeed had got ordained but who were really edgy. Like my doctor friend who was against baptism and had gone to, was in a charge in Northern Ontario, and there were no medical people there, and he was a doctor. And so the people were far more excited about having a doctor –

KGC: A doctor than a minister!

AE: A doctor than a minister! And so, in addition to being a minister, he started practising some medicine in that town. And so, then that was cause to withdraw his ordination. And he was one of the people supporting me. So, you've got to shut up these characters. So, they laid all this strategy down and it was all down to where people stood on the floor of conference. So Angus was over here and we had different groups in different places around the floor with different questions, and everybody had their timing, and it was all very political, in terms of how they got me ordained.

And when it got right down to it, they had accepted my ordination, my ordination was – this was at about four in the afternoon, and I think the ordination was at seven. Like, it was that down to the line that I had no idea whether it was going to happen or not, and of course there was no opportunity for my parents or anybody to get to this, as well, because it was going straight ahead if it was going. But one of the things that happened was that the clerk of the conference got up at the very last minute and went to the microphone very officiously and said, "We cannot possibly ordain Anne Bartram" – my name was Bartram – "We cannot ordain Anne Bartram; it's not possible. Her name is not on the program, and we can't have no record of her ordination because her name isn't printed on the program!" [Laughs] At which point my planted people around went, "Question! Question!" You know, in other words, like, "Take the vote *right now* because this is so absurd." And they took the vote and I was ordained.

KGC: Wow. And during those three hours, were you still thinking, "I gotta get the hell out," or were you sure that this was what, at that point –

AE: No, we had a say in the paper, and it must be true, because I see it in the newspaper, in the *Globe and Mail*, I can't find them, they were quite good, but I can't find them – it says that my husband and I had a really serious talk, I don't know, maybe Monday or Tuesday of the week of conference, and we decided that as difficult as this was going to be, we were going to go for it.

KGC: Ok. So, you were sure.

AE: I was sure that I was going for it, but I wasn't at all sure I was going to be ordained. Who knew how this was going to play out?

KGC: It must have taken incredible courage to have your future determined by a bunch of men who didn't want a woman in the room with them.

AE: Who did not. Who clearly did not. Now why that's in me to do, I...? But anyways, it felt important to me. I had known a lot of women in... my grandmother was a suffragette. That may be the whole story. Right there. I'm sure. That's probably it. And my own mother was very, very physically

challenged. She was deaf and mostly blind. And so, you know, it's a lot to live up to, having your grandmother as a suffragette.

KGC: Yeah. Well, you definitely lived up to it.

AE: But you know, I think, maybe that's – because there were lots of reasons to quit; lots and lots of reasons to quit. And of course then there was the whole problem, in those days you were settled. Well, I had not gone through Settlement Committee because, of course, no one would shift my name off there because I defiantly wasn't going to be ordained. So then, the Settlement Committee had to meet again, which they wouldn't have wanted to do, because they had settled everybody, and they didn't have any parishes left to put me in. So, they opened one that had been closed and they sent me to it. And that's a whole story in and of itself.

And that's where I think I really paid, because they sent me to this place in Northern Ontario. It was a three-point charge, they were a hundred and eight miles apart on deep logging roads with lots of moose and lots of big logging trucks in the winter on the roads, in this parish that they sent me to. I had this eighteen-month-old kid, which was of course part of the problem: "She can't possibly have a child and do this as well. We have to protect the ministry from a young mother with a child."

KGC: And was your partner with you at that point?

AE: Yes, yes. And he was hanging in with this, he was okay, and he was willing to go wherever we went – which was also part of the problem, because they didn't think that he should have been willing to do that, etc., etc. But anyway, we made that deal. He'd moved a long way from having me sign a piece of paper saying I wouldn't have to work, so he moved a lot. And we went to this place, and we got there, and it truly was a tarpaper shack. It was covered with tarp, the manse – I say in the thing – it was covered with tarp, and I remember the big holes in the tarp paper. The roof leaked like a sieve, there was no fridge, stove or bed when we arrived. This parish was *closed*. And they opened it to do something with me, really. And it was French-speaking as well, and I don't speak French.

KGC: Oh my gosh. You were really being set up for failure, in a way.

AE: Yes. And really, basically, like they said, "We don't want to ordain her because we're certain that she will flunk at the job."

KGC: Well, when they put you in a

AE: So that all happened, and it was a very ... it was ... there are many sad, very sad things about all of that, because I did go there and was going to put my two years in, and I began to do it, and, again – this was a disaster – but anyway, I got pregnant. And that was like the worst possible thing. That just proved everything. And so, I just determined, "Okay, well, alright I'm going to have a baby in this parish, and that's what's going to happen." And there's no maternity leave, there's nothing, you know. And Johnathan – I have had a real history with babies – the first baby was born with heart failure, Jonathan. The second

child was born on this charge, and he wasn't that well. He wasn't a really well baby, but I had to preach the next Sunday after he was born. That was it, like there was no getting out of me travelling around. Again, I felt like the whole future – it's crazy to think about – but I thought that the whole future of young women with babies in the church was riding on me being able to not flunk, as they said I was going to.

