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Janet SCARFE

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Transcript

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**Kay Goldsworthy  
Arross WA**

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**As told to Janet Scarfe on 29 November 1996**

b 1956

[Initial banter... Initially JS questions and KG answers ...]

I was born in Kew, when it was "Kew E4", Kew in Melbourne, in 1956. Sent to Sunday school at Holy Trinity, Kew. Baptised there, sent to Sunday school there, member of the GFS. JS: So was I! KG: The "Girls Fascist Society" [laughs]. That was also the church in which my parents had been married, so Kew was really the place of family roots. My sister was married there as well, and she and my brother had both gone through the same kind of "steps".

Religion was "women's business" in our family. My father, who was Church of England, sent my mother, who was Roman Catholic, with us to church. He went to funerals and weddings. I actually don't think he went much more than that. That was probably about it. Mum used to go along on "Family Service Sunday." God, nothing is new, is it? "Family Service Sundays." JS: I know, once a month. KG: Yes, once a month, you have got it! You have got it! We are still bloody doing it! It is frightening. It was Eucharist - well, I think it was Eucharist. I have no remembrance of Morning Prayer as a main service of the church.

Then, when I was 9 we moved to Mooroolbark, and the same thing happened, except that when I was 13 or so, it was time to be confirmed and so I went off to confirmation classes. I was 13 and I was just hopelessly giggly. And the parish priest, whose name was Bruce Avery, said to me, "You are not interested in this. I don't think you should come back any more." JS: Oh, Kay! Nobody ever fails confirmation class! [both laugh]. KG: But I was more afraid of my father's anger should I not get confirmed than I was of the parish priest, so I stayed in the confirmation class.

I was confirmed by Frank Woods, whom my father didn't like because he asked him what his "position" was, what his "quality" was. And as our "quality" wasn't that great, I think he was mortally offended, but anyway.

And I stayed. Stayed on at church. Got involved in the youth group. JS: There was a boy there, come on! KG: No, there wasn't a boy there at that point in time, that I remember anyway I mean, there were boys there but I don't think I remember anybody especially. And I was a Junior Sunday school Teacher! [laughs] A bloody awful story isn't it! [laughs] JS: Well you have come a long way. I think one could say that.

KG: Then Lynne and Gerald Beaumont arrived in the parish, and I think that is really what kept me in church. Certainly they are the strongest influence I can think of on my vocation. They left when I was 16, but in between times, oh my God, what didn't I do in that parish! JS:

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Well you smoked! KG: I did all of that! I learnt to smoke dope. That was where I was first introduced to marihuana, at the youth group of the parish!

The thing about Lynne and Gerald was that for the first time in my memory, I actually had this over-riding thing of people who *lived what they professed!* They talked about things Christian, and they lived it!. In those days, they ran open house, so the youth group was there a lot. They were really very important alternate parents for me, or did alternate parenting for me, which most adolescents need and I certainly needed it. So I spent a lot of time at their house, and with them in the parish. Gerald would say, "Look, there is a bible study on. I think you should come" and I would go. So a number of other things happened, I guess.

Then they went off to Carpentaria, to the Carpentaria Aerial Mission, and I moved out of home when I was 16 at the end of Year 11. Just before I left, I rang Deaconess House and asked them how one began to train to be a deaconess, because I had talked to Gerald about what sorts of things there were for me. JS: [summary] Slight shock! Sixteen! In Melbourne? KG: Yes, in fact, it was at Martinhurst then, at Hawksburn, and I late lived in that house, because the Beaumonts went into that parish, St. Martin's in Hawksburn.

JS: So you were going to be a deaconess? KG: Well, I didn't know what I was going to be, but I wanted to do something in the church. I mean I had never met a deaconess at that point, and Gerald said "This is the kind of thing that some women might do." So I rang there, and whoever I spoke to - and I suspect it was Elsie Well, because she was the principal I think then - said "Well, I think you are a bit young, dear, so go off and finish school or whatever, and then ring us back in a couple of years, or make contact again then." As I look back, I see it as the standard response really.

I didn't do that, because I moved out of home and went and lived with my sister, and moved into sex, drugs and rock and roll in a fairly big way for the next couple of years. JS: Bit of a mixture! KG: What? JS: Sex drugs and whatnot on the one hand and deaconess on the other! KG: [laughing] I didn't ever think they were incompatible. In fact, it didn't occur to me that they might be! Mind you, as I said, I hadn't met a deaconess yet. [More laughter] I didn't know what the Diocese of Sydney was!

I really stopped going to church for a while, fairly completely. God was not an issue; Jesus was always the issue - this part of the equation was always very difficult. A benign spirit was fine, a sense of God as creator was fine, God who could be prayed to was fine, but Jesus - you know all that traditional language, "my friend", "my brother", "my Saviour", all that sort of stuff was all a bit much for me really.

I left school at the end of year 11, and I went off and worked in a number of jobs. I sold men's cosmetics, I was shaving men in the middle of Myer! [both laugh], "Hello sir. May I help you? May I shave you?" Those were the days when I didn't own one new dress. Everything I owned was from the opportunity shop. I used to arrive and my hair was dyed really really red; I was sort of a hair dresser, and my hair was dyed this absolutely shocking Titian red. I used to arrive at Myer at 9 o'clock in the morning, absolutely stoned, in a black lace dress with this red hair everywhere, and shaved people and stuff like that!

It was fairly depressing really. The first six months I spent in an office because my father wanted me to work in a bank, and they sent me off to shorthand and typing school. I think I went about three times and then said "No! Forget that!" So I was the "mail girl"! [both laugh] I worked for Comalco. Oh god! Can you believe?! \$35 a week I made I am sure that was a

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king's ransom compared to many but anyway, there you go! So I got out of all that as soon as I could. Six months I stuck that and then I went and worked for cosmetics firms and did all of that.

