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Making Room for Women Project

Interview with Donna Runnalls

Part Three

July 3, 2015

Oral History Recording Summary

Interviewee: Donna Runnalls (DR)
Date of Interview: July 3, 2015
Transcribed by: Katherine Chambers

Interviewed by: Kaz Amaranth (KA)
Location: Langley
Auditor of Transcription: Donna Runnalls

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KA: Okay, this is July 3—Friday, July 3, out in Langley, and this is Kaz Amaranth, and I'm with Donna Runnalls. Do I have your permission to record, Donna? 00:02

DR: Yes, yes.

KA: Thank you.

…

DR: Yes, we were really needing a break from the tension of the six day war, and so we got on this student flight—it was very inexpensive—and flew from Tel Aviv to Athens. And then we got off the plane and hadn't made any plans as to what we were going to do, except at the same time that things were tense in Israel, they were also tense in Greece, because … 0:36

KA: Turkey?

DR: No, the Generals had taken over the government, so it had become like a military government, and we didn't know what to expect. And so we decided the first thing to do was to get on a boat—an overnight boat—to Crete. So we got on the boat, and of course we're students and we don't have much money, so we get the cheapest ferry we can, which is bedding down on the deck. And of course, we had only taken summer clothes with us and it was freezing at night. It was so funny. We opened up our suitcases and put on every piece of clothing that we had. Shorts and tops and a dress on top—everything that we could try. Well, it was a dry night because it was cold. And then we get off, and we don't know what we're going to do there, so we get on a bus and go—we wanted to go to the east end of the island. And this bus, old bus full of Greek passengers, and we come to this kind of—it's a crevice kind of thing; the road goes down like this and it gets to the bottom and goes back up the other side. And it's very narrow and it's just gravel road. And at the bottom of the [crevice] there's a shrine to whatever saint it was.

KA: Saint Crevice.

DR: Yes. (Laughter) And everybody on the bus goes [to the small chapel to light a candle and pray for a safe journey] to the other side.

KA: Oh, my goodness. Maybe a saint of travellers or something.

DR: Yes, oh yes. Oh yes. Anyway, we get to this community—I can't remember the name of it—on the east end of the island, and we had a ball there. Because every day—we found a little beach that wasn't very wide, the sandy part, and there were two cliffs one on each side, so it was very private. So we would buy our lunch and take it there and we spent the days on the beach, which was a great break from the war.

KA: Yeah, the intensity of the time in Israel.

DR: Yeah, I had had, oh, maybe four or five days in Greece on my way to Israel, but this was my first, really, longer visit, and we spent about three weeks there. We spent it where you could stay long enough in a town to kind of see things. It wasn't just one day here and one day there and so on. That's what we did there. And it was a great relief to get away from Israel, and we agreed that we would not talk the politics of Greece, because it was too much.

KA: Yeah. Did you speak modern Greek?

DR: No.

KA: No, okay.

DR: I could read the road signs, though.

(Laughter)

KA: Yes.

DR: That was always a help.

KA: Yeah, no kidding.

DR: We did go—we were in Athens, and we did go to the theatre, one of the great amphitheaters that they still performed in, outdoors. And we saw—it was an Aristophanes play, but I can't tell you which one. But what I was astounded by was of the woman who played Athena—the goddess Athena—was head and shoulders taller than any of the other performers, male or female! She was just huge! And when she came on the stage, you could see (gasps) "That really does look like the goddess it's supposed to look like!"

KA: Isn't that neat. Just a really beautiful, simple visual that just was—phew! —very striking.

DR: Yeah. Anyways, that was '67, and I had already been—I had spent three weeks, prior to that—after the war but prior to that—on a dig in … Gezer, Gezer. And that was my one experience of archeology. 06:17

KA: Yeah. How was that?

DR: It was great; because what I wanted to learn was … I wanted to learn the excavating techniques so that I could read reports and understand them, because writers of the reports don't always give you a kind of conclusion about all the things that they found in the dig.

KA: It's detailing of … it's more kind of a technical report?

DR: Yeah, yeah. And then it's the way you can use that material for general writing.

KA: And I guess that would have been—were you thinking of the scrolls or were you really concerned with artifacts? What kinds of reports were you reading?

DR: Well, the reports of the findings of the digs and—for example, with Gezer, they conclude about the different layers of settlement and what was going on in that area, in terms of material culture. And that's always very helpful, because you get some kind of an idea of what was going on in—by reading the different levels, you can relate that then to other sites and get an idea of what was happening across the country at the same time.

