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Making Room for Women Project

Interview with Patricia Baker

January 21, 2014

Oral History Recording Summary

Interviewee: Patricia Baker (PB)
Date of Interview: January 21, 2015
Transcribed by: Katherine Chambers

Interviewed by: Melanie Ihmels (MI)
Location: By telephone
Auditor of Transcription: Patricia Baker

Time Log (minutes)	Description of Content
05:13	Beginning of Interview; introduction, information about early life
19:44	Early impressions of gender inequality
28:54	Vocational choices
30:46	Volunteer roles
41:05	Leadership responsibilities
42:46	Ecumenical responsibilities
43:17	Important issues, joys and challenges
47:52	Life passions
49:30	Effect of class and race on life
51:36	Leisure activities
53:05	Hopes for future direction of church

- MI: Now, you're my first official interview. I've had some little ones, but not for the full questionnaire. So this is a learning experience for both of us, so stop me at any time and if you want to add any information, that would be great. Also, once you get the set of our discussion in the mail you are welcome to add any information to that as well while reading it. For instance, if we were talking about something and you remember something after, you can add it in and it all becomes part of the record. 05:13
- PB: Alright.
- MI: So, I'll do some basics. Where were you born? 06:00
- PB: In Victoria.
- MI: And when did you join the United Church?
- PB: When did I officially join the United Church? Well, because I was raised as an Anglican. It was while I was in nurses' training at VGH and it would probably have been around 1953-'54—I can't remember exactly—it may even have been '52. I had been attending, with some of the other nursing students, a group at Chown Memorial Church and very much appreciated the information and the reception from Stan Packham at the time. There was also, at the same time, one of the medical interns, Dr. Helen Huston, who was attending that same group and she, you may know, later became a medical missionary with the United Church. Anyhow, that was my introduction to the United Church and I felt very comfortable and I joined the Church at that time.
- MI: And so Chown Memorial was a United Church?
- PB: Chown—C-H-O-W-N—Chown in Vancouver.
- MI: Oh, okay. In Vancouver?
- PB: Mm-hmm
- MI: Okay. I'm learning all these wonderful things as I do this. Okay, so that was sometime between '52 and '54.
- PB: That's right.
- MI: When did you choose to become more involved with the church? 07:33
- PB: With the United Church?
- MI: Yes.

- PB: Well, I'd been a fairly regular attender with the Anglican Church most of my younger life but I appreciated very much the context of the United Church. I had also been part of the Student Christian Movement at UBC in my first and second years there before I went into nurse's training and had met a number of United Church folk there who were opening and questioning in ways, as far as I knew, Anglicans didn't do at that time. So that's what really drew me into the United Church, and my continuation was from then, as I had married one of the students that I had been at the SCM with. My husband's name was Glen Baker, and he was heading into United Church ministry at the time, while I was continuing with Nursing. 07:41
- MI: So he became a minister? 08: 39
- PB: He did.
- MI: With the United Church?
- PB: That's right.
- MI: And is that how you got pulled into some of the ministry work? 08:44
- PB: Partially, but not really because I was also nursing and we were married and we had our family. We served up in the McBride area—Glen's first pastoral charge was the Prince George-McBride area—and then in Richmond and then at downtown First United Church, the mission church at Gore and Hastings. And all that time I was raising five children. 08:47
- MI: Oh my goodness!
- PB: So I was a minister's wife on the fringe and did not fulfill that era's typical role as minister's wife.
- MI: No, you sound a little busy! (laughter)
- PB: I was busy with my own family. That's right. Well, a little bit of history: when I was fifteen and had an interview with one of the high school counsellors and was asked what I wanted to do and I said I really wanted to be a ... I wanted to be a priest.
- MI: Oh, wow!
- PB: The Anglican Church was not very accepting at that time and I was told that was a very foolish thing for me to decide to do, but I was allowed to be a social worker or a teacher or a nurse.
- MI: Oh, gosh!

PB: So I decided well, okay, I'd go into nursing and be a missionary nurse. Well, my mission field was Northern BC and my five kids at home. But, when Glen got to be minister at Dunbar United Church, through a number of things that had been happening in my working life and family life, I decided, "This is ideal ... this is a good place."

MI: And what year was that?