At the end of that year, I decided that there was absolutely nothing I could do with my life that was going to be satisfying unless I did my HSC (as it was in those days), so I went back to school. JS: Very brave! KG: Well ... But I had had a very pleasant year off and school life didn't suit me I didn't go very often - and I was still living with my sister at the time, whose first marriage had just broken up so I used to go and stay with her at weekends, so it really didn't interfere with my social life. Needless to say, I failed HSC. I got a first class honour in English and English literature and failed everything else; those were the only two things I was really interested in. So I never had any real [inaudible??] – and I still don't, deep down, though I am getting better at it I would describe myself as a "Very Nice Person, who was terrific to talk to, but don't ask me to do anything vaguely academic! Not terribly bright." JS: Does that all make sense? JS: No!! KG: Oh! Good with feelings, but absolutely hopeless ... I mean, just academically ... JS: So academically hopeless? KG: Yes. But it is not unusual women's perception, if you know what I mean, that kind of stuff! The bloody bane of my life, actually.

When I was about 19, 18 actually, the Beaumonts were back in Melbourne, and I was living with some guy in some totally unsatisfactory relationship - where was I? Hurstbridge I think at the time. I had moved into hippy mode in a very big way! [laughing] Driving my \$50 car into Myer every day! JS: And she has still got it, the same car! KG: It feels very similar, except that the other one, on the passenger door you had to use a slide bolt! JS: Mr. Bean has got a slide bolt! [both laughing]

So the next thing was the Beaumonts were in the parish of St. Martin's Hawksburn and St. Alban's ... eh, you know up there off Malvern Rd, at the other end. St. Alban's was the other end of the parish; it was off Malvern Rd I think. I needed a place to live fairly quickly, so I went and lived with them, because this relationship broke up. The parish that Gerald was in was where Nigel Wright was a parishioner and the organist. And that is where Nigel and I first met. He has also been very important for me.

The parish was going through its charismatic stage, and they were all off to a charismatic conference in Adelaide. I was back working at Myer at this point, after a break. They were talking about this conference they were going to - and there was Elvis Tyler and Sister Inez, Nigel, Lynne, Gerald, all of this. Elvis Tyler was in that parish, but was in fact an old girl of Perth College as it turns out, and very involved with CSC [Community of the Sisters of the Church], an associate. JS: Never met her - obviously not one of the Sunday lunch crowd. I went out one morning and said "Could someone else go?" And it just happened that that particular day, Gail Poynter - who had been in the parish of Mooroolbark when I was being confirmed; that's how long I have known her, which would explain some of our ability to deal with each other and cope with each other through almost anything. She was another significant person in my journey, really significant in all sorts of ways. I really admire her ability to say "Stuff you! This is me and this is good enough, and this is enough!" I think this is just so important, particularly in the life of the church where the strictures can be so powerful.

It just happened that morning that Gail, who was meant to go, couldn't go, and Gerald said "There just happens to be a place free." I went off to work, and said "Excuse me, could I please have a week off to go to a Christian conference!" thinking they wouldn't possibly say No! Except they said "No" so I thought Well, fuck you and said "Well, I quit!" which I did. I

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didn't like the job anyway. So I went off, went off, sitting next to Inez I think in the back of the car. That was my first introduction to Inez.

So off we went to Adelaide with these 3000 frantic, charismatic Christians - or 2000, it felt like 3000. I don't know how many were there. I thought, Oh my God! Who am I going to listen to in the line-up of speakers? There were men with matching ties and socks! [JS laughs] I thought Oh no! It was terrible. JS: You had only recently been selling them cosmetics! KG: no, no, no, no! They were a quite different crowd - the smarmy Christian, you know that terrible kind of... like in America, those tele-evangelists, one is still in gaol. There was a guy with jeans on and I went and listened to him. His name was Charles Ringner and he ran 'Teen Challenge' which was some sort of parachurch outreach to young people and all of that. And all through this weekend, people kept saying to me, "Oh, you are not a Christian? That's interesting! Can we pray for you?" "Sure, pray for me! I am happy to be prayed for! Fine! No worries!" And all of that, and go off to smoke a joint and all of that!

However, at some point during the weekend, I did have some other experience which was my re-entry into the church. You could call it a charismatic experience, a deepening experience, a quickening I don't really understand, I don't really know, but it became clear to me that this was really ...[pause] this was what had hold of me and wasn't going to let go of me. It was very liberating.

So I am knocking on Nigel's door at 3 o'clock in the morning, saying "Nigel! Nigel! Nigel!" and all of that! The next morning we had Eucharist in somebody's room. Gerald presided, just sitting around on somebody's bed, whatever. It was just wonderful, it was really wonderful.

Soon after that, when we arrived back from Adelaide and I didn't have a job and all of that sort of stuff, I decided that I needed to pursue it again in a more determined way. And Charles Ringner was coming through Melbourne, so I met him and then decided after talking with him that I would go to Brisbane to live and learn to work in Teen Challenge, and become part of a Christian community up there. JS: Turn about! KG: I think my mother thought it was the end of the road and my sister thought I was cracked, all that stuff.

I went off to Brisbane to live. He was prepared the people in his community by saying that a young girl of 18 was coming, and I arrived with my hair cropped half an inch from my head and looking decidedly "Melbourne" and anything but a young girl. I didn't know it at the time, but there was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing in their community about just where I would live, because all these women took hold of their husbands and said "She can't possibly stay here!" But I did eventually. Isn't that interesting? That would never have occurred to me at all. I definitely considered myself a feminist, but I also was shocked and it took a long time until I wasn't shocked by people's inability to trust what I believed being a Christian was. Do you know what I mean? I mean, I felt that my motives were ... I was just stunned when people were questioning of my motives. JS: [summary] You didn't market them in a very conventional manner! KG: Well, no, no! Precisely! Not at that point.

I stayed in that community for about six months, and then I got involved - slowly but surely - in a Pentecostal church. They were on the fringes of that sort of experience anyway. I was involved with a very interesting group of people, all of whom had come from alternate life-style experiences. We really drifted towards each other in this incredibly conforming church experience. My sister came to visit for a week, and she came to church with me on Sunday night with me saying to everybody "Do not attempt to convert my sister. I know her very well,

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and it will not work!" So she had this major conversion experience while she was there! She sent back to Melbourne for her things and then lived with is for a while. It was just ...I A lot of that time was very very terrible as I look back on it, and as I lived through it in one sense. But a lot of it was also just amazing!