And there's lots I regret. But at any rate, what happened was that Jonathan died in that parish. And that was pretty brutal. And I say in there [indicating the news article] that I sort of blame the church, and I haven't even thought about that for a long time. I was surprised, because I got it out to tell you, but I don't like how harsh I sound in there.

KGC: I can understand that, though.

AE: It's very harsh, what I say [paper rustles]... Like, I... Did I really say that?

KGC: I'm sure you weren't wrong to say it.

AE: [Reads from paper] "Some officials felt her theology wasn't sound" – oh, that was the other thing, they really tested my theology. I went through more theological reviews in that week... I was asked so many questions about my theology, which was probably pretty liberal theology. "Others didn't want to ordain someone with a child. She was accused of being selfish for even seeking ordination. And one of her defenders accused the dissenters of playing God in refusing her ordination." Yeah, that was some of my loud people that they had to shut up.

"An opponent said sourly that she was just a frustrated housewife who might flunk her job. Committee members formed a delegation to ask Mrs. Bartram to withdraw. Sick with church politics, she seriously considered saying, 'To hell with it,' and walking away. But after talking with her husband, she decided to stand and fight." That one doesn't say... there's one that talks about how difficult it was in the North. "The church manse,' she says, 'was a large building covered with tarpaper full of holes and a front door hanging from a broken hinge. There was no bed, no stove, no refrigerator, life was..." I remember that. 53:19
Anyway.

So then, after that, my husband decided to study theology. And so that then begins another whole chapter. We went to Chicago because he decided to study theology in Chicago. And we went there, and we were there during the time that Martin Luther King died, and all of the Civil Rights upheaval, and we were right in the middle of it, and I was the Christian Education Director at the church that was most involved when Martin Luther King died, and keeping the South side calm. That was another whole, whole, whole big story.

KGC: Wow. So, you were you involved in ministry there?

AE: Yes, in that church I was the Minister of Children and Youth, in that congregation. And in Chicago. People have told me since, it was the most progressive church that the United States has ever seen. Like it was really, really doing incredibly interesting work, and it was really working with trying to...

I mean, the night that Martin Luther King died, it was the one that was most instrumental in keeping the South side from burning. Because really, the whole of the Blackstone Rangers, they were fighting with the disciples of the two big gangs in Chicago, and they clashed. They came to our church that night, and the head minister, Charlie Bayer, really found a way to help them grieve Martin Luther King's death so that they didn't have to burn the city.

KGC: What was it like at this point – you'd discovered and had a heightened discovery of identity as a woman, but then you were, I suppose, discovering yourself again as a White woman in particular.

AE: Oh yeah, in a Black city. We lived in a complex that belonged to the University of Chicago, and in that complex, Jesse Jackson was right across the hall. And Jesse started theology with my husband in the same year, he started to theology, as did all kinds of draft dodgers, people who were simply avoiding the draft, and so they were like the cream of the cream; they were Phi Beta Kappa. I mean, they were so brilliant, and they were just trying to avoid the draft. So, they were flooding into theology, and they were going to this particular school in Chicago, as was Jesse Jackson.

So, we got very involved, until the Black movement basically said, "We don't want Whites anymore." Like, "Get out. Because this is our job, we've got to do this, and you've got to get out of here." And that was hard, because we were neighbours and, you know, we had to try to understand. Eventually I really felt like it was so dangerous. It was dangerous there, and I was going to have to send my kid to public school, and basically it was completely boarded up. I mean, they were trying to integrate the school and it was integrated, but the windows were boarded and the classroom doors were locked, and the Black kids extracted money from all the White kids every day, and you know, I was a Canadian. And at some point I just thought, this fight, you know... I've made a lot of fights; this fight I can't make. I want to go back to Canada.

KGC: Yeah, it wasn't your battle.

AE: It wasn't. I mean, I opted out maybe, I don't know. I did opt out, and then we came back here. And then the story goes on and on. Those are – it was a very dramatic, very dramatic time, all of that. And we had a child in Chicago, and that child lived, but barely. She was placenta previa, that was, like, something else, and then we had another child who died. So, we had two children who lived and two children who died. Like I just, I really, for whatever reasons, I don't know, didn't have easy – there were complications in the births, you know.

KGC: Absolutely. Yeah. Did you find that that community was more accepting of a female priest?

AE: That particular church was probably the only place I really could have been. It was so radical.

KGC: That must have been a huge shift in experience.

AE: Oh yeah. It was nice. It was also the school was pretty – that’s where I did my D.M. – so when I was there ... I have a lot of energy. I still do. I mean I just have a lot of energy.