One of the digs I never was involved in but that I was totally fascinated by was—it was an earlier dig—and it was of Jericho. 08:27

KA: Oh, yeah.

DR: And they had found at Tel Jericho this wall that was probably fifteen to twenty feet high and probably four feet—at least—wide. It was quite a large wall and the archeologist dated it to 7000 BC. And that meant it was prehistoric, but the question was: Who was the enemy that they were keeping out, and what a mass they would have to have been to need that kind of a wall! So, asking the question: *What was going on at that period in time?* —there's no answer to it at this point.

KA: Because that would have been wide enough people could walk on the top.

DR: Oh, yeah.

KA: Four feet across.

DR: They would be able to stand on the stop and let the people down below have it. Because they used boiling oil, they used boiling water, they used whatever—what do you call them, when you've got bows and arrows—they could have shot anything at the enemy that was down below.

KA: Wow. Really kind of strikes the imagination about the coming down of the walls of Jericho then, eh?

DR: Believe me, geologically I don't think it was possible.

(Laughter)

KA: But, you know, metaphorically it certainly strikes the imagination.

DR: Yeah, and then you have to imagine what kind of war equipment the outsiders

had that they could have attacked that wall. Because the building of walls—there was always some way people could break through them.

KA: And Gilgamesh, Gilgamesh is more like 4000 BC, and the walls of Uruk and all the stories of that, in terms of mythology and tales. So 7000 BC!

DR: This is considered to be the oldest wall that they have so far found.

KA: Wow.

DR: Yeah, it's really an incredible sight to see. Because the dig was only partial.

KA: Oh yeah?

DR: Yeah. It would have taken a huge amount of money to dig more than the part that they did.

KA: And I'm guessing that the city's built on top of it, right?

DR: Yeah, but in addition to that, over time a mound had built up over top of it. So when they dug it, they only dug this particular piece. So when you go to visit it, you basically are looking from here down to it. And then when you think that that was on—was built in the place which was defence against the other and would have been on the mound or something. It's really incredible to imagine the geography.

KA: That is amazing.

DR: Anyway, I'm not sure what that has to do with anything.

KA: Well, I dunno, it's the things that inspire you, the things that you think about—it does, it strikes the imagination. One of the reasons that you were on the dig was—you know …

DR: Yeah. I wanted to learn. And I wanted to understand what I needed to know about archeology.

KA: I guess one of the questions that was kind of stirring in my mind from our other conversations was—I guess I wondered … what do you think your biggest inspirations were and or are. 13:14

DR: In terms of people, or …?

KA: The way you made your way in the world, what inspired you to … to walk the way you did, and have …?

DR: Okay. When I went to U of T, there was one professor there who—I don't know if I've told you this story, but my … all my professors there were men, and I got along with most of them. But there was one professor who taught in the area of Septuagint Studies. And I wanted to do a course with him. He had the course at two o'clock in the afternoon—two hours, that was once a week—and we were assigned a text that we had to study, and we had to study it in the original Hebrew and then in the Greek. And then we had to comment on the passage. We had to comment on whether or not the Greeks had got it right—if they'd read the Hebrew right, which wasn't always easy to do. Anyway, he clearly did not want women students. And the first day we went into his seminar—oh, by the way, the weather was turning cold and so the windows were closed; it was a room about half the size of this one; there were six of us, I think: five men and myself and he smoked cigars through the whole time and he kept us there for longer than two hours. Sometimes it would end up being three or more. Sometimes I almost missed dinner in the residence because he kept us so long, and my head would be pounding. What inspired me about him was he—from the first day—he picked on me. All the guys knew this was going on, and it was just week after week after week, and I decided, after the first experience, "Damn it all, he's not winning. He's not forcing me out of this class." And I took it. The last two sessions, he did the same thing—he turned away from me and he gave each of those male students the same treatment that he'd given me all term. And when we left the class, all of the guys said to me, "How on earth did you survive that? It's awful." And I said, "Because I determined that he was not winning!" (Laughs). Now, that's a kind of negative inspiration, but I sure learned a lot, because I had to study really hard knowing that he would be picking on—like, "Why is this word translated that way instead of that way," just things like that. It was really picky stuff, but it was also a helpful course in understanding the process of Bible translation.

KA: Well, it sounds like, you know, faced with adversity, you were like, "Okay,

that's it." It just fueled your fire even more.

DR: Yeah, yeah.