I started work in a restaurant as a waitress, and about three months after that they asked me if I would manage it! So I said yes, I would. I was managing this restaurant, I was wearing these long chiffon dresses and pearls while I was at work, and on Sunday nights I would go to church and on Tuesday nights I would go to cell group - that was it, they were my two nights off! So it was all very interesting. In between, I really couldn't help myself - you know how it is ... JS: Well, no! KG: Oh sorry! Well, in between times, I was working in a restaurant where people's main aim was to get as drunk as they possibly could or to pick someone up! It was a very interesting life.

I went up there in 75 when I was 18, I think. I came back in 1980. A couple of things happened that really precipitated me coming back to Melbourne. Do you want to hear all this?! JS: Yes! KG: They were things like - we took some friends to church one night and they went up for the altar call, and of course they were terribly unconventional and all that stuff. And I went out to the back room where they used to take people to pray for them, and the youth pastor was jumping up and down and saying to this girl, "Renounce drugs! Renounce drugs!" And I said "Listen, you can't do that!" And he turned on me and said "How would you know! Look at you! You look the same as you did when you arrived here three years ago! Nothing has changed!" I thought, You haven't bothered to get to know me. You wouldn't have a clue as to what has changed in my life. You have no idea about this person who learnt to run a business, hopping around in her bloody chiffon and pearls! I was really really distressed and very very hurt. I thought Fuck you!

It was coming up for Easter, and I thought I am too battered to go back here, and so I went to the cathedral, where - can you believe it? Ian George was the dean in those days. I went in, and when he began to preach I remember this so well - he began by saying "As I was looking in the mirror shaving the other day ..." And I thought, Oh my God! I am back in Anglican-land! [both laugh] And it was just like coming home! It was so profoundly like coming home, the ritual, and the sense that I could be who I was in this space, without the pressure to conform - because what these Pentecostals had been trying to do, and it was obviously what the youth pastor was so distressed about, what that I hadn't moved into the kind of sweet, Christian girl out to find a good Christian husband and so give him his imprimatur of success. And it wasn't long after that that I began to say "What am I really meant to be doing with my life? If I stay in the restaurant, all I will ever do is manage other people's restaurants and stuff like that. In fact, I probably would have owned them in the end! JS: Chains of them! KG: Yes, well, given that these people have now got bloody restaurants in main streets in Sydney, it is a real pity! Anyway, not to worry.

I resigned and they said "We would rather you took three months off to go back to Melbourne and see what you think." I said I don't know what I am going to do, but I feel there is something more I should be doing with my life than what I am doing, and I have no idea what it is. But basically, what I am doing here is selling alcohol and sex appeal and mediocre food. That's fine, but there is something more I need to be doing with my life, and it has got something to do with my faith and I don't know what it is.

Gerald said "Come back to Melbourne. We can give you a job in the parish for three months doing a "feasibility study" on what they should do with one of their building funds! [both laugh], I didn't have a bloody clue! They didn't have a clue and I didn't much money, so I

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said "Fine, I'm back!" So I came back to live with Lynne and Gerald. I did the study - or more or less did the study, I don't know what I bloody did now! But it was just wonderful. I came back, and I'd go off to morning meditation, and go off to high mass and started serving and doing all that stuff. It was great. I just moseyed around Melbourne again - met up with old friends and did all that.

I used to go and sit in Gerald's study while he was working, which would drive him insane. I'd be sitting in an easy chair, just carrying on some conversation while he was doing whatever he was doing at his desk and prattling on about this that and the other thing. I went in one day and I said, "Gerald, I think I would like to go on retreat." And he said, "Oh, sounds good." So I said, "Now, how do I do this?" He said, "Well, you can go to CSC or CHN" so off I went down to CHN, and a friend of mine came with me. Because we were on private retreat, they let us worship with them in the sisters' chapel. It was wonderful; I really enjoyed it.

So we went down there for, I don't know, five days or something, and when I came back, I was sitting in Gerald's study again, and I said "Gerald, how do you study theology?" And he said, "Well, there are a number of things you can do. You can do this or you can do that" - you know, blah, blah, rave, rave. I said "Oh, great. Thanks" and I went out. And three weeks later, I was sitting in the study and I said to him, "Gerald, how do you become a minister?" And he said, "Well! It's about bloody time!" [laughs] And I said "What do you mean?" And he said "This is what you do."

Well, my first interview with an examining chaplain was Inez [CSC], who said to me, "What does the living Jesus mean to you?" [both laugh], "Oh ... well..." What do I say - if I don't say the right thing now, I am going to fail here and now!! "What does the living Jesus mean to me? Oh well..." I cannot remember what I said! The other examining chaplain I saw was the guy who used to be in East Kew, Brown was his name, I went to see him.

I got accepted to go to a selection conference. This September 1980. I went off to selection conference I will never forget it, I'll never forget it! There was a lovely man called Eric Black. While I was in Melbourne, the other thing I was doing ... By this stage, Gerald had moved out of the charismatic stuff and was heavily into transactional analysis and sending everybody within his reach to Yvonne Dann! So I was off in a group with Yvonne Dann at Bishops court once a week and all of that stuff while I was working for Gerald.

JS: Selection for what? KG: Selection for training for ministry, to be a I didn't know what. I went to selection conference at CHN, and God it was harrowing, absolutely harrowing. John Bell who was the chaplain at [Royal] Melbourne Hospital was there, and a nice man called Eric Black - he did leadership - and an archdeacon from somewhere in the country did spirituality. God, that day - spirituality! I was scared shitless by that day! "How do you pray?" "Oh, well, er, urn, er..." And Alan I can't remember his surname; he used to go to St. Peter's Eastern Hill and worked at Melbourne Grammar - anyway, he was lovely, lovely. Who else? I can't remember other people - some psych on personality, something like that. I thought to myself, I have nothing to lose here. I ready just have to tell these people who I am, because if I don't, they may hold something incredibly important in their hands for me and it's whether I get to be in ministry or not! I really didn't see past it.