KGC: It’s wonderful. So, you were able to do your doctorate, and that was a much more positive experience, you were saying.

AE: And that was, I mean that’s another kind of... you’d have to check it out, but I’m pretty sure I was the first woman who got a D.M. in Canada. But I’m not certain. I think that’s probably true. It was pretty early, and again, we’d left Chicago because I couldn’t do this integration thing with my son; I just thought I can’t do that. It’s too risky. I mean, I’d lost a child, and I didn’t know I was going to lose yet another one. And then our daughter was very touch and go, although it was great she was born in Chicago, because if she’d been born anywhere else she might not have had the incredible treatment she’d had as a neo-natal there. But yeah, we came back.

So when we came back, my husband went back to teaching school. We just didn’t know what we were going to do. We taught school for a year. We were in Bracebridge, Ontario, and I got very involved with the church there, and then I was back in the, like how am I going to make this work. In Chicago, I made decisions in my D.M. and in my studies that I was really going towards counselling. And that had really started in Elk Lake. Because, when I was in that little community up north, they had no help, and they had so many interpersonal problems, and I liked dealing with that, there. I thought, “Okay, I’m good at that.” And so I wanted to specialize my ministry in that. And in the States, specializing a ministry was possible. But in Canada, specializing a ministry isn’t possible.

KGC: But even still, you returned to Canada and tried to...

AE: And so I tried to bring that off, in Canada. And that’s a whole... I was going to tell you, there’s a whole story about that, but that was ultimately recognized a few years ago, not that many years ago, when they presented me with an eagle feather. Which is quite a beautiful thing Indigenous people did. They honoured three women. All of us pioneered certain aspects of specialized ministry. So, it was a really special event.

KGC: Yes, it must have been. That’s a huge honour.

AE: I think it must have been about seven years ago, maybe, if that. But I thought... I have that, too. I was just kind of pulling out some stuff. And then the story goes on and on. You must have more questions and I’ve derailed you.

KGC: Oh, no, that’s totally fine, I think we’ve covered a lot of them. [Tape recorder is paused and then restarts]. There we go, resuming. So, you came back to Canada after Chicago, and did you find that you had more respect now that you had your doctoral degree? Did you find that the people, did they have more faith in you as a female minister?

AE: I think at this time I knew when I had taken the training to be a certified pastoral counsellor, and I also, at the same time, got secular education to be a marriage and family therapist... I think the church has always been trying to open doors, 1:01:17

trying to stretch the church. I was the Director of Training at the Toronto Institute for Human Relations, which trained people to become therapists. And I wanted that recognized as a legitimate ministry.

And I fought quite hard, you know, had fights and meetings, because in those days your ordination could be rescinded anytime if you weren't doing parish ministry, and you had to appear before committees pretty much every year, or maybe every two years, but you always had this deadline coming up, and I always felt that what I was doing was a legitimate ministry. The Catholic Church would have recognized it if they'd recognized women, which they didn't, but they would have recognized a male priest doing it as a legitimate priesthood. So, I kept trying to get the United Church to make that change, and I always had this ordination ordination problem.

But my name... my husband and I got divorced, somewhere, and I reverted to my maiden name, which is Evans. And that put me in the alphabetical order right beside Northrop Frye. So, this funny thing happened, that when I was at Emmanuel and taught at Emmanuel, Northrop Frye was at Victoria, and he's always a problem because he's so anti-social. He's just dreadfully anti-social. And I don't know why, I would always get appointed to have to handle him at public functions, like to keep him talking, to keep him in the room, just to have some sort of conversation with this deeply shy man. And so, the benefit that came back to me was that they just simply weren't going to rescind his ordination.

They were pretty good – if you taught on a university faculty, that was considered a legitimate ministry. So, he would get considered as a legitimate ministry. But, because our names were so close alphabetically, they'd have to deal with us one right after the other. So, they didn't want to cause too much controversy about me, because they knew that Frye was the next name on the list. That's my own opinion about why I would just kind of get through.

Eventually I got them to recognize TIHR [Toronto Institute of Human Relations], but it only existed for two more years after that, so it wasn't a long... But I don't think it ever was, it didn't ever pay off for others, and there's the Canadian Association for Pastoral... CAPPE. It used to have other initials early on. It changed its set of initials many times. But it was kind of like the official organization where people who were pastoral associates, or interested in pastoral counselling, or did the care of the souls and of the ministry, were trained and went through that. Eventually I'm pretty sure that there's some recognition, at least of what used to be the diaconate, in that realm of things.

I'm quite outside the church at the moment, which is a very sad and sorry tale, that happened five or six years ago. Up until then, I was totally active and very involved in this ministry, which I still see as a ministry, but the United Church doesn't particularly. I'm now on the retired roles of Presbytery, so it's not an issue. But for a long time, I tried to open that door, you know.