KA: I guess that's what I'm wondering, is what do you think is the spark that made you turn to be determined to keep going and to succeed versus caving in … 17:58

DR: I suspect it was my mother. My dad was like this, too, but my mother, because she was a woman, was extremely determined that she was going to do what she wanted to do. And as a young woman, she had done that. And so I think the lessons—that actually came from both my parents, but particularly from my mother, I think, as a woman. And my dad was very encouraging; my older sister says that he was very proud of me, which was nice to hear. Anyway, I don't think—I was clearly inspired by my mother—but I don't think that I can think of other women who were models for me. Certainly, when I was in Korea and I was under the WMS, I did not get along well with the woman from Toronto who was the secretary of Missions in the WMS—I think her name was something Taylor. No. I think in some ways, I probably modeled myself more on men than women, which is an odd thing, when you think about it.

KA: From lack of role models, then, you somehow decided, "Okay, that's it." So who were your role models as men?

DR: Well, certainly the man who taught me my first class in Old Testament: Stanley Frost. He was a model for me. And when I went to Korea … who were the models there? There weren't any that I can identify. I guess, in some ways, my father was a role model. He was a very stubborn person, too. (Laughter). He would just very quietly continue to do what he was going to do.

KA: Some might call it perseverance.

DR: Yeah exactly.

(Laughter)

DR: Exactly.

KA: When you spoke of going to Korea and you said you went during the summer and you worked in a factory—that kind of speaks to me about class consciousness—where do you think that came from? 21:13

DR: Part of what that was from was that when I joined the SCM, I had … the SCM had run for a number of years what they called Summer Industrial Camps. You signed up for the summer and the plan was, we lived, in my case—the one I went to, I was in two—was living in a church hall and living as a community, and then everybody going and finding a job in a factory. So I worked the summer I was a student and worked in a factory. My first two weeks I was working in a garment factory—the pay was so low that I had applied for other jobs and one came through: Yardley's Perfume Factory.

KA: Oh, ho! This was in Toronto?

DR: In Toronto. And that was a good job, good paying job, but one day—I mean, I was on an assembly line doing the packaging, and this guy, whose job was to pick up all the perfume as they filled up boxes, dropped one box right beside me, and I got covered with it. So when I got on the streetcar to go back to the church, I just reeked! (Laughter)

Anyway, you had to be persistent in doing that because it was hard work trying to cover the fact that you were not at that level of education that would normally be working in a factory. We were all university students, so it was tricky. And then we had sessions—group sessions—when we talked about labour and society and the role of this kind of labour in society and so on, and we were all, by the end of the summer, very pro-union. And I think that that was what led me to wonder about what factory life was like in Korea. And I think I may have mentioned that the only way I got the job was to agree to teach English to the owners—the top ranks. 24:26

KA: Oh, it wasn't to the workers.

DR: No, it wasn't to the workers; it was to the people at the top.

KA: But it was through one of the women that you were teaching English to that you got the job?

DR: No, she went with me.

KA: Oh, she went with you.

DR: Yeah, but I got the job through an American Methodist Missionary who was also interested in what was going on in the kind of post-war building of employment and what kinds of businesses were being built and so on. And he had contact with the owners of this factory and so he set it up for me. I think that he was equally puzzled by why I wanted to do this as everybody else was.

KA: You didn't bring a whole coterie of other teachers with you; it was just you.

DR: No. No, no. I was …

KA: Striking out on your own.

DR: Yeah, it was my individual education. But it was kind of interesting—I mean, everybody else was on holiday at the beach and here I was …

(Laughter)

KA: Making pots.

DR: Yes, right.

KA: Wow.

DR: Yeah, it was—I'm glad I did it. It let me see …

KA: What did you see that you hadn't seen before?

DR: I saw—largely it was the women, but I'm sure the same conditions applied to the men—women that were working six days a week and probably ten hours a day and sometimes they would be called to work seven days a week. They hardly had time to wash their clothes and look after—most of them, they would

have to have some elderly member of the family looking after the children because they almost never saw their children.

What else did I see? It was real drudgery, as far as I could see, for most of them. It just was day by day by day and no planning for a better future.

KA: And those would have been women who were … perhaps their partners or husbands had been killed in the war.

DR: Some of them had been.

KA: And so they had to be the main earners for their entire families. If not for the war, do you think those same women would have been in the factories?