I went and I remember John Bell saying to me, "What would you do if you were in a hospital as a chaplain? How do you think you would manage?" I said "Oh, I am not very good with sick people!" [both laugh] JS: Great start! KG: He said, "So do you think ...?" I said "Well, I guess I'd have to learn! I suppose I would learn how to cope, and I suppose the more I was around people, the more I would learn." Alan Eustice - that was his name. I remember.

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When I went to see Alan Eustice, he was in charge of academic ... just the word gave me the willies. The first thing I said to him was "I am not very academic, and I need to tell you from the start, I am not academic!" He was so kind. He said, "What do you think it means to be 'academic'?" "Smart, and be able to go to university and this that and the other thing! I failed HSC ..." and blah blah, rave rave. When I got to know him afterwards, he said "Kay, you were the only person on that weekend who thought that sensitivity had anything to do with intelligence!" because he had said "What do you think being intelligent means? What are the qualities?" I said "You have got to be sensitive. You have got to be fairly intelligent, you have got to have common sense, stuff like that." I am actually quite grateful.

I got a letter back in a couple of weeks, saying "You have been accepted for all ministries open to women." People kept saying to me at the conference, "Well, of course, you can't be a priest." I didn't know what they were talking about! I said, "No, but I could be a deaconess, couldn't I? Can't women be deaconesses?" I mean I knew I wasn't going to be a nun! I had I known that since I was 13 and had a moment 20 minutes after I saw "The Nun's Story" on Sunday Night at the Movies once where I thought I might be!

I didn't know that women wanted to be priests. It was 1980 and I didn't know there was a debate raging! JS: There wasn't really. Or there was in limited circles. KG: There was in limited circles, so I was unaware. So I said I don't know what I want to do, I think I am called to ministry. I think I have got to do something about this overwhelming conviction that I need to give my life to this, somehow.

So the letter said "to all ministries open to women, and you'll go to Trinity College and study for a Bachelor of Theology." God! I nearly wet my pants over that! The thought of having to go and study for a degree I was overwhelmed by the thought of that.

Anyway, I went off to Trinity. I had been living with Lynne and Gerald still, I had this enormous room at their house upstairs, an enormous room, but because I didn't have any points, when I went to Trinity I was living in something the equivalent of a broom closet and twice as ugly. I remember going up to John Gaden on the first day and saying "I haven't applied to be a *nun*! They have given me a cell! What is this? If I had wanted to do that, I would have done it! What's going on here?" But it was fine. I put carpet down, and painted the room a deep cantaloupe I think [laughs] - my progress through Trinity could be plotted by the colours! I moved through cantaloupe into banana, something else and something else.

Because I had no previous degree, I had to do the four year degree. It was part way through my second year, when I was a student - a field education student in Deepdene - that it came to me that I could no longer pretend that I was not called to be a priest, not to myself or anybody else. By then, eighteen months into the process, not only had I discovered how wonderfully liberating studying theology was - God, it was wonderful, it was just wonderful, I can't tell you! And especially after four years in a Pentecostal church, where one was "washed in the Word and don't question it! Washed in the Word. Standing on it. Stand on the Word!" Then using that old Billy Graham "the Bible says ..." That that settles it! And all of that rubbish, which I knew to be rubbish, deep down inside of me. It was wonderful. I was so thrilled. JS: [summary] Met lots of women converted at Billy Graham crusade ... KG: No. I didn't know who he was; I still didn't know who he was! I think I was converted at a youth group meeting when I was 14, that's what I reckoned happened to me. As I look back, there was a very powerful moment at some point there. But I see life as a series of conversion moments really.

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I knew the debate was on, well and truly, by 1982, but I was sticking to my guns that I was called to be something and I didn't quite know what. I assumed it would be a deaconess and all of that. I was aware of the women who had chosen to be trained as trained women workers and things. I was in a nursing home in Deepdene, meeting with a woman whose name was Elizabeth and who had MS. And she was paralysed from the neck down. While I was visiting her, her lunch arrived and the nurse said - you know how nurses have that wonderful manner - "Oh good! Well, you won't mind feeding her, will you?" and shoved the bowl down in front of me. I thought Oh shit! I was the youngest child I have never fed anybody in my life! So it was a horror experience! But as I was feeding this woman, it just '... no, "not just..." but I thought, you can't deny this woman! You are called to be a priest! You are called to feed people! That's what your vocation is and you've got to stop pretending that it isn't! So that was that, really!

But I felt ...Oh, so ambivalent! Not ambivalent about my vocation, but ambivalent because of all that stuff that was going around about "these women who want to wreck the church ... *these women.*" I had never seen myself as that powerful, and suddenly I was invested with an enormous amount of power, and I didn't know what to do with it because it was not at all how I perceived most of us. And I still don't see myself as particularly powerful. I think I am strong, but I don't think I am particularly powerful in that sense. I am not the sort of person that makes people quake in their boots when they see me - not a Patricia Brennan or a Janet Scarfe. Do you know what I mean? Suddenly, here is a kind of outside story that isn't going to match with the inside story at all, but this is it, and there is something in that that is carried on through the whole of the movement towards ordination and beyond it.

JS: [summary] Contemporaries? KG: Carlie Hannah was in Trinity, but she was the only other woman in terms of residents. In terms of non-residents, I don't think there actually was anybody that I can remember. So my peers were men. Carlie and I didn't have a whole lot in common. Katie Irwin [Prowd] as she was then came into college in 1983, I think, and she and I had much more in common. Maybe she came in 1982. She and I had much more in common. And there were other women around. I mean, Sheridan Hannah I think might have been a student by then. Sandra I can't remember her name and I have no idea where she is now - was around; she was a non-resident student. Nigel had finished and he was a deacon down in Cheltenham, dealing with the death of his parish priest at the altar. Do you remember that?