KGC: So how long were you teaching at Emmanuel College?

AE: Oh, forever. A long time. I was adjunct faculty there for a long time, and then they shifted me to TST [Toronto School of Theology]. Because you can only be adjunct faculty for so long. And at various times I did try to get a professorship. I did apply and was shortlisted at UBC, but they didn't take me to their... I think they made a mistake, but anyway. Did I try anywhere else? Maybe Queen's. I did teach at Queen's also, at the same time. I was adjunct faculty at Queen's for a while, while I was adjunct faculty at Emmanuel, and then at TST. Maybe ten or twelve years. It seems a long time.

KGC: Was there contrast between being there as a student and as a faculty? What had changed and what was the difference?

AE: Just pastoral counselling isn't a respected field. A woman in pastoral counselling... people in the hard disciplines of technology, church history, systematic theology, and Old and New Testament don't really have a lot ... that's the quadrivium. This other stuff is frivolous. And I taught the other stuff.

KGC: So, your classes, what were they, specifically?

AE: I taught pastoral counselling. And my classes were always full. I had a really, really good... I had lots of people wanting – but that didn't help, either. It didn't help with the four main disciplines. In particular, the systematic theology guy, David Dennison, he was so Bartian and so rigid. And this is long before... There weren't women teaching; Phyllis Airhart didn't teach there.

KGC: So was it mostly male faculty?

AE: Yeah, yeah.

KGC: So not much had changed since you were a student, in all those years.

AE: No, no. It was just... they tolerated me. They tolerated me, like they did when I was a don. I guess I just was used to that. I kept thinking that, okay, it's opening. There were a lot more women students, I mean there were tons of women students. And so I felt good about that, because I felt I really contributed to... I mean, there were women students who had babies in the class who were nursing them! And that's in my lifetime, you know.

KGC: Yes. And did you feel...?

AE: I felt good about that!

KGC: Of course! Did you feel like you could be a mentor to those female students? Did you see yourself that way?

AE: I did for a while. Especially to the ones that first got – in the very beginning of my teaching, I did a lot of that with students who'd just got sent to places like Elk Lake, who came out and got sent to inappropriate places. I've done a lot of that through the years. Maybe ten twelve women ministers I've tried to mentor, for sure. In the difficulties of being in rural places that are inappropriate, as far as I'm concerned. Inappropriate places to send women. They don't do it anymore, so that's over, but, you know.

KGC: For a while there.

AE: Yeah, well, up until, I don't know, what is it, five years ago they stopped doing that. Maybe it's ten years ago; I lose track of time.

KGC: Did you go right into teaching as soon as you came back from Chicago, or was there a period there when you were serving another church?

AE: No, I never served a parish in Canada after Elk Lake. I did serve the church in Chicago, which was the denomination of the Disciples of Christ.

KGC: Right. So, where did you go after the twelve years at Emmanuel?

AE: Well, I'd practised in Toronto. Somewhere in all of that, quite early, I established a private practice, you know. And so that's what I did, and I housed it in an Anglican church. It was housed in St. Clement's Anglican Church. It's fine for a priest in an Anglican church to be a pastoral counsellor; that's seen as a priestly thing to do. It's just the United Church that was all about word and sacrament, and nothing else. If you weren't doing word and sacrament, you weren't authentic. I don't know. I think for me, the gender thing was just always trying to open the door to women being able to have the same rights that men had. And then I was also trying to open the door for pastoral counsellors to be recognized for specialized ministry, basically. Teaching, for specialized ministry to be recognized. And I possibly continue to be a thorn in the church's side.

KGC: That's not a bad thing to be. I think they could use a few more thorns.

AE: I think that's maybe true. I feel pretty strongly about that at the moment, but anyway...

KGC: You mentioned that the establishment of evolutionary Christianity was something that you were proud of. Is that the same thing of practising pastoral theology?

1:11:14

AE: No, no, no. What happened was I remarried, and I married a United Church minister, and together we – I would say together, whatever he says now I have no idea, it's a very acrimonious situation and I don't see or hear from him. I don't try to follow him. I don't pay any attention to whatever the hell he's doing. But, for thirty years we were very engaged in, and over that period of time, created an alternative theology, I would say, which is Evolutionary Christian Spirituality. And he had published five books on the subject during that time, and we did workshops all over the world, and we created a congregation here at Canadian Memorial United, which totally committed to Evolutionary Christian Spirituality, was really on board with it, was a destination church around that, and I was deeply involved in that, in the teaching, and giving workshops, and organizing a lot of it, and being an agent for it. And, you know, it was really what I was... Plus, always I had my practice going at the same time

KGC: That's a lot of work.