DR: I don't know. It's hard to tell. Because if it hadn't been for the war, the whole economy of the country might have been completely different, although it was not—it had not developed the way Japan had, even though the Japanese occupied them. Because for the Japanese, they [Koreans] were really like the source of cheap labour. So Korea wasn't going to get ahead as long as Japan controlled the scene, which they did in China as well. It's hard to tell. The future was what it was at that point, but I know … I think I mentioned to you the woman who had been in Hiroshima and had scars all over her body from the bomb. That wouldn't have happened if …

KA: Yeah. I guess I was just thinking about—in terms of the structure of their society, I mean, because of the war, obviously so many things happened that wouldn't have happened … there wouldn't have been maybe a factory of mostly women that you could have gone to work in had there not been the Korean war.

DR: That's probably true. I don't know if you've read about what's happening in North Korea, but from the end of the Korean war there was always this tension between North and South. And it sounds like North Korea's absolute hell now.

KA: Yeah, I read the book that one of the … someone who had escaped from one of the camps in North Korea had written when he escaped to the States. He grew up there and then … anyway …

DR: Yeah, and unfortunately our present government, apparently because the South Korean government is willing to accept North Koreans … what do you call them … [escapees to] South Korea—the government is willing but the population is not. But because the government is willing, Canada is starting to cut back on the number of North Koreans that they will [accept] and they're trying to send the ones that are here [to South Korea].

KA: Wow. So much to do, eh?

DR: Yeah, yeah. (Sighs deeply). Well. (Laughs). You must have a list of questions.

KA: I do! I do have a list of questions. I keep, just, you know … whenever we talk, I get so engaged in whatever we're talking about that I forget about the questions I have. I do have a question … I was wondering—you mentioned that you didn't have a lot of women role models and that your mum was this fiercely determined, independent woman. So one of the questions was: Can you think of a time in your life, the first time you thought of gender … that you saw gender as something of an entity. 31:24

DR: It was not, I think, until I was at McGill that that would have been the case. In my own family, my parents treated all of us the same, so I was not aware of what was called the feminist question and the gender question in the same way. But then, I don't think anybody in that period of time was … well, that's not true: there were leaders among the women in the country that were thinking in those terms, but when I was growing up, I never thought that much [about it]. In order to think about gender … Yeah, I think it was only when I went to McGill—starting there in '71—that I became much more conscious of the gender question. I think one of the triggers for that was my taking on the job of being Warden of Royal Victoria College, because then, administratively, I began to see the way in which the men subordinated—or tried to subordinate—the women. I don't think that the whole discussion of the relationship of men to women and vice versa was even using that terminology. Because one the things that I liked about the SCM was that people were equal there. That was one of the real, strong elements of the SCM, was the equality between men and women.

KA: Would that have been from an evangelical point of you—in Christ there is no male or female …?

DR: I think that's where it would have come from. And I think also because the SCM was related to the World Student Christian Federation—that the experience of

the Second World War had fed into the roles that women were playing in terms of the war and so on. And the West wouldn't have survived without that equal participation. So I think that it was happening, but the terminology wasn't being used.

KA: But you were speaking of … you were quite aware when you had that professor at U of T that he was targeting you because you were a woman and he didn't particularly want to have a woman student.

DR: Yeah. But what I didn't do was then theorize about it. I just, like so many women, I assumed that it was me. Not me—female, but me—*me.* Do you know what I mean?

KA: Yeah. You personalized it instead of seeing that it could have been anybody and he would still treat you the same.

DR: Yeah. And then when I became Dean, and joined—became a member of a group—the Women Academic Administrators of the Universities—that's when I really learned a lot more about how to handle this whole situation.

KA: Yeah. So that's when you kind of were more theorizing about the gender inequality.

DR: Yeah.

KA: And at that point, your role would have been—you had some authority at that point and been able to affect change in some ways.

DR: Yeah. Except the authority of the Dean of Religious Studies was, in a sense, more moral that substantial, because we were the smallest faculty in the University, so you didn't carry a lot of power. Because, obviously, the power related to the size of your budget. (Laughs)

KA: Yeah. Right. Theology already was on the wane of …

DR: That's right.

KA: Interesting. Interesting.

DR: Yeah.

KA: You were saying the feminist terminology … Do you consider yourself a feminist? 13:16

DR: (Sighs)

KA: Big question.

DR: Yeah. I'm certainly not a radical feminist; I couldn't be—I like men too much for that! But in one sense, yes. Most of the feminist theorising that I hear—some of it is okay, but some of it pushes the boundaries to … how shall I say it? Almost like the women want to take over the old role that men played. And I'm not sure that that's the way you get an equal society. So … yes, I would consider myself a feminist in the sense that I believe women should have equal opportunities to men in what they want to do with their lives. And certainly I recognize that a lot of women still want to—I mean, men, too—want to have families, and it's usually the men that have greater responsibility simply because of sex. Not gender.