Then in 1984, Monica Furlong came out. And I was at that meeting in Richmond. Remember it? JS: I do! KG: I got involved in MOW from there, and I stayed involved with MOW and with the Women in Ministry. The other women who were around were Barbara Darling - but she was up at Ridley, so I didn't have much to do with her; Heather Marten - but I didn't know her terribly well; Helen Hunter - but I hardly knew her. JS: Was Anna Cullen around? KG: Anna Cullen was around. I remember her from the Women's Ministry Conferences at Cheltenham, where she would be playing her violin in a very very high tension! [both laugh], with Dawn whatever her name was - "Dawn dear" we called her, because she called everybody "dear". JS: Dawn Robbins? KG: Yes, that's it! She used to call everybody "dear" - "Oh, hello dear!" I thought If that fucking woman calls me "dear" again, I'll spit! So I always called her "Dawn dear."

And Gayle Poynter was a chaplain at one stage, I think. She and I of course had kept contact and it was through Gayle that I really got to know Diane [Heath] - also through MOW, but mostly through her. When was that? Was I still in college? I can't remember. I don't think I was, I think it was a bit later.

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So all those early days of MOW out at Malvern, and you know when Janet Gaden first got involved, and then there was that letter from Helen Hunter - do you remember? Oh God help us! Then there were all those difficult men who used to arrive and take over the meetings. All of that! Then I think I was a bit less involved in MOW. Then Liz Smith, of course, before she was "Elizabeth", was in college, and Liz was really really good to me, because she taught me how to write essays. I didn't have a clue, really. She was a non-resident student, so she and Katie I guess I got closest to in many ways.

At the end of 83, somewhere around the end of 83, all the men I had been through with were finishing, because they had all done three year degrees and I still had time to go. They wanted to know what I wanted to do when they thought that I should leave college and maybe finish the degree part-time. So I said "Well, I'll be ordained a deaconess" - or "made a deaconess." It was what I had had in my mind from the beginning as my image of the ministry open to women. I was absolutely pissed off with the idea that as a trained woman worker, in the mail somehow would arrive this license where neither the church nor I had to take any responsibility or make any public declaration of our intent or of ownership. I thought Bugger this! This is bloody well not going to happen to me! So I was made a deaconess in 1984.

I went out to work with Nigel Wright as his assistant, because they had asked three blokes two of whom had said "No" and one had said "our parish isn't ready for a woman yet." I was never supposed to know that but you know what the church is like! and there was money going, because somebody had been out in Thomastown but I think they were thinking Who the hell could we put with Nigel Wright and who the hell can we put Kay Goldsworthy with?

Because God is good, they gave us to each other! I have to say that is absolutely the truth. H was fantastic to work with, he took me seriously. I remember once when there was funeral coming up, and when the undertaker got hold of the fact that it was a woman and it went back to the family, the undertaker rang back and said "I am awfully sorry but this man had been in the war" [both laugh] - isn't that wonderful? - "and he had done this and he had done that ...and they really don't think he would have wanted a woman." And Nigel said "That is the ministry that this parish offering." I have to say that was absolutely bloody fantastic! And they said "Oh, oh!" So somebody else took the funeral, not our parish. There aren't many men around who would have done that.

In February 1985, all the men I had trained with were ordained priest. It was really really awful. God it was awful! I was preaching that morning, and it was Mark Ch 4, and it was the messianic secrets stuff - you know like "Don't tell anybody!" [JS laughs] I was preaching some bloody curate's sermon about this secret not being able to be kept, that in Mark's theology, the secret just couldn't be kept - this was the power of God. We were up at St. John's, which was the small church and the small congregation and the first service, and I stopped preaching and I just couldn't go on. Nigel stood up and he came across and he said "Do you want to tell us what the secret is?" And I said "I don't know if I can." He said, "Well, we will take our time." And I said "Well..." and burst into tears and said that "the secret is that I really believe that I should be ordained today and I am not going to be, because I am a woman." Oh, it still has power! "And I know that there is no other reason except for the fact that I am not a man that I won't be there. And I feel as though I have to keep this secret, but it can't be kept secret."

That afternoon, this parish which had been neither here nor there really in terms of a public face about the ordination of women in any way, sense or form, had 25 people on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral carrying placards, amongst the MOW people, saying "the parish of

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Thomastown wants an ordained woman now!” [both laugh] Isn’t that wonderful? Just fantastic!

I went of course, to the ordination, because I thought it was important to go for all sorts of reasons. But that kind of support - and feeling like I could tell these people this secret and that they honoured it was enormously important, enormously important and a real shift.

Before we were made deacons, I got moved to St. Alban’s in Deer Park, and the moral of that story is never go somewhere and say, “My God! Who’d come here!” [both laugh] because every time you say it, you bloody well get sent there! [more laughter] I went out there, and while I was there ... Stewart Young was a lovely man but incredibly paternalistic, and I think he really wasn’t quite sure how to cope and bits and pieces, and I didn’t have a bloody clue. I was in charge of that new area, do you remember? JS: I do! KG: Oh my God! I didn’t have a clue, and it was so difficult! JS: Well, nobody else did either. It is kind of commonplace now, but it wasn’t all those years ago. Well, commonplace is an exaggeration.

KG: Into the middle of all of this came the possibility of being deaconed, and the ordination of deacons. You remember that well as to why. JS: Yes. KG: That happened, and that was terrific. JS: Were you in that first lot? KG: Yes. It was wonderful. Yes, we were all there for the bomb scare. Then we had a big party at Trinity afterwards.

But what kept happening in the parish was that there was this enormous problem for me. I either had to get some priest to come in and stuff up the liturgy for me Sunday by Sunday in this new area (or most Sundays) because every priest has their own way of doing things and stuff or and this is what happened mostly, we had “extended communions”, and for me, that practice became harder and harder. It was not teaching a new community of Anglicans how to be Anglicans, but it was also ... I felt this incredible loss of integrity, because it was pretending something that wasn’t. JS: It was like acting. KG: Yes.