AE: Yeah, and that's basically what I was really doing until five years ago, when he just simply walked out on it all. And it's been crushing. It's been horrible for a lot of people, not just me, but for lots of people. He's made a new life, and he's got – I don't even know. I know some of what he's off doing, but it's not good for me

to know very much about it, and I really stay away from it. But I don't like the way Canadian Memorial handled me.

KGC: Which is how?

AE: I think, brutally. And, I don't like the way the United Church in Canada handled me, either. So, I'm mad about it. I'm good and mad. [Laughs] Emphasis on good! Legitimately mad about it.

KGC: Right, legitimately mad. Do you think that that had to do with the theology that you were presenting?

AE: No, I think it had to do with – that, I think, was a gender issue. I think it was pretty easy to choose him. And he's male, and very charismatic, and they presented it, which is him because he's a minister, but I was a minister too, and I mean, in a different way. Not in a recognized form of ministry. And I certainly gave tons of time to this project, and to that church. And, I don't know, I think the church is pretty interested in survival.

KGC: Yes, it is.

AE: And, I think it was more interested in survival than in being a caring presence for me. And that really pisses me off.

KGC: Yeah. Absolutely.

AE: I think [incomprehensible whisper], but I don't want to go there. [Laughs]. It's raw. It's still quite raw for me in lots of ways. And the way they treated me is reminiscent in some ways of the ways the church treated me back in the beginning. You know, you don't have a place, and we don't choose you, we choose him. I mean, I get that he was their signed on minister and they were probably, legally, there was things that they had to deal with, but he resigned eventually. And they did put enough pressure on him that he resigned. But, I really felt after he resigned, I really wanted to work with them on what had happened, and I thought we could get some facilitation, and that we could figure out a way to figure out how they had treated me and what had happened. But you know, I get it. They were afraid of being split, and the church taking sides. They wanted to survive. I gather they have, and they've gone on a different route, and they're not doing Evolutionary Christianity. That piece is over, and it's sad for me because I think it was a really significant thing that we were doing. Unusual but significant.

KGC: What is it that you were doing? What is Evolutionary Christianity?

AE: Well, at the very core, it's a way to put science and religion together that makes sense. To just really be honouring biology in particular, and it's like.... As a feminist, it's like we first try to read the text through feminist eyes, you know? Well, I would say, Evolutionary Christianity is about reading the Bible through the eyes of an evolutionary. So, you read the text differently, just as you read it differently as a woman. And we were pretty involved in teaching people how to do that, and in explaining that. Trying to bring together, particularly, biology – of the hard sciences – particularly probably biology. Physics, as well, but hard scientists always think physics is a bit loose.

KGC: And so is this focusing mostly on creation stories, or on the entire Bible?

AE: The entire Bible.

KGC: The way that life is described, and....

AE: Yeah.

KGC: That's really interesting.

AE: Yeah, and it was. I really... it was making a difference. And it's still lively in certain places in the US, for sure. There's still people writing in the field in the United States, but I don't think there's anything in Canada.

KGC: It hasn't really taken off in the same way.

AE: Yeah. It was in its early stages. It really needed a lot of maintenance and care. I really felt that that was the big project that Bruce and I were engaged in doing. Basically. I think he thought he could just do it without me. And he may well be. I know he's doing something without me, so. But I know he's taken a real turn into psychedelic drugs and things. So that's quite a different turn.

KGC: Yeah, that's very difficult. Yeah. And during this time that you were working on it together, did you find that people had a recognition of everything that you had done up to that point? Were you still seen as a minister, or did your identity slip into that of the minister's wife?

AE: Well, I guess a lot of the congregation saw me as spouse, for sure. But the people who took training with us and experienced me as a teacher didn't think of me that way. Because his name was on the books, you know for sure he was the, absolutely he was the reason; people wanted to hear from the author of this book, but I don't know. There are many, many people who know how central I was in all of this, and I know that for myself. I don't have any doubt about it. I sort of figure I was there every step of the way, that he never preached a sermon that I didn't hear. We went over all things together. I read every word he ever wrote, and all that stuff. And I was happy enough to; I mean, I had done this other thing for quite a while in my life. I was kind of happy that this was the role I was playing.

KGC: Yeah. The partnership.

AE: Yeah. And I saw it that way. And I would say that the people at Canadian Memorial who saw it that way left. That's what they did. And then some of them who saw it that way decided that they didn't want to leave because they'd been at that church for longer than us, so why should they leave? They wanted to stay, so they figured out how to stay by getting rid of him. By making it so awkward for him that he resigned. But then, I was like, "Okay, now we just have to survive". And.... "Anne's too complicated. She's too much of a force to

contend with,” or “We don’t want to figure out how to take care of her.” And I figured that that’s the church’s job. At the core. You’re supposed to take care of the hurt and wounded, the abandoned, etc. Which I certainly fit into.

KGC: Yeah. And at that point especially, a moment of vulnerability and hurt.