PB: "I can go to VST."

MI: Mmm, yes! I like VST!

PB: Okay (laughs). So, that would have been about 1977. And I had five teenagers at home.

MI: Oh, my goodness, I have two and they're more than enough! Okay, so 1977 and you went to VST then ...

PB: Yup, I worked part time and studied part time for the first two years, and then I realized I needed to go full time. So I quit my job and went to VST, which was a little hard on the family because instead of being a semi-wage earner and helping with the finances, I then became a full-time student and was not contributing financially any longer so it was a tough time for the family but they were all very supportive; all my kids were very, very helpful.

MI: Did you find there was a lot of support in the school system for you? 11:38

PB: At VST?

MI: At VST.

PB: Officially?

MI: Um, we could be ...

PB: Faculty? I'm just figuring out how to say this—I'd have to say yes and no. My support group mainly was three other women of similar age. We banded together and were really supportive to one another—two Anglicans, another United Church woman and myself, and we were a very, very strong support group. For a long time around VST we had a name that was remembered—we called ourselves "The Late Church Mothers," in contrast to the Early Church Fathers. 11:52

MI: Oh, that's great! (laughing)

PB: And we were known for a long time, even after our graduation, as the Late Church Mothers. They knew who they were referring to at that time: that would have been Helen Hobbs and myself and the Anglicans: Dorothy Barker and

Barbara Clay.

12:43

MI: Dorothy Barker and Barabra Clay?

PB: They were the Anglicans, that's right, and Helen and I were the two United Church. For a long time afterwards, people would refer—"So what's happening with the Late Church Mothers?"—and they knew who they were talking about.

MI: That is so neat! I actually have Helen on my list to do an interview with as well.

PB: Okay, well she'll talk about the Late Church Mothers.

MI: Oh, that's ... that's marvellous.

PB: Yeah. In terms of the faculty and attitudes of support: well, yes and no. I do remember one incident that ... I won't name the prof ... I was needing to ask for an extension on a paper because my mother, who was in her late seventies, early eighties, had been quite ill and we'd had to bring her in to our home from Victoria and she had been very ill and we'd had to spend a lot of time with her; my husband had had a car accident and I needed to ask for a paper extension. This particular professor from whom I'd asked it had said, "No, you won't get an extension. Perhaps this will teach you how to deal with the stress of ministry."

13:13

MI: Oh, my goodness.

PB: Yeah. So that ... yeah, I wouldn't have called that a very supportive attitude.

MI: No.

PB: And I think that ... we're talking now about the late '70s—at VST there were ... how many of us? ... We certainly weren't anywhere near half the student body at that time, but there were some very strong women who were there, at that time, and that was the group in which I found my support: the other women who were there.

MI: Did you have support financially through VST or any other ...?

14:50

PB: Yes, I did. I had some financial support from the ... what did they call it at the time? ... I remember Marilyn Harrison was the chaplain. The faculty person who was the most supportive to me at that time was June Bradley, who was the Registrar. She was great.

14:55

MI: I think I've heard that name.

PB: Yup.

MI: That sounds familiar. Okay, and when were you ordained?

15:20

PB: I was ordained in '84. I had finished my work in '83, but I still had one term of field work to do before I could be ordained.

MI: So you got to be ordained in '84.

PB: In '84, mmm hmm.

MI: I bet that was exciting.

PB: It was. It certainly was.

Okay, so that's kind of some of the basic check-in questions; now some of this we might repeat ourselves and we can just say, "We've already talked about that". I have a list of questions here and we don't have to stay strict to how these questions are laid out. We can go off into tangents or you're welcome to say, "I'm not interested in answering that question".

PB: Okay.

MI: Okay? So, just so you know I'm also keeping some notes while we're going so I have a way of finding where we are on the tape. Saying that, I'm checking to see if we're still taping and we are—that's good. Okay, so the first question is: Tell me a bit about your early life: family, community, participation in the church. So you mentioned you ... 16:14

PB: Grew up in Victoria. In my elementary school years it was the war years—World War II—and my father was in the navy and he was killed overseas when I was seven, in '42. 16:38

MI: '42 ...