There were a number of other things happening at that point in time, but in April 1987, Judith Cottier rang me and said “Would you be interested in being chaplain at Perth College? Will you come and see me?” So I went to see her when she was in Melbourne. I thought My God, a school! I am hopeless! I have taught in my life! How could I do that?” blah blah, rave rave! Perth is the other end of the bloody universe anyway, and I have got some very deep romantic attachments here I am not quite willing to give up - some hot steamy affair I had going or whatever. So I said to her, “No, it couldn’t possibly happen.”

But later that year, after Gerry and I met, I had been up to Brisbane and I had been to see the assistant bishop who is now the Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn. Gerry was in Brisbane, and we were trying to decide whether I’d move to Brisbane or he’d move to Melbourne. So I went to see George Browning who said “Oh! Of course we don’t have women as deacons as yet in this diocese, and when we do we’ll first be going to our women.” Oh, I thought, forget this! I couldn’t bloody go up there on that sort of proviso - there is no way; I need to have something to go to!

After a while, Gerry and I looked at each other and I said “I think I might ring up and see about that job in Perth.” I rang Judith, and this was October, and she had offered the job to a woman in England I think and the woman had accepted, and that morning had had a letter in the post saying that due to some unforeseen circumstances, this woman couldn’t take the job. So I came over for the interview, and said “Yes, I’ll take it.”

Side 2

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(left the restaurant; sitting in rector dining room, nursing with mysteriously painful foot)

JS: Now who was influential for you? You have told - the Beaumonts, Nigel Wright... KG: Yes, the Beaumonts, Nigel Wright, Gayle [Poynter]. All church people, I know. JS: A bit pious. KG: Yes, but then none of them are pious in any way, shape or form. JS: Family members? KG: Yes, I was thinking I really have to say my mother was influential. JS: [summary] lost quote - The true apostolic succession is from grandmothers to granddaughters. KG: I can believe that, there are other people along the way, a lot of people on the way, but I think they have a particular place. JS: Charles Ringmer? KG: no, no. At a given moment in time, but not...

JS: Now did you feel any different when you were ordained deacon or priest, deaconess. KG: Do you mean, like "did the earth move for me?" JS: yes, and did other people treat you differently? KG: I think as a deaconess there were differences, and I think that when I became a deacon, both I had grown into the deaconess/deacon thing (because I actually think the only difference between a deaconess and a deacon is that one has got a dick and one has got a womb, you see - you know what I mean). JS: One had a uniform and the other didn't. Did you wear the uniform? KG: No, no. That was my only thing about not being a deaconess; I couldn't stand the sensible grey. But I have got a grey poodle, and I had a grey car! I think I had grown into a bit, and I was ready to be a deacon. I was ready to be more than that, I think by 86, but I was ready to be a deacon.

With issues the way they were, it was always so imperative to be clear about what you believed you were meant to be doing - especially when nearly everyone you met needed you or asked you to justify yourself one way or another, wanted to know - "Why are you doing this?" "How dare you think you should be doing this!" or "Isn't it fantastic that you were doing this!" So it certainly allowed for a fair amount of clarity.

It also allowed a kind of soul searching and testing. I mean, I just think those of us who have been ordained who had been through all this - it would be the most bloody tested vocation the church anywhere has got, wouldn't we? JS: I reckon! KG: I mean, how many times do you have to present, again and again and again?

So that was that. And then at priesting, something inwardly significant changed, because ... because there was a whole new scheme to grow into, in one sense - if that makes sense. Like, not only what was - what I believed was and what the church had said was was given a place, was given authority or allowed. But there was a whole sense in which all this stuff I had been saying and trumpeting about and working towards and agitating for and agonising over and crying about for so long, here was the time to take it up and to grow into it, to see how it fits, in a sense. Does that all make sense? Do you know what I mean? JS: MMM. It may not in the morning...

KG: But of course with priesting, there were so many changes because it was so public and because I think the symbolic shift is enormously important. In fact, maybe four years ago, I wouldn't have said it was as important as I think it is now, and that's because four years ago, I was working in a community of women. Now I am back in mainstream parish life and I think, My God! What's been happening over these last eight years? I mean, what has changed here? I am aware of the deep kind of shift and what a wrench it has been in the psyche of the community here to have a woman. JS: Two women. KG: Two women. Yes!

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On my second Sunday, there were women servers, there were Anna [Cullen, deacon] and myself in the sanctuary at the early service. At the end of the service, somebody said "Well, I think you had better do something about getting men into the sanctuary!" there wasn't a man in there this morning! It is all very well to have women, but we need to have a balance!" And I thought, Oh God! Give me a break!! So I said "Yes, isn't a shock after 2000 years of things being one way, for us to have our whole perceptions turned upside down! But of course, this is what we have been looking at for years and years and years and years without questioning! It will take a while to get used to." So then I think I walked away with some smart arsed comment like "But isn't it wonderful? Isn't it wonderful! And it won't take us 2000 years to get used to this!" And left them!

JS: So what was it like being a pioneer? Did you ever imagine yourself being a pioneer? KG: No, no, not before this. No. I mean I had an image of myself as a conforming [JS laughs]... No, really, really. Conforming. It was an agony for me to think that I might be single-handedly responsible for the downfall of the Anglican Church. That one is very hard, [laughing] Thank God I got over it quickly! It is really interesting. I would never have seen myself as a pioneer, but here we are, and I recognise that it has been pioneering and that I have had some part in that, alongside lots of other women.

But, you know, a lot of it has only been possible - to hang in there, in the institutional centre, or at least it was pre-ordination, because of the sense of a number of strong women around who would say things like, "Oh, come on! Don't be stupid! Bloody church!" The first time I heard women calling bishops by their first names - it was so empowering. "Yes sir, no sir/ three bags full sir! Your Grace!" Well, not "Your Grace" quite, but all of that sort of stuff. "Bishop." They are always so bloody tall too; you have always got to crane your neck to look up at them! JS: They choose them like that. KG: Yes, it's part of the designed job description.