KA: If you were to look to women today, what would you want to tell them? That you think they should know? 38:45

DR: Hm. I would say that if you want to do something badly enough, you should never give it up. You should pursue it. But I think there's also a need to recognize the points at which you will not succeed, and therefore don't go on about it. Just back off.

KA: I can't remember who it is that said, "If you want to succeed, double your failures."

DR: That's a good idea! Yeah. No, it's a hard life, wanting to work in the professional world. But I think it's getting easier for women as—I mean, certainly business is not a place that's easy for women, but I think professions are better. The professional world is much, much easier to get ahead in.

KA: You showed me the article that you wrote in—is it, "A Fair Shake"? The story about McGill women?

DR: Mm hm.

KA: And the last paragraph you talk about how, looking ahead, you're looking to writing projects and …

DR: I know! (Laughs)

KA: So I was wondering, oh ho, what kind of writing project are you interested in now? I mean, I know that was back in '84, so I thought "Wow!" So … 40:49

DR: Well, I had projects that I wanted to pursue, but then I became Dean and it turned out that my life became more administrative than teaching and research. I've written mostly articles that I'm quite proud of. But the kind of detailed research that I wanted to do, I ended up not having the time to be able to do them.

KA: What kind of detailed research were you …?

DR: Well, I was interested in … I wrote an article about a Greek interpretation of passages from the Bible that were written by a Greek scholar, and the scholarship is known only in fragments. And I was really interested in pursuing the question of the intersection between Hebrew culture and the Greek culture. The learned Greek culture.

KA: Still in the same period that you were kinda focused on, the hundred-so years after Christ there, in the first centuries?

DR: Yeah, and these Greek writers were writing also pre-Christian period, say from 300 BC to 200 AD, in that period in there. The Classical Greek period was around 500 [BC], but it went on. Greek was, by about 200 BC, it was beginning to decline as a language. Or to be simplified, I should say. It's a difference between the Classical Greek period and what is called the Hellenistic period, where Greek was being more widely influenced by the meeting with the Romans and all the other ethnic groups that were impacting their language.

And that was the kind of period that I was interested in, because I really wanted to know what was happening—like we know, basically, what happened within the rabbinic Jewish group, but what we don't know so much about is what was happening with the wider Jewish culture, in terms of how it was assimilating or finding differentiation from the Greek culture, which is the dominant culture. So that's what I was thinking of following up, but then things all changed. (Laughter).

KA: So is that one of the papers you were especially proud of, was the one you worked on then?

DR: Yeah. I've forgotten my title, but it's about Moses.

KA: Moses?

DR: Yeah.

KA: (Paper ruffling) Let's see … publications … *The Lord Said to Moses*?

DR: No.

KA: That's '98 … oh, that's probably not updated ... '84 … '83

DR: I think it would have been around … but …

KA: Oh, I can't find it.

DR: Let's see.

KA: Looking at the list of your publications.

DR: Yeah. Where is it now?

KA: Oh, an aside: I was talking to my dad about Asingo—"Did you know what Donna Runnalls did her thesis on?"

He says, "Yes, of course: Josephus."

DR: Yeah, I did.

KA: Of course he does. And I said, "Oh yeah." He says, "You know your grandfather used to read him."

I said, "What?"

He said, "Yes, he had his entire collection".

DR: (Laughs)

KA: I said, "My grandfather, who was not a minister—or, great-grandfather—not a minister," I said, "What do you mean he had the entire collection of Josesphus, I mean surely that's kind of an arcane thing to have in your library."

He said, "Oh, yeah, but he was a wide reader."

DR: (Laughs)

KA: And I just thought about the difference between what we were talking about in an earlier conversation about the kind of basis for scholarship, that people just were more widely read. I mean, I know he's probably an exception, but in that people did read the classics on their own, and that in grammar school that you would read Homer and *The Odyssey* and whatnot, and all the greats.

DR: Oh, yeah. And I think …

KA: So you would come to the university with already the wide base of general knowledge and literature that you could …

DR: I think in high school, in earlier periods, they would have studied either Latin or

Greek, and sometimes both, and they had this whole foundation.

There's this one I'm thinking about—*Moses, Ethiopian Campaign*, which—of course in the Bible, Moses went nowhere near Ethiopia.

KA: So is this a tongue in cheek, is *Ethiopian Campaign*, or is this your unearthing the things that are … extra-biblical?