AE: Yeah. And they, I think they got really wound up about it, and probably their board was fighting back and forth and they didn’t want to do that anymore, so they sent it off to Presbytery. They moved it up a level. And then Presbytery made the decision that – I mean, it’s a brutal letter they sent me. Just a brutal letter. My lawyer at that time really thought I should sue them.

KGC: Really?

AE: Well, they sent a letter basically saying that of course I’m always welcome at that church. Like, they can’t deny me to be at that church. But these are the conditions: I can go there, but I can never teach there, and I can never speak about my former husband in any way whatsoever.

KGC: That’s not healthy!

AE: No. The conditions are very clear. And I was too engaged at that, I mean I thought about fighting it, and my lawyer wanted to fight it, and some people wanted to fight it, and we thought about fighting it, and I also was in this massive fight with him about this house, and I just wasn’t in, I was just completely... I’m a pretty good example of resilience at the moment. Because if you’d seen me five years ago, you wouldn’t be meeting me, you know?

KGC: Yeah. I’m sorry.

AE: Yeah. So, it’s been a hard journey. So, I was in no condition to fight that at that time, but I’m good and mad about it. So, there you go! That’s pretty up to date.

KGC: So, from this place and everything that you’ve heard, what are your hopes for the direction of the church, as it moves forward? What do you think needs to happen? 1:22:09

AE: I think it needs to shut down. I think it’s over. You’re not going to want me to say that, but...

KGC: That’s okay.

AE: In lots of ways, I think it’s over. I think it’s an institution that’s done.

KGC: Is that the United Church specifically? Or the church?

AE: The church.

KGC: And Christianity.

AE: Yeah. But my friends around the world, it's off. I've many Catholic friends, it's terrible what's happening in various places in the world. I just think, I don't know what, it needs some kind of massive renovation. And I don't think it can happen as long as they keep trying to survive. Something like that. I have kind of wild thoughts about that.

KGC: Where do you think faith would be in all that? So, if the institution itself shuts down, where would the faith....

AE: Oh, I think it would emerge. Who knows? I don't think it's going to go away. It's going to create something else.

KGC: So, it's the system that is done, and then the faith will – I mean it has a life of its own, that's what faith is.

AE: I think it just would emerge differently. And in some ways right now I think the institution, the system, is holding it back. It's so invested in bricks and mortar and numbers and, well, just surviving. It's so hard for the church to survive. And I just think of all the money that's being spent on it surviving. And that's money that good people have donated to the church in their lifetimes for generations. And it's not good stewardship. Like, I just think of my friends right now who are ministers of churches with ten people in them, and fifteen people. Something's not right about that.

KGC: Do you think that the church's insistence on its own survival is preventing it and providing a barrier for its ability to be inclusive of women, those who are on the margins, and are forced to the margins of society?

AE: Well, it wouldn't like to see itself that way because it likes – especially the United Church of Canada – likes to see itself as the most tolerant, inclusive church in the world. But there's a lot of hurt people. Which I didn't know so much about until I was so hurt by it myself. It gave me a compassion for it at a different level than I had before.

KGC: Yeah. But when you were experiencing the gender inequality earlier in your life, the church was thriving at that point.

AE: Yes, it was. A hundred and fifty kids in the church school. It was like that; I do remember a hundred at fifty kids. At one point, the kids' dad, at one point he took a stint as the youth director of the church, and yeah, he had three superintendents of the church school, of different departments, because each department was so large. That's just not now. And we're never going to, that's not a functional option anymore. Kids have many, many things to do on a weekend, and then they didn't. Now they've got multiple things to do. And it's the only time their families get to see them. It's just a different world.

But I do often have that thought. Like, I had that thought of the institute I was the director of, the Toronto Institute of Human Relations, and I really felt that it needed to shut. Eventually it did, but I left before it did. But I thought, it's done; this particular iteration of counselling training is over. It's done. OISE's picked it up, other institutions have picked it up and are doing it, you know? It's done. So, I don't know. If I wasn't so good and mad at the church, I might think it

should keep trying to survive. [Laughs] I don't know. Those are some of my thoughts.

KGC: So, where do you – since you are not currently an active member of a congregation – where do you see faith in your life now? Is it through this work, the counselling work, or in life in general?

AE: I have maybe, you might say ... Darlene, and Joan, and Hayden, and Chepayla.... I must have a circle of ten or twelve people that are clergy. And we stay really pretty closely connected. I would say we talk a lot, we discuss theological issues, one of them is still actively preaching. Tend to – not every Sunday – but tend to follow the lectionary somewhat closely. Try different things. For a while, I really liked it when Stephen Phelps was the minister of Riverside in New York. And so, I would go to church maybe a couple of times a year in New York, and I would listen on Sundays and follow, so sort of felt part of that congregation for a while.