PB: Yeah, so my uncles were in the services and my mother and three sisters shared a house, so I grew up in a household of women. My family was nominally Anglican. I went to an Anglican Sunday school—actually I went to a Presbyterian Sunday school first, then I went to an Anglican Sunday school and started singing in the junior choir when I was eight. The fact that I was singing in the choir kept me regularly going to church on Sundays; I liked that very much. But I wouldn't say my family had a strong connection with the church. After the war was over and my mother and my brother and I moved from the main house over into a house of our own, which she was able to get through veterans and widows allowance, we started going to church together more regularly, all through my young teens and through high school. And then, as I say, I came over to Vancouver, to UBC, and then joined the Student Christian Movement and that is what really drew me into the church in a more significant way. So that would have been when I was about seventeen.

MI: You had also mentioned that when you were in high school you had thought about being a priest. 18:37

PB: That's right.

MI: Is there anything about that ... what attracted you to it?

PB: I liked the idea (laughs). I had been going to church all the time, while family wasn't, you know? 18:47

MI: Mmm hmm, yes.

PB: ... most of the time I was going there, and I liked the idea. I just thought that might be a neat thing to do. I liked the fact that this person had a lot of people ... I guess it was because there seemed to be some kind of relationship between that leadership and the people. And I also loved the Bible stories

(Laughter)

PB: And I wanted to learn more.

MI: That's interesting. I wanted to be a nun.

PB: Yeah? Is that right?

MI: Yeah. I had nothing to do with the Roman Catholic Church—I was United—but I wanted to be a nun.

19:44

That's very interesting. Okay: Can you remember any early deciding moments that made you aware of gender inequality?

PB: Of gender inequality?

MI: Mmm hmm.

PB: Early moments? Well, one of them, I suppose—relating to the same thing—was that it always interested me that the clergy that I was aware of wore what looked like white dresses and lots of frills. I remember when I was thirteen being in a confirmation class and I was also very interested, by the way, in lots of—I was an avid reader and I liked the stories of Greek mythology and whatever I could get my hands on, and in the confirmation class I can remember asking the priest who was leading it why it was that we said that all other people told myths but our story was true. And I can remember him pulling himself up to about his five-foot-six height and looking down on me and saying, "Well because, little girl, our story is true." And that didn't satisfy me and I also didn't like him calling me "little girl". 19:57

MI: (Laughs) I bet.

PB: So there was an awareness there. I wouldn't have put it as an awareness of

gender inequality but there was something very uncomfortable about his answer and his stance towards me that I did not like.

Gender equality issues ... Probably they were beginning to be a challenge when I was with the Student Christian Movement bunch because they questioned everything. And I found that that was the ... to me that was exciting, almost on the edge of dangerous because you weren't supposed to question, were you? But these folk questioned everything and that felt good. It was kind of exciting to be in a place where you could question whatever you wanted and say, "I don't believe that." So it was more like that kind of thing. 21:30

MI: Mm hm?

PB: My radicalization moment really became after my twins were born. My eldest daughter had turned five in June; my twins were born in July, which meant that I had five children ages 5 and under.

MI: Oh my goodness.

PB: I asked my doctor at that point if I could have a tubal ligation. This was in 1964 and he said, "No, you only ... the legality of a sterilization for women is you have to have had five pregnancies or—no, six pregnancies—or five live births." I'm sorry—six pregnancies or six live births. Now, our very, very first child had only lived for ten days. So I'd had six children, but one of them was dead; because I had twins I'd only had five pregnancies.

MI: Oh, I see.

PB: I didn't qualify.

MI: Wow.

PB: I would say that was the moment of my radicalization of gender inequalities and feminism and all the rest of it. So, it wasn't really to do with the church at that time except that there was something that they didn't, you know—it was all tied in as far as I was concerned.

MI: Mm hm.

PB: Does that make sense?

MI: That makes sense.

PB: Okay.