DR: No … Yeah, this is from this Jewish, but Greek, scholar. I've forgotten his name now, but he … that was the kind of thing I was interested in, was the period. When you think about it—I mean, this was the theological problems I've always had: When Judaism met Greek culture, it went into a kind of understanding of—a theological understanding that was different than Judaism—straight Judaism. And that's always puzzled me, because I think in many ways, I'm more Jewish than I am Greek. Because, I mean, there's so much that accumulated, particularly in the Catholic tradition, that is so anti-Jewish that you kind of think, "Why did we get there?" Like this whole business, which drives me nuts, in the Catholic tradition, of actually thinking that in some kind of magical way, the cup becomes the blood of … (Laughs) … of the sacrifice? And you just kind of think, "What kind of imagination is this?" It's so un-down-to-earth. That's the kind of questions that interest me. 47:31

KA: Can you give me an example of what Greek … like, when you say that Judaism, and the Jewish culture meeting the Greek culture, and then what comes through … can you give me an example of what you mean by that?

DR: Well, I think the political organization is one thing. The role in Judaism of the Rabbi is so completely different than the role of—in Catholicism—the role of the priest. And I think that the kind of patterns that developed in the Christian church were modeled so much on the whole hierarchy of empire that the democracy—and actually, I think that the Reformation was an attempt to readdress those questions of—like Protestantism didn't develop this kind of hierarchal understanding of—I mean, reality. It wasn't just "tip your hat to the Emperor'" it was "this is the person who runs your life." And I think that that kind of conflict between the Jewish and the Greek both in assimilation, but in the patterns of assimilation, were different.

KA: Hm.

DR: If all of that makes sense to you. (Laughter).

KA: I'm thinking about—when you say, 'the role of the Rabbi versus the role of the priest', and what I think of is the Divine Right of Kings and then the priest being the intermediator between the Divine and the human, and what is the role of the Rabbi, then?

DR: The role of the Rabbi is to answer people's questions about the problems that they have. But it's not to order people, that they have to do this or that or something else. It's more an advisory role than a ruler—an authority role.

KA: Well certainly the … I mean, the study of the Talmud and how they study—they read other people's questions about the text and then debate over the centuries, who has said what and what they thought and so it's like the Rabbi doesn't have the answer, doesn't have the Word from God, the divine or whatever kind of answer, but more of a stirring you to ask more questions. That's how I see it, but …

DR: Well, that's right. Because of course, in the Catholic tradition, the Pope is always right. And I mean, that's a bunch of BS but … (Laughs) … and I think that Protestantism has in fact tried to bring it back closer to the Jewish tradition. But after a long period of contact with the Greek culture, it was never going to go back to being what it had been before.

KA: And culturally, even if Protestantism was trying to bring it back, there was so much anti-Semitism in Europe at the time, it was just so rife with it, so … 52:53

DR: Oh yeah. I hadn't realized it, but apparently the anti-Semitism wasn't there for the first millennium in Europe. It came out of—by the beginning of the second millennium, so much of Europe had become Christian. That's when the anti-Semitism started developing.

KA: Was that kind of the burgeoning of the "Jews killed Jesus" type of Christianity? The very anti-Semitic Christianity?

DR: Mm hm. And it got worse and worse and worse and worse. And in some areas it was far worse than other areas in Europe.

KA: Why do you think that the turn of the millennium, and … was that the time Clovis became—in France—became Christian, and it was more

institutionalized in Europe?

DR: Well, I think part of it was that Eastern Europe was converting to Christianity, and some of it was coming from there, in terms of the anti-Semitism, and certainly I think Germany and … maybe it was because they were converting to Christianity, it was like a competition between Judaism and Christianity, I don't know, but the Jews … I think the other thing was the legislation didn't permit Jews to own property. So they then had to go into being financiers, because that was one of the few things they were permitted to do. Then, you know, it's built up on jealousy about their wealth and all that kind of stuff, too. It's so complicated.

KA: It *is* complicated. And when you think about it, it's one of the reasons why Christians don't want to deal with money, is that whole misinterpretation that money is the root of all evil, when in fact the quote is actually "the *love* of money is the root of all evil", but that turned money into the other and since Jews were the other, you kinda go, "Hey, they go together!" Anyway …

DR: Yeah.

KA: I just … you know, I don't know, it is hard to understand. The root of these things is so fascinating.

DR: It is. And the other thing is that—what is also fascinating is how long-term the idea that one person could make a slave of another person has been culturally [widespread]. The fact that there's anti-slavery … that's so recent. And so the Jews ended up being slaves! It's … human behaviour is …

KA: It's fascinating.