I don't feel anything here is possible, in Vancouver. I feel that there's too much history; there's too much known about me. I don't like it. It still happens to me a lot, you know. On the golf course or anywhere, because people know about the circumstance. And I don't want to go to a different denomination I really don't feel attracted to.

Occasionally, we'll go to – I like the... I think Ken. The minister at Tenth Evangelical Church is really preaching thoughtfully. He's preaching thoughtfully, and occasionally I will... I mean, they're closing it down now, but it was just three doors up the street. Because 10th had a plant in the United and Anglican church that closed just up the street, and they have a plant going on in there. Do you know what that means? That means that they decided to plant a new church, and so the new church that they planted is called their plant.

KGC: [Laughter] Okay!

AE: It's the way the church used to expand. A church would get big enough, and then they'd decided right ok, we'll plant something over there. And Tenth is huge, and so they've made several plants in the city. And they tend to plant them in United Churches that are closing down, and then of course they fill them in a week. But he's thoughtful. He thinks a lot, that guy. So, I just sort of enjoy his... and he's pushing the boundaries of the evangelical world and kind of, I mean that was one of the things that Bruce and I were doing, too, was pushing the Bruce McLaren was kind of on side with – he was the big evangelical preacher there – kind of got interested in evolutionary Christianity. There were different kinds of places that we were trying to influence the big picture church, or the big picture expression of worship. I have a prayer life. But I think Christians need to live in community, I really do. So, I would think that I have this community that is part of that, that's where it's at for me right now. And it could be more intentional, for sure, than it is. And I wonder about that. Who knows.

KGC: Who knows where it will go?

AE: But I feel very grateful to be not where I was five years ago, and where I am now, for sure. And also, I have to face how old I am. I'm eighty, so there's all kinds of new things you have to face. Right now, I have to face my... [laughs] It's funny! I was looking for a journal to write about this in, and I was at Paper Ya at Granville Island!

KGC: Oh, I love Paper Ya! Oh my gosh! [Laughs]

AE: Yeah! And I was in there, and I noticed that they have all these, what we used to call composition scribblers. When we went to school we got a whole bunch of new...

KGC: Like a notebook?

AE: Yeah, notebooks. Only they were called composition scribblers. And I went in and I picked it up, and I looked at it, and they're having fun with it, and they're calling it "decompositions." And I thought, "Well, that's the one I need to get, because I really have to take my decomposition seriously right now. I have to go visit retirement and facilities and stuff, I need to be able to tell my children what my next plan is." So, I thought a *d*ecomposition journal has got some potential, I don't know. First I said no, no, no, but the more I thought about it I thought "well it's kind of ironic, it's kind of telling that that's the one for me."

KGC: [Laughs]. Yeah. Yeah. So, slowing down, bit by bit.

AE: Oh, I don't know, maybe. I don't slow down. I'm probably going to be going strong the day I die. Unless something happens. I mean, of course I know something can happen. I can get dementia tomorrow. I can step over that thing and not make it, and fall. So, you begin to know, because all your friends, that's happening to everybody your age that's all around you, and so you're having to take all that in.

KGC: Yeah.

AE: Are there more questions on your page?

KGC: I think we've probably covered ... I mean, there's a lot that ... yeah, I think that we've covered ... [paper turns] I think the one – I just enjoy this question, I think that it's interesting. But, what have been some of the most important issues to you in your life, things that you're passionate about – either with theology or outside of theology – that have brought you joy and inspiration?

1:32:30

AE: Oh, I'm passionate about the arts.

KGC: Oh, yeah. Me, too.

AE: I'm a big supporter. I've worked with *a lot* of artists in my practice over the years, trying to get their art form to be in a position of influence, you know, either music or visual arts, or writing. For sure that's been a... and in parts, that's why it's very sad for me that this young boy that I went to high school with, I met when I was eighteen, Ted Bartram, he just died a week ago Saturday. I just remember, just very young, getting pieces of his art that he'd

toss into a basket and schlepping them around art galleries trying to get him an agent. And so that kind of started early, that I was really interested in... and my son studied fine art, there's a lot of artists in the family, visual artists in the family, and writers. That's a passion. I'm physically very active. I play golf. And I guess I'm passionate about swimming; I swim all the time. I walk miles. So, I have a lot of them. Friendships are really important.

KGC: Absolutely.

AE: So those are things. I used to really do a lot of needlework; that was a form of creativity for me. But I have really bad arthritis in my hands, and this hand is pretty shot, so that's been difficult to kind of figure out. Okay, alright, I won't do that. I just won't do that. [Laughs]. Anyway! That kind of thing.

KGC: Yeah. Is there anything else that you wanted to share that I haven't touched on? Any experiences, involvements, anything? 1:34:37

AE: You got a lot today.

KGC: Good! [Laughs]

AE: It seems a very – I don't know what you're going to do with all that, but.