MI: Yes. Yes, it does. Once you were ordained or in the process of being ordained, was there anything regarding gender inequality that you ran into? 23:51

- PB: Oh! (laughs) I have a lovely story about that! This was in Kelowna and there were two ministerials because the right wing ministerial didn't really want to mix with the left wing ministerial. 24:00
- MI: (Laughter)
- PB: But at one point there was somebody who came and said that they would really invite the ministerial members to come to a breakfast meeting that they were having at the mission the following month. So the other woman who was in the presbytery area close to Kelowna—Bev Milton—and I decided, “Hey, let's go to that meeting.” None of the celebs were interested in going so we said, “Let's go to that meeting.” So, we did. We went to this breakfast meeting, we turned up about ten to eight in the morning and the place was set up with round tables set for eight people. We walked in and there was sort of a sense of hush over the room as Bev and I walked in. We found two places at a table that were empty, and as we sat down the two men on either side of those places deliberately turned their chairs so that their backs were to us.
- MI: (Gasps) Oh my gosh!
- PB: And we were totally invisible.
- MI: Wow.
- PB: Totally invisible. We sort of looked at each other, held hands under the table and said, “Let's stay.”
- MI: Oh, good for you!
- PB: And we did, but we were totally invisible. The other thing was that the ministerial group there—the right wingers—refused to refer to me as ‘Reverend’. I was always “Mrs. Baker”, if they talked to me at all.
- MI: (Gasps)
- PB: Amongst my partners in ministry there, I can't say that there was any of that kind of behaviour but there was very definitely from the right wing ministers of the area, yeah.
- MI: Wow. And do you remember what year that breakfast meeting was?
- PB: That would have been in about 1984, '85 ... somewhere in there. 26:18
- MI: Wow. So that's right after you were ordained, too?
- PB: That's right. That's what I'm saying. It was probably '85, 'cause I think I'd probably been there a while before I decided to do that, yeah. Mind you, I went to Kelowna in 1983, that was the other thing—when I finished VST in '83, Glen

was ready to make a move from Dunbar and we said from that point on we would move together, so the two of us got a call to go to the downtown church in Kelowna, even though I wasn't ordained at that point, so my first six months counted then as my second field placement. So we had gone to the First United Church of Kelowna in May of 1983. I was ordained the following May in '84, but had already been in the position for a year.

MI: For a year.

PB: Yup.

MI: Wow! That's ... that's pretty clear! (Laughs)

PB: Yeah, I thought so! (Laughs)

MI: And did you find that generally it eased off after a number of years? Was there a period where you suddenly realized: "It's not like it was." 27:27

PB: Oh, no. Not with the people from that other ministerial, no. They could never get over the fact that there were women that were in leadership in the church, yeah. And, as I say, my relationships with the other United Church clergy and the presbytery—not so much the Anglicans—but there were a couple of really super—one very, very super Catholic priest, Father Joe Smith; he was very wonderful. He related very warmly and well to both Bev and me. That was great.

MI: That is neat!

PB: Yup. We formed a little group of female clergy of United—well, no, an interfaith female clergy group that were in that area of the Okanagan and we would get together for lunch once a month and talk about our situations and laugh and joke and have fun. So that was good.

MI: Yeah, that's really neat. Are you still in touch with those women?

PB: I'm still in touch with Bev Milton, for sure, yup. 28:44

MI: And she's the one who you had the breakfast with.

PB: That's right.

MI: That's neat. Okay, so, the next question is about your education: What contributed to your vocational choices? We kind of talked about that a little bit. 28:54

PB: Yup, we did.

MI: Is there anything you wanted to add to that?

- PB: Not really, other than that when it was presented to me that I could be either a teacher or a social worker or a secretary or a nurse, I decided if I was a nurse I could maybe become a missionary nurse. I'd finished high school when I was fifteen so I couldn't go into nursing right away like some of my classmates did, and that was what directed me to go to UBC and to the UBC degree program in Nursing. 29:03
- MI: Okay.
- PB: And that's what got me; that was the impetus to come to UBC to then become part of the SCM, which I wouldn't have done if I'd gone straight into the Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. So it was those kind of choices ...
- MI: Coincidences ...
- PB: Coincidences or synchronicity or whatever you want to call it that set me on that path.
- MI: Did you have any particular role models at that time? 30:00
- PB: Certainly when I was at VGH at the hospital, Helen Huston was one of them—I really appreciated her very much and could see what she was doing, and she actually went on to become a missionary doctor. I think she went to Nepal; she was with the United Church. And some of the older students at the SCM—those who were two or three years older than me—I found them to be really helpful in those early years, yes. 30:06
- MI: Yeah ... that is neat. Okay, so that ends that question.
- PB: Okay.
- MI: So, you have worked as a minister. Have you done any other volunteer roles or anything else that you are involved with the church, outside of ministerial duties? 30:46
- PB: This is since I became ordained? 31:00
- MI: Yes.
- PB: Okay. I took training with Energy Healing and Healing Touch and became an instructor with the healing pathway at Naramata, which is something I brought into my own ministry and developed the healing ministry in the church. I also, through Naramata, led a number of programs there and Glen and I did a lot of work with family cluster, teaching that at Naramata. When he was on staff at First United in the downtown core of Vancouver, we were also involved with 31:04