DR: It is. Uh huh. And I really do think, however, that over two millennia, Christianity has been an enormous, civilizing influence in the world. And that's what really is sad about the loss of people's faith—Christian faith, I think. I mean, there being all kinds of things that weren't thought through well enough, or maybe it was the culture of the day, but I think that on the whole, Christianity's had an enormous, positive influence in world history.

KA: What inspires you now? 57:09

DR: I'm not sure anything does.

(Laughter)

KA: Says she, who's just been passionately talking of theological matters.

(Laughter)

DR: Yeah, exactly. I don't know, I mean I think part of it is just continuing to use my brain that inspires me. It's getting lazier and lazier, I think, although I'm still reading a lot.

KA: Yeah?

DR: Yeah.

KA: What are you reading, lately?

DR: Well, I haven't got any … oh, yes, I'm reading a book which I'm having a little difficulty finishing. You wouldn't believe this, but I've been reading up on Canadian history, so I'm reading a book which I actually gave my brother-in-law for Christmas, and told him that when he'd read it, I had to read it because I wanted to read it. It's about the Dieppe raid of the Second World War. You're heard of the Dieppe raid? 57:55

KA: Dieppe, yeah.

DR: Okay. And this guy wrote a book with the release of all of the secret documents from the British Archives, starting in '95 when they released—what happened at Dieppe, which was happening at the time in 1941-42, was that the Brits had discovered this Enigma machine. And they had deciphered all the German codes—and the Enigma was working on … what did they call it? Three wheels. And so they were able to figure out what the codes were. But in 1942, the Germans introduced another way of … and they couldn't break it. Things that

were happening more and more … ships were being sunk more … it was a really serious period. So the plan was, in Dieppe, that it was to be seen as an attempt at testing for invasion of Europe, but there was a small team whose assignment was to find that material, that fourth wheel. And they didn't find it. But they actually got access two months later. But the whole thing is the build-up, because the result of the Dieppe disaster was so great for the Canadians, and they have never known what was behind it all. And now this guy has published what was behind it. The few veterans that are still alive are saying, "Now we know. That it was worth it." Even though they didn't succeed.

KA: And the losses were so great, so it must carry a lot of weight for them to know that there's …

DR: Well, the guy that was actually the head honcho got dismissed from the job, so … yeah, it was very sad, but this whole business of the Enigma Machine has … it's only very recently that we've been learning about it, and it's the beginning of the computer age. So it's really significant!

KA: Did you see *The Imitation Game*?

DR: No. I've never—is that the one with Turing?

KA: Yeah. It's really fine. It makes me think of that … even them having broken the code and then having to let the ships be sunk because they needed to wait and not let the Germans know that they had broken it.

DR: Yeah, it's … when you read this kind of thing, you wonder how many merchant seamen went down. It must have been an enormous number.

KA: Do you think that—I kind of wonder, because we live in such an Individualistic Age, I wonder now if that's even possible, because there was such a sense of the common good and the good of community and larger social entities than nowadays. 1:02:21

DR: Yeah. I wonder … under a very serious threat, whether that wouldn't come back, because there is a sense in which—Canadians certainly … the generations that settled here knew that you didn't survive alone. You could only

survive in this kind of climate and so on if you were together, and you had help from other kind of people. You sort of wonder whether it wouldn't rapidly change. I mean, I could see society … sometimes I look at American society and think, "They'll all march to the death alone."

KA: Yeah. Whether a common foe or adversity would … and maybe that's gonna be the climate changing …

DR: I think it is, quite frankly.

KA: And whether we're back to the walls of Jericho: if you have something against whom you're trying to protect, what's sacred to you …

DR: Yeah, because certainly the questions of the pipelines, the mining and all this kind of stuff are causing a real conflict, I think.

KA: In the article—I'm just going to get back to the article that you wrote—in the McGill Women book, and I think you're quote at the beginning was about wisdom. And it just struck me, because I was wondering if … I'm just going to find it, so I don't misquote it … you say, "The beginning to wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. Prize her highly, and she will exalt you, she will honour you if you embrace her." From Proverbs. And I was wondering if … what kind of insights you have about theological education and education that you didn't have when you began. 1:04:17

DR: Hmm. I think … I have been watching theological education become more and more driven by … what would I call it? The ministerial skills and the kind of de-emphasis—I mean, not completely lost or anything, but the de-emphasis on the intellectual, that needs to go along with those skills. I don't have the impression that our clergy today are as well educated as, say, my father's generation was. And I'm not sure that that will really help the church in the long run. That's, I think, what I would call one of the insights. Again, I don't know if I'm right or wrong, but that's my impression.