The kind of MOW women I think of who have been influential have of course been Patricia and yourself and Diane and Alison Cheek. I know it's not exactly as an MOW woman but I was always in conjunction with MOW women. And Elizabeth [Smith], back then. And this was prior her... back in the 80s. And it was really good to be surrounded by those women. And it was really good to be with the women who were in ministry in Melbourne, a number of the women, and we used to meet together and say "All right, what can we do about this? What needs to be done differently? How can we work for this?" That has never been part of my experience in this diocese, without somebody looking over their shoulder and saying "We might get into trouble" or "What if we rock a boat? Do you think it will be all right? Perhaps we should ring the bishop!" [JS laughs] Oh! Do you know what I mean? Totally, totally different perceptions.

JS: [summary] Asked about collegiality etc. "No." No idea what they would talk about if they did meet ... Buckley's. KG: I know. So I really hope something comes out of this conference ["Consuming Passions"], that there will be some people who...

I have to say I had such wonderful support in Perth College, and worked with women, and amongst young women. One of the really nice things when I left there was that there were girls in that school whose only experience of priesthood was women! Isn't that fabulous! This was wonderful. This was wonderful these are kids whose whole iconography is different! And two years after the ordination, there were kids for whom it was "What do you mean - it was an issue!" whereas the kids who were at school in 92 knew clearly what was happening and really took it up.

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I think it might have been the difference between the rate of change in that sort of environment where every year there is a new generation and the complete lack of change in the church that has been really difficult to cope with coming into a parish. You know, the over-riding and continuing bloody paternalism. Really! JS: Among the parishioners, or in the church as it works through deaneries and things, or both? KG: Both. I tend not take much notice in deaneries and things any more. I have been sent up by experts, if you know what I mean I mean, I have been done over well and truly like most of us have been. Yes ... anyway. I am not confronting, but I am not... [long pauses]. I am not agonising over this - "Oh no! I am being treated by this paternalistic person and what can I do about it!" I have got enough confidence behind me now to just go [gesture!] or I disagree with you or even "Oh Father!" - you know, in that kind of way we play that game. But I have been kind of stunned I think.

JS: What did you expect to be different? KG: I think I thought the language would be different and until we adopted the new prayer book, of course it wasn't. And sometimes hymns still emerge that have not been purged and all of that. I guess I was used ... It didn't take long to become used to myself as a norm and other women as a norm, so the shock has been how much of a "not normal" thing this has been. People in the parish would now say, "Oh, now look. We are over this. Don't take it deeply, don't personalise it. We were over this ages ago."

But I see a whole lot of different things at work that still say ... (twitch), "Oh, we are not quite sure about this." Deeply cultural stuff. I don't see people can expect that they have made an adjustment when their entire life of spirituality and their faith formation has been dominated by one particular view! That doesn't change in six months or a year.

This is an interesting parish. We have got people in this parish who deeply believe that the man is the head of the house, that this is biblical and ordained. We have got people for whom the priest is the icon of Christ. It is an interesting parish in that it holds all these view together. But we have got other people for whom it is just liberating and it's freeing and all of that. And other people who are just beginning to discover this stuff... It's just that it takes a while, but you needs some supports while it is taking a while!

JS: Now, you have been very successful if I might presume to say so in the structures - canon, General Synod Standing Committee, General Synod Women's Commission ... Gosh, head in hands here I don't mean to raise a painful topic! KG: No! It's not a painful topic. Janet... JS: I didn't mean to be sarcastic when I said "successful" - "prominent"? KG: Prominent, I think. I just think I have been in a particular place at the time. When I left Melbourne, I thought This is it; I won't be ordained with these women; ordination will happen in Perth but certainly it will be sometime after Melbourne - well, I can live with that and all of that stuff. It was not like I was going to picnic. But what an accident! Or circumstance. I thought to myself, I am giving up these things, and then it worked out the way it did - which was not anything that could be foreseen, it just happened. It just seems to me that things happen, and I am really committed Janet to taking up opportunities. I mean I agonised over them. God! I agonised over them! You wouldn't believe how long it takes me to make some decisions. Standing Committee I have got to say something and so I don't here another word for the entire morning, and that's not good enough! But you know, it's like "Oh, I am going to have to speak in front of these people; I am going to have to be coherent; it's not just me who speaks, it's every woman ..." It's all of that stuff. I mean I take a lot of responsibility onto myself which I really needn't!

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You know that how I felt after the ordination here in 92. I felt *devastated!* That was one of the things that I felt - a real sense of my priesthood being incomplete, because it was not shared. I felt almost guilty.

So if you look at in perspective, I am reasonably personable, I don't do a back job I haven't fluffed it yet totally - so it stands to reason that some of these things might come my way. [JS laughs] Doesn't it? JS: I suppose so. KG: That's one way of seeing it, I don't think I am an absolute dodo but... JS: Prospective bishop, people tell me. KG: Which people tell you that? JS: Oh, names, names, names. Talk about women as bishops and they say "Kay Goldsworthy", "Willy Maddock", "Barbara Darling", "Kay Goldsworthy"... KG: Do you think that is just because we are prominent? JS: I don't know. It's interesting the way names come up and then take on a life of their own. KG: yes, and I think that has got a lot to do with being first in a number of things, and I wasn't shy of the media.

That's one of the things Melbourne really helped with. Do you remember in Melbourne when somewhere around 1985 - you may not remember this - the women who were seeking ordination all did a "how to deal with the media" kind of thing. Maybe the archbishop arranged it or somebody arranged because we said we were scared completely shitless speaking to the media, and that was really useful.

When I came here, the women were I mean, I didn't know they weren't as vocal as they were in Melbourne! I assumed women were as vocal as Melbourne everywhere, in one sense. Do you know what I mean? I didn't know women over here, so I just went around making the same amount of noise, or expecting the same sorts of things, or doing that, and so it stood out! So there you go.

JS: What will it take before women can be bishops? KG: It will take men to allow it, won't it? Just the bloody same as priests. I don't voting-wise, I mean consecrating-wise. JS: or working with wise. KG: Yes, that's one of the things it is going to take. I hope, I really hope ... I really, really, really, really, really, really hope that we do not go blithely off down the same path, through General Synods. JS: Well, we will. KG: We might, but I am really hopping some bishop will forestall it by consecrating, put it to the test.