Camp Fircom and I did a lot of work over there with family camps and that kind of thing. I was also on the national committee of Women in Ministry, and that was from about 1984 through to 1993. Actually, I was on that committee at the time that we were evolving the protocol for sexual harassment, and that was a pretty involving time.

MI: Wow, I bet.

PB: Let's see ... what were the kinds of things ...? Oh, I did a few programs with some of the Anglican Church women, too, on occasion. It was called Lead Programs for Them. I did lead a program at Kananaskis for the Western Women's Conference. Yeah, that kind of stuff.

MI: So what was your motivation for those volunteer positions? For instance, the National Committee of Women in Ministry; that sounds fascinating. 33:02

PB: It was. It was great. I was invited to be part of that—well, I had done some of my field work in Saskatchewan and I had met people like Barb Elliott and Cheryl Black who were in Saskatchewan at that time—Charlotte Caron—and had really enjoyed their company, and then I got invited to be a part of that committee through some of those contacts. I got to know Ann Naylor and she was on the National Committee at the same time. Having been radicalized at one point, I thought, "This is something I really want to be involved in." Because it was still a time in the church when women were still trying to find their place with more and more women in the church, like at that point there were only nine—when I was ordained there were only nine women ordained in British Columbia Conference. So we're talking, in those years, when we were still a little bit of an anomaly, so part of the things we were doing in that committee, apart from evolving protocol and policies that would be helpful, we were gathering the stories that women were reporting to us from all across the country about their experiences of being women in ministry. Some of them were actually fascinating, as you can imagine, and you may have heard a lot of them. Some of them were quite funny, some were poignant, and some made you very angry. They were great stories, yup.

MI: Wow. Is there anyone in particular that stands out to you?

PB: (Laughs). Oh, yes, yes! There's one about a woman who was being called to be considered—I think it was in Northern Saskatchewan—but the committee of men, or one of the men on the committee, apparently said, "I want you to know I will not vote for you. There's no way I want to have a woman conducting my funeral."

MI: (Gasps, laughing) Oh, ho, ho, ho, my God!

PB: And this woman had the wit to say, "You know, in ministry so far, I think I've conducted close to a hundred funerals and as far as I'm aware they all took."

MI: (Laughs) That's funny!

PB: Isn't that wonderful? (Smiling) Oh, yes.

MI: "All took"! None of them came back! (Laughter)

PB: That's right! So we had, you know, lots of stories, lots and lots of stories. Of course there were also the kinds of stories about the women who would be sent to a small community and their accommodation might be an apartment in somebody's house—if it wasn't an apartment—or a room in somebody's house. After all, you're a single woman; you don't need a whole place to yourself. Or, if they were married: "Well, you don't need a housing allowance. You're living with your husband." So one of the things that we worked for was equal housing allowance for women, no matter whether they were, you know, on their own or single or married. You know, all those kinds of things that the church had to come to terms with, because they didn't know what to do with these women who may have had husbands who weren't in ministry.

MI: Yes.

PB: It was a fascinating time to be able to be doing it.

MI: Oh, I bet!

PB: And, you know, part of me, at this stage, wants to stand up sometimes and say, "Hey, women! Do you know what it took to get you the privileges and where you are now?" You know?

MI: Yes.

PB: "You know what it took, and what we had to put up with so that you could be where you are now?"

MI: I understand that feeling.

PB: Yup.

MI: That would have been fascinating. I would have loved to be a fly on the wall in some of those discussions, but it '84 I was thirteen. (Laughs).

PB: Yup. Exactly. Right. True.

MI: So not quite there but was definitely into all of the women's liberation stuff.

