

## Interview with Patricia Morrison, by Ruth Greenaway – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

(Intro to Tape- SIDE A, TAPE ONE)

- RG Patricia, you received a Human Rights award for your work with the YWCA in 1999, could you tell me what that was all about?
- PM The YWCAs around the world were initiated by the YWCA in the United States of America, looked for people within their organisation who were in their way, in their own idea of the YWCA in their commitment towards achieving human rights and most of the YWCAs of the world took part and the YWCA of NZ after looking at suggestions and nominations from various local associations made the award to me for that particular year and then forwarded the information to the world body that was looking at these suggestions.
- RG Right, and the award was for your work over several years with the World YWCA?
- PM Well it wasn't for work particularly with the YWCA only, it was for work for human rights, and it was the year for recognising human rights through the United Nations Association, so any work that was regarded as contributing to achieving human rights for people but of YWCA work that I did contributed, but that was not the only work that was mentioned.
- RG Right. And how did it feel to be rewarded?
- PM Well, I felt exceedingly nervous and not very happy at the beginning that I should be selected because I think there are many more people who should have been selected who have done much more than I have, but this was their decision.
- RG Well, I'm very interested in everything that you've done and something that I really admire about what you have done is that it seems you have been involved with a number of networks and been very committed and how your work crosses so many networks and I'd be really interested to know how you became inspired as a young person to look into working in a such a direction? With various groups or organisations?
- PM Well, it's very hard to pin point how it all came about, except that I think it probably came from a love of history, right from when I was very young when I was in Primary school. Therefore of learning about other peoples not only in my own country but in the rest of the world and that kind of interest I have kept my entire life and that person who inspired me to further my work in history was the Principal of the Primary school I attended he was so intrigued by all that he had done that he taught history to each class in the school right through the school so from what we called standard one when I was six years old we had history lessons and when I came to about four years later the last two years of Primary school he and I became quite good friends and he would suggest to me competitions and essays for subjects in Christchurch and Canterbury and I began my research and interest in history and it carried on of course into the secondary school where I again had three very good teachers in the girls high school who had the same love of their subject and of course the obvious thing was that when I went to University I would take History. And I did although I was very interested in English as well but as it happened at that time it was not possible to follow the two subjects right through, because of the restrictions on the language we had to follow at the same time, and in the end I chose History and followed that through.
- RG And was it a natural step for you to go to University?
- PM Oh yes, I mean I had, I don't know why no one in my immediate family, oh my Father of course had been to University but not as a full time student he had to do all his studies at night and attend classes in Law early in the morning before work and after work at night, but he was very pleased that I was interested in going to University and it must have been difficult for him when I was the eldest of eventually six children. He was quite happy for me to be a full time student at Canterbury. My Mother was just as keen that I should follow whatever I wanted to do.
- RG So they were very supportive?
- PM Oh extremely supportive yes.
- RG And did your family influence any of your ideas as a young person about looking at society and peace and justice and those sorts of things, and History?
- PM No, not in History I don't think, I mean my Father read a lot and Mother read a lot and I read a great deal but no I don't think that History was particularly something that they followed my Father was read very well but I wouldn't say that they were the ones that were responsible for my interest in History, but on the questions of justice, as my Father was a Lawyer I obviously discussed matters like that with him and my family was very open to meeting people

of different communities and it was never any bias or criticism of people because they were different to what our family was or because they went to different schools or were a different colour or anything like that I didn't ever learn anything about, that would make me feel critical of other people because of any difference and I valued that very much, in later life certainly.

RG When you were at University were there friends and groups that you belonged to that got you interested in being involved in a campaign for peace of anything like that?