JS: There are two who might: one, the one here, and two, Roger Herft in Newcastle. Can't imagine anyone else. KG: Clyde Wood. JS: I suppose he could, yes and now, except I don't know about the women in North Queensland ... KG: I don't either. It will depend ... politically speaking, Perth certainly believes he has got the constitutional ability to do it and the only way to try that is to test it. He has made it very clear that he doesn't think that we need to enter into any sort of synod debate. I am actually quite admiring of his stance, in that I think if Melbourne were taking the same sort of stance, there would be a different debate happening, wouldn't there? There is the same kind of cautious approach and all of that, which will result in around and around and around again. The big issue in consecrating women is that it is going to ask bishops to think about what bishops are, and that is going to be the biggest stumbling block, it seems to me. That may be one reason why Peter Carnley could possibly work, because I actually think that Peter Carnley has thought about what it is to be a bishop. Whether one agrees or disagrees with his stance, he has got a very particular kind of stance about this, and one of them is that you have given me authority to ordain or consecrate who I like! [laughs]

When I read him saying something like, "We do not have two classes of priest in this diocese, and there are not two classes of priest in the Anglican Church, to enter into a debate about whether women can be consecrated as bishops or not is to enter into a debate

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two classes of priesthood. That resonates for me with Nigel saying “This is the ministry this parish is offering.” What it is effectively doing is taking the ordination of women seriously. So what gets done with that I don’t know, but I am certainly not interested in going through a whole lot more General Synod things and all of that. And who the hell knows who should be a bishop and who might be the first woman bishop and all that sort of stuff. The thing is, it is going to be incredibly difficult for the first woman bishop in Australia. This diocese hasn’t even got a woman on its senior staff yet, which is a bit bloody pathetic!

Now some people would say, “Oh, well of course, it’s all a bit early yet! But there are creative ways to think about this, creative ways to think about this! You don’t just have to make them an archdeacon to put them onto the senior staff - just because that is how they have generally got there, as an archdeacon or a bishop! You could certainly make it creatively. My problem is I can’t go in and say - I’d really like to go in and say this - “When are you going to have a woman on senior staff?” because it looks like self-interest, and because I have to admit I have a certain amount of self-interest. I would love to be on the senior staff of the bloody diocese! That doesn’t necessarily mean I’d be the best person for the job, it just means I know myself. JS: [summary] Who makes up senior staff? The senior staff are the bishops and the archdeacons, and then there is a kind of a wider senior staff, which includes the heads of departments.

JS: So why would one do this? What are the differences that women bring to ministry? KG: I think it is a whole symbolic ... it’s not only symbolic, it’s real change in our perception of God, in our perception of a Christ who has a welcoming embrace, in the way we say the things we say and do the things we do. We all use the same words, and it is as different as having somebody who is married or somebody who is single or somebody who is gay or somebody who is divorced I mean, it is as different, but it has got that other difference which is that it is ... [long pause] like an earthquake! [JS laughs] Don’t you think? It shakes everything and it breaks open the earth.

And it doesn’t often look very different, and I know there are a lot of men around saying “Oh, four years after - mean nothing has bloody well changed, has it?” But I actually think lots of things have changed and one of the reasons I can say that is, when I think back to Perth College, I think there is a whole generation of kids there whose first and only so far experience of priesthood in the church and their experience of the church is the experience of the leadership of women! That seems to me to be potentially awfully powerful.

JS: [summary] School took a lead role or a freak incident? KG: It happened. I don’t know, for instance, how other schools with women as chaplains took up the issue when they were ordained, or how those women see things, but that was just my experience. JS: [summary] Stark contrast to other sisters' schools. Terrible image.

KG: When I first got to Perth College, they were all saying “for us men and for our salvation” - 800 girls saying “for us men”! I said, “Whoa! Stop! All the men here, put up your hand!!” Three staff members put up their hand. I said “Anybody else? We are not going to say “for us men” because it is not true, it is ridiculous! Just little things like that, but after a while there are all sorts of significant changes. JS: If there are enough of them. KG: if there are enough of them, if they are reinforced and if they connect with the way people live the rest of their life and therefore open up a way for them to reflect theologically, in a way that makes sense. And I think it does that for lots of people.

JS: So what’s the extent of inclusive language and thought here? KG: it is always used in the preaching, by both me and the associate priest. It is always used in our conversation. It is

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always used when we write things. The only time when it is not used is when somebody reads from their own bible. JS: [summary] People carry large tomes to the lectern ... KG: Yes, and things like that. All these things are so difficult to change. People presented bibles to the parish and they are all in the pews and unfortunately they are all exclusive language but they are only eighteen months old - you know, something like that. We pulled all the "Good news for Modern Man" out of the bookshelves when I got here, and I can't bring myself to send them to the mission fields because I don't think it is politically sound. JS: Burn them! KG: Except they were a memorial. It is really tricky stuff.

And some of the hymns that we sing are not always changed. Sometimes we omit verses, and sometimes we tell people; if we have them on overheads we change them, but in the AHB ... JS: Elizabeth Smith's hymns? KG: Yes, every now and again, not constantly. And there are all the copyright issues that go with them which are just not clear cut, well they are clear cut but they are difficult.

JS: [summary] Room full of strangers, clergymen and women, opposite ends of room, which group would you approach? KG: It would be the women. JS: Because ... KG: That would be the most comfortable place for me, or at least I would assume it was going to be. So this is definitely men at one end and women at the other? We are talking Australian parties! JS: [summary] Yes. KG: I would go to the women. JS: [summary] Many answers ... So that is your primary identity, you reckon? KG: I think that is the base out of which I am comfortable. Once I had made some kind of contact, then I would be more inclined, but clergy you don't know, male clergy you don't know, are bloody intimidating, I find. Women, I know of them, leads me to think that this is going to be someone I can talk to, whatever.

[Removes cold pack from son's foot]

Tape ends