PB: Yup, mm hmm.

MI: Are there any of the other volunteer things you were doing—like, for instance, the Healing Touch or the Naramata things—is there any motivation that has directed you in choosing what volunteer work you do? 37:33

PB: Well, for about thirty-five years before—let's see—I can say I was probably about 30 and 35 years old, I began to be very interested in energy work, and the implications of energy work, and energy healing. I found, to my great dismay that I could talk about that almost anywhere except the church.

MI: Except the church.

PB: Except the church. So I began to be very curious and concerned about, "Why not in the church?" The church had a history of healing and laying on of hands. Why can't we talk about it? Why can't we do it? Why can't it become part, again, of the church's whole ministry? So while I was exploring that sort of outside ministry area, when I became ordained it became very much a concern of mine to see that that could be reintroduced into the church in an acceptable way. Actually, I began to do a little bit of it when I was in Kelowna and then we moved to the Sunshine Coast and I thought, "Oh my gosh, I'm going to have to start all over again to make contact here." Well, as it happened, I became aware of a woman who lived in Gibsons who was very interested in this kind of stuff and her name was Rochelle Graham. 38:26

MI: Oh, I know Rochelle!

PB: Rochelle and I began talking with each other and I said, "Rochelle, this is my concern to get it into the church!" And so we began to talk about that and I can remember sitting with her one day and talking about, "You know, if we were to put this into the church, what could we call it? What would be some of the levels that we could call it?" I think that that was the beginning of Rochelle saying, "I'm gonna go to Naramata. I'm gonna see what we can do through Naramata." So I was actually teaching—with Rochelle and another woman called Janine Elliott—I was teaching Healing Touch in church congregations before The Pathway was formed.

MI:

MI: Wow. That's neat. So you were one of the first people that involved the Healing Touch ministry with the United Church.

PB: Yup, I think that Bruce McIntyre—who was from the prairies—Bruce McIntyre and I were the first two clergy people involved with the Healing Touch program before it became the Pathway.

MI: Neat!

PB: Mm hm.

MI: I bet that was also an exciting time.

PB: Absolutely.

MI: ‘Cause it’s grown so much.

PB: Absolutely. That’s right.

MI: Okay! So, what leadership responsibilities have you carried in the church—your congregation, other church courts? 41:05

PB: Well, in the congregation, the usual ones.

MI: (Laughter)

PB: I felt like part of my role, very much as clergy especially in the Kelowna congregation—well, it’s not an original phrase—would certainly be one from Ralph Donnelly—who was one of the Homiletics profs at VST while I was there—and his phrase was: “You’re there as a teaching elder.” So education for the lay people was certainly one of my very strong points of focus for ministry. I had various positions in presbytery, mainly with Ministry and Personnel, and then with the issues of sexual harassment/sexual abuse. I didn’t take any responsibilities—well I was on, again, the Sexual Abuse Committee for Conference and helped to formulate the Conference protocol for BC Conference and served on that Committee, but I didn’t take any other responsibilities at Conference. I was asked to stand for Conference President twice and I said, “No, it’s nice to be asked but I don’t need the responsibilities.”

MI: (Laughs)

PB: Besides which, Glen had already been President of Conference and I didn’t think that was right, to take it on, too.

MI: Oh, your husband!

PB: Yeah.

MI: What about your ecumenical activities? 42:46

PB: All informal. In other words—had good relationships with the other clergy and as I was saying, in Kelowna we had this ecumenical group of women who met together, but it was all on an informal basis.

MI: Okay. Alright! What were the important issues, joys or challenges in your life? 43:17

PB: Life or ministry?

MI: I'm thinking that I need to kind of do that in both ways ... let's start with life ... or, no, let's start with ministry and then go to life, how about that?

PB: (Chuckles). Okay, alright. Joys and challenges ... I loved the teaching role. I really loved to be able to ... well I used to have a study group in Kelowna that I called Everything You Wanted to Know About the Bible but Were Afraid to Ask.

MI: Oh, I love that!

PB: Yeah ... and so opportunities for teaching, opportunities for opening up the boundaries, taking the frame off the book, letting people know it was something that could be ... You could ask any questions, you could stand up to it, explore, and new reading ... I'm an avid reader and felt it was my responsibility to keep up with current theology and then be able to translate it for the congregation. That's always been a great joy for me.