KA: Hm. That's funny … when you say that, talking about the skillset, more of a … almost an apprenticeship training college for ministers to acquire the skills, and maybe not the wisdom of accumulated scholarship and seeing what other people said over the ages and …

DR: And, you see, I'm not even sure … I don't know the curriculum any longer. I'm not even sure what languages are required. Whether anybody's learning Hebrew or Greek these days. I don't know that.

KA: When you had graduate students, did they have to learn Hebrew and Greek?

DR: Oh yeah, oh yeah. Quebec was so different because theology had to be a first degree, not a second degree. The churches required it being a second degree, but in any case, everybody had to do one of those two languages: Hebrew or Greek. When I was a student, we had to do both, but I'm not even sure they're required to do any languages now. And the funny part was, when I was teaching Hebrew—I had been taught Hebrew in the old style, where you learned all the grammar before you started kind of reading sentences and all that kind of stuff, and I had a textbook that had been structured in terms of the way you learn modern languages. And so I taught the students probably about six weeks, from this style where you learned to put sentences together right from the beginning. And then I had found in some teaching aid, passages in the Bible that were very simple to read. And so the first passage we read was the sacrifice of Isaac. And when we read that in my class, the students were just aghast, because it was so blunt and so simple, but so powerful, that reading the English just didn't do it. From then on, having had that experience, they really learned Hebrew more effectively. But it was fascinating to watch that.

KA: That there was real reason, a real motivation to see that that … that different language, it's like you were on an archeological dig and were unearthing something else that you never would have been able to understand.

DR: That's right. Absolutely. Absolutely. No, I always enjoyed doing that because that moment of discovery, of learning, was just fabulous for me to see.

KA: I'm not sure whether I have anything else I'm really burning to ask right now. Are there things that … you know, this is the context of Making Room for Women: women's stories, oral histories and leadership in the church for the Archives, but is there anything that you would like to say.

DR: No. I think that one of the difficult things for me is that I was never—how would I say it?—I ended up not being as active in terms of the United Church as I probably should have been. I certainly gave papers at conferences, I did attend a number of the local conferences as a theme speaker, but I did—I wasn't a continual participant in the life of the church. It would have been—I just found that it wasn't possible to cover the world. 1:11:19

(Laughter)

KA: To train those ministers, to teach them and to then go and be part of other doings of the church.

DR: Yeah. I was on several national committees—I was on Theology and something.

KA: Was that the one on inclusive language?

DR: Yeah. And you know, my friend Phyllis Smyth and I were both on it for a number of years. From then on, I just wasn't that active in the United Church.

One of the things that really bugged me, actually, was that when I was living in Israel, we had all these United Church people come through, and I very seldom saw them. They knew I was there, but they never referred to me about anything that I might have been able to help them with.

KA: Oh, that's a shame. That's a real loss for them.

DR: Yeah, it was. I felt it was, anyway.

(Laughter)

DR: But anyway, that was one of the things that I found interesting. One woman that brought a group—I can't remember—one of the Toronto people that had been in what was now called …

KA: The Centre for Christian Studies?

DR: Yeah, the Centre for Christian Studies. She had written me simply to meet her, not to meet the group, but to meet her because she wanted to say hello, how are you doing and so on. But none of the groups—I never got to meet as a group.

KA: Do you think that was a lack on the United Church part in terms of being aware of people doing scholarship and education?

DR: I think it was, yeah.

KA: And do you think more women than men, during that time?

DR: I don't know. I really don't know. I'm not sure that they would have paid attention to any men that were doing similar things. And maybe they just thought you were so busy, they shouldn't interrupt you or whatever, but that was kind of sad, in a way.

KA: Or that you were part of a cultural kind of shift away from scholarship. That it was a kind of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but not necessarily speaking to people who were doing in-depth research.

DR: Yeah, yeah.

KA: I mean, I don't know, I'm just surmising off the top of my head.

DR: Yeah, but I really have little idea of why that was the case. I always thought, "Well maybe it's just because they don't know I'm here."

KA: Which is another kind of lacuna.

DR: Yeah. Exactly.

KA: Interesting.

DR: Yeah. So, what do we … are you leaving? 1:15:36

KA: Well, I …

DR: It's ten to twelve.

KA: Yeah, okay. Well, thank you so much for these times together. It's been really fun for me, and really illuminating and really beautiful to hear your stories. So thank you.

DR: This is … enough?

KA: Yeah, I will say thank you, Donna and … yeah, thank you so much.

DR: You're welcome.