KGC: Yeah... yeah.

AE: I think it's kind of – I've always felt like, at times I've tried to write. I mean I've done a lot of writing. And so, I think it's a very interesting story to be told.

KGC: Absolutely. It absolutely is.

AE: And I'm trying to figure out how to do that. I've written a memoir. That's one of the things I've done in the last five years, is I've written a book. I don't know what I'm going to do with it, but...

KGC: But it's done!

AE: It's done.

KGC: That's huge!

AE: Yes, I have done it, but now it's maybe leaning towards what I do with that. I'm in that kind of process about that. But, I really... it's really a memoir about grief, and what I've been through in the last five years. So, I've got all this other stuff, but I needed to do that, and it's done, and now I think about, you know there's other stories that I want to tell.

KGC: Yeah. And I think that need to be told and heard.

AE: Yeah, I think so. I think that's what started me talking to Blair in the first place. Because I think this story about – that I shared with you today, largely the first part of the story – about just what it was like to try to work with the ceiling of an institution that was too oppressive. Even if I think that institution is maybe done now. That's kind of a piss off. You spend your life trying to renovate an institution, and then you think maybe the institution isn't worth the renovating. I don't know. Thoughts like that are interesting

- KGC: Yeah. Well, there's so many institutions like it.
- AE: Yeah, oh for sure, for sure. I work with a lot of doctors right now. Women doctors. And the men they're having trouble with, the institution of hospitals!
- KGC: Yeah, I can imagine.
- AE: It's really ugly.
- KGC: Yeah. The glass ceiling is really everywhere.
- AE: Yeah. Sure. Try being a surgeon today, as a woman. So, it's not dissimilar. I mean, it's really not dissimilar to many of the experiences I had over and over. I mean, what's that one called? [indicates news article] "Is the Pulpit for Women" or something?
- KGC: [Reading the title] "Do You Want a Woman in Your Pulpit?"
- AE: And I'm the "Beauty Chorus Candidate?" [Laughs]. Where does that fit with the MeToo movement, right?
- KGC: Oh my gosh! [Laughs] Yeah. When was that published?
- AE: When was this? I don't know. But I do think the article is one that you guys would be interested in.
- KGC: I think we'd love to, yeah. [Reads date] 1966.
- AE: 1966
- KGC: And so is that you?
- AE: That's me.
- KGC: Wow. You look so young! [Laughs]
- AE: I know, I know. Well that was the reason, wasn't it? I'm sure that's why they – and when I look at it, of course I see my granddaughters.
- KGC: Oh, really!
- AE: Yeah, they were just here, and one granddaughter, oh my gosh, she looks like that. She does. I don't know if this is a close enough picture of her, probably not, to see, but there she is [rustling].
- KGC: Oh, yeah. You can absolutely see the family resemblance.
- AE: Yeah. So I thought it was kind of... She has this big, big, thick hair that I don't have, from her father, but anyway. That one, she in particular looks like me, I think. [Picture is set down]. Yeah, so, if you wanted, I don't know how you'd get that or how he gets that, do you?

- KGC: I don't, but I'll mention it in the email. I mean, I also see Blair frequently.
- AE: I just happen to have it, and you know, but I don't want to just float it out into the world.
- KGC: Yeah, probably could just keep it on hand. Probably in a collection.
- AE: Yeah, he could ask, like I don't know, maybe eventually it's who it should go to.
- KGC: Maybe, or we could just do a photocopy and keep it in the collection of Making Room for Women.
- AE: Well, if he does want that, then I do have it and it could be photocopied, I guess.
- KGC: I'll mention it to him, for sure.
- AE: Because it really is largely, I mean, there's much in the article that's about this other woman, and a couple of other women.
- KGC: Yeah, and their stories are important.
- AE: Yeah, and for sure they took. I also wrote a ... I know you've got to go and I've got to go because I have another...
- KGC: That's fine.
- AE: But I wrote a study for the Center for Christian Studies. I also taught there for quite a while. And I wrote a study for them, and it was called, "Woman, Who Am I?" And this was the resource book for it. I don't know where the original book was; I don't know why it's not on my shelf. You'd think it should be there, but I couldn't find it this morning. But, it's just kind of funny, the articles that I'd chosen that are the resource articles for the students taking... It would be like a very initial online course, only it wouldn't have been an online course, because we didn't have that at that time. So, it must have been sent out and sent back. I don't know how it happened, but this was the resource, and then there was the book. And this was the piece that... This was for the group study, and the other told you how to conduct a group study, and it was all about – it was pre-feminist, you know. It was just when you were trying to think language in the church should be changed, and how are we going to change it, and all that kind of stuff. Interesting.
- KGC: Yeah, a really interesting discussion.
- AE: Yeah. In the church, historically. So, there you go! So, what are you doing right now, with your life?
- KGC: I'll just pause the recording.