MI: Okay.

PB: Challenges ... Well, I was awfully glad that Glen loved administration.

MI: (Laughter)

PB: 'Cause we were in team ministry.

MI: You gotta have both, don't you?

PB: Yeah, right. So that's how I'd speak to it in terms of ministry. Joys and challenges in family: well, challenge was having five children five and under but the joy was producing five wonderful adults for the world. I really appreciated my family very much. They had a very formative time when Glen was on staff at First United Church, it was very formative for them growing up in that milieu and they all have a very strong sense of social justice. I'm very happy about that.

Challenges: it was always hard to keep five people going on a clergy salary in those years.

MI: (Laughs) Apparently that hasn't changed.

PB: Well, it's changed a bit more than it had been for us. (Laughs)

MI: (Laughing) Right. Good. That's good to know. I'll be finding that out.

PB: Mmm hmm.

MI: And what have been some of your greatest joys—having five children, yes? 45:58

PB: Yeah, and watching them grow and becoming the very fine human beings that they are, with that sense of social justice and caring for one another and the fact that they're all—the five of them—are good friends with each other.

MI: Good. Okay. Is there a particular project or work that you are most proud of? Or especially proud of? 46:20

PB: (Breathes deeply). I think the fact that we developed here in Sechelt a healing ministry that has been going for eighteen years now, and in early phases, St. John's was known as the church with the human clinic and the community. People came from the community—lots of them—but, I have to remember, it was a time where energy healing was not as widely available in many forms as it is now. But through that ministry a number of people became part of the church itself; that was their first contact and then they wanted to know why we were doing that, what motivated us for doing that, and then they decided that they wanted to be part of that.

MI: That's neat.

PB: Yeah.

MI: Now are you working full time as a minister at St. John's? 47:30

PB: At age 80? No.

MI: No, okay. I didn't think so.

PB: But I still sing in the choir.

MI: Okay. I'm not surprised! Okay, so ... next ... What have you been most passionate about in your later years? I would think it would be the healing ... 47:52

PB: Healing Touch and what's going on with current theology.

MI: You know, there's some fascinating books out right now.

PB: Oh, gosh! I just took part in the epiphany celebrations in Victoria and I absolutely love Phyllis Tickle's work.

MI: Is she the one that writes some of the humorous ...? No, I'm thinking of someone else.

PB: Yeah ... no, she's the Emergence Christianity. You know, what's coming up ahead of us. So it was great to be part of that. I've been to those about five times—that's a marvelous conference, by the way.

MI: I'm hoping to go next year.

PB: Oh, yes, absolutely. It's the largest and the longest running United Church conference. It's been going now for twelve years, and it's the largest United Church gathering in the country.

MI: That's neat! I didn't know that.

PB: Yeah, it's great.

MI: Are there any other authors or particular people you're reading or interested in right now, besides Phyllis Tickle? 49:02

PB: Oh, my goodness.

MI: (Laughs)

PB: Well, I read Crossan and Borg all the time. Ken Wilbur's been very important to me; he's not a theologian but he does work with spirituality. Cynthia Bourgeault 49:14

... Both right off the top of my head, yeah.

- MI: Okay. So, back into a little bit more of some personal questions: What effect has your class, your race, your sexual orientation had on your life? 49:30
- PB: To recognize that I'm amongst the privileged bunch because of being white, speaking English and having a university education. And to recognize the responsibility for that. 49:44
- MI: Did you find that hard? Was it something that came later, or something you've always been aware of?
- PB: To be aware fairly early on that to speak English, to have a university education, to live in North America, you're already one up on so many people so be responsible with it. 50:09
- MI: Mm hmm. And did you find that would change in your participation in the church—were there any challenges that way, other than being one of the few women United Church ministers? 50:32
- PB: There's ... did it change ...? (Thinks for a minute). I don't think so. It just, you know, it just ... I guess what I was aware of again was the fact that with those privileges comes responsibility. If we're about social justice then to recognize that ... while I talked about being radicalized and about feminism, it was never a ... I've never been a whining feminist. 50:44
- MI: (Laughs) Okay. I've heard that phrase before. Okay, so ... We're getting through these quite well. What leisure-time activities have enriched your life? 51:36
- PB: Painting. Sewing. Quilting. Reading. Two book groups. Choirs. Camping with the kids, camping with the family, travelling—when I had the opportunity. Yup. Stuff like that. Swimming.
- MI: Sounds like we could be related. (Laughs) So, you're quite busy, then. You stay busy?
- PB: I would say so, yes. I don't have many dull and wretched hours in my life.
- MI: (Laughs). So you're just going forward! I love that. What is important about your life right now? 52:26
- PB: To stay involved, when I can. Right now I'm dealing with a knee that is going to need to be replaced and that is annoying me greatly, but I realize that it's only for a short time before it'll be ... you know, before it gets back on track. Yeah ... I'd like to live to 120 if I can be *compos mentis* all that time.

- MI: Okay. What direction do you hope the church will take in the future? 53:05
- PB: (Breathes deeply) Okay ... I'm just figuring out how to say this. (Thinks for a minute.) That it will keep going into the future unafraid and ready to adapt to the changes that are inevitable and know that the Spirit is always there. I think very much that we are coming into and will continue to be in the age of the Spirit and that is going to be the strong focus of who we are together in the Spirit and that will open us up to ... hopefully we'll start to overcome the denominational schisms in the Protestant Church but will also open us up to other faith groups because it's the same Spirit in all of them. 53:18
- MI: Mmm hmm. So if you're looking over your life and the last 80 years and you've watched as women have grown and developed, what would you say were some of the most important lessons we could take, going into the next generation? 54:24
- PB: Oh, my goodness.
- MI: (Laughs). Easy question, right?
- PB: Oh, my goodness. (Thinks for a minute, breathes deeply). Well ... I think ... I think it's to recognize that to get over ... and I think we have done, I think we're getting over ... to get over the need, the desire to see matriarchy to replace patriarchy and realize that neither one of them are the way to go; we need to move into the era of genuine cooperation and honouring the gifts of each other and of all the people. All divisions need to break down ... I guess it's that whole concept of where there is division between any of the polarities, the spirit of Christ is not there. We need to recognize the unity that we are. The no-separation between us from God and us from each other and us from creation and us from the universe—that that's where we have to go. That that's the lesson we're only beginning to learn, but that's the direction that learning has to take. That's the movement that has to happen. 54:55
- MI: That's beautiful ... Just finishing writing down here ...
- PB: Okay.
- MI: Okay! Is there ... that's pretty well all the questions I have.
- PB: Okay.
- MI: So the last thing is: Is there anything else you feel you'd like to share with me, or you'd like to add? 56:40
- PB: (Pauses). I don't think so.

MI: Okay.

PB: I don't think so. This has been a good experience for me, too. To try and put this stuff into words. (Chuckles softly).

MI: I've had a few people say that they didn't think they had anything to say.

PB: Yeah.

MI: And I find it very surprising that when I talk to people they have all of this information that's just fascinating.

PB: Mmm hmm. Well, good for you. That's great.

MI: So, I will ... the next thing ... oh, I just gotta say the time that we're ending is—is it seven?

PB: Yup, just about ... or, I *think* it is seven.

MI: Okay, so it's seven o'clock on the 21st of January, and we're ending with Pat Baker from Sechelt. And-

PB: Just one thing—I'd like to know ... to change my name at one point—that was another radicalization point which I needn't go in to, but my name is Patricia.

MI: Oh, Patricia! Sorry, okay. So I will make sure that that is written down because I have Pat.

PB: And I will tell you—you don't need to put this into print ...

MI: Okay.

PB: But I will tell you another reason why my name is Patricia.

MI: Okay.

PB: Because I was once at a church gathering in Vancouver and the clergy person came over to me, looked at my nametag, and said, "Is that your name or an invitation?"

MI: Oh, that's horrible!

PB: I decided at that point to squeeze the you-know-what: My name, from now on, is Patricia.

MI: Wow.

PB: You needn't put that one in print. But that's the reason.

MI: Is it alright if I put that in print? 'Cause that is a fascinating story.

PB: I'll leave that up to you.

MI: Okay. So I'm just going to turn off the recorder ... again it's 7:05, so just hold on for a second ...