PM Yes, well I joined the Student Christian Movement (SCM) when I went to University full time. There had been a SCM group in the school, in the girls' high school but my Mother felt that I had enough to do keeping up with my homework and that. She didn't want me attending more meetings after school hours and so I didn't ever attend that school group. I didn't know that some years later I would be the travelling secretary for NZ for the schools work, but I wasn't a member during my own school career but I did join at Canterbury University or Canterbury College and this was of course a very fraught time, I started University in 1939 and in September of '39 war broke out, so it was a very strange time really to be at University and interest in international affairs was something one would naturally take up and of course the history department had to deal with all sorts of questions about other countries and in particular their attitudes towards the war and I think the Student Christian Movement was particularly interested in whether or not people should support the war, whether they should be pacifists or join the forces and that was a question that applied to everybody, men and women at that age, so I suppose the peace question most certainly were upper most in our student discussions.

RG What was the Student Christian Movement like when you were at University? How important was it for you to be a part of a group like that where you were discussing things like that?

PM I think I wasn't the kind of person to work my own, it was important to meet other people and to be in groups that were thinking and expressing their ideas and to me it was very important, to me it was a place where I found a great deal to do and I soon became a member of the executive and we had a president and if the president was a man we had woman vice president. And I was the women's vice president and in the final year when I was the vice president the president went into the army and so I was the acting president all that year. When we met regularly we had arranged lectures in the University we had the support of the staff and in many ways. We had a series called "What I live by" and we got university staff who had no commitment to religion at all who came to talk to us about their beliefs and what they lived by. And we had debates and general discussion, it was quite a strong movement in the University at the time when I was there. And of course it was a movement through out NZ so there were meeting with other University groups in other areas, but as it was war time there was only one conference which I attended the beginning of my time and then at the very end it was very difficult to travel and of course it wasn't possible to arrange national conferences at that time. But we kept in touch by correspondence and of course corresponded with the SCM overseas and we kept in touch with the World movement in Geneva which was cut off from the rest of the world and we had some contact with the SCMs of the States and Canada, and also in China.

RG It must have been a time where not did you have your studies but you had, you were gaining a broad understanding of people around the country through SCM and overseas.

PM Oh yes the studies were only a part of the work, I was very interested in the study but in the, one's interest in the groups, there were so many groups you could join if you wanted, but the SCM was the group that had most of my time, my leisure time, so called. Then I was also involved in a women's association that was set up during that period, and then became a member of the student's Association Executive which had the administration of student work, I think I was on that for about two years. So we had all the interests of the students in the University that came before us in that group. There were more men than women on the executive, but it represented quite well the interests of the students but of course there were less men at the University as the war years continued and more women. And even as far as the women were concerned they were leaving earlier to take up essential work or to go into the forces. It was a time when people didn't have much possibility of really devoting themselves to anything but their studies, of course the full-time students were the lucky ones who did have that chance. We just did what we wanted to do and of course some people didn't take much interest in anything even in their studies very much but of course there were other who did much more in the rest of their time than they did in their studies.

RG Was it a time when it really got you thinking about where you wanted to go after University? And maybe the sort of work you were interested in doing?

PM Well, of course I always had a hope that I didn't divulge to anyone else was that I would get into international work. I suppose the first opening in a way was the SCM, learning from people who had been overseas and in reading their publications and then I was asked if I would be the secretary to the Committee of the International Students Service. Operating in Canterbury University College and the chair of that was the then Dr Height, he was in the History Department where I was doing most of my studies and we were involved in bringing Jewish students out of, who had come out of Germany or Austria to NZ and helping integrate them in the University. And also in raising funds and finding ways of resourcing, well student bodies that were really under pressure, if we could get any resources to them,

then NZ was being asked to help as was Australia and of course Canada and the States, we tried to help the European groups if we could get in touch with them. Being secretary meant that correspondence came through from Geneva and came through also from China where European and particularly American student groups were helping these students of China, again it was very difficult to correspond or to keep the contacts, but we were involved with that as well and of course eventually NZ students did join the Friends (that is the Quakers) the Friends ambulance unit which went to China and some of the students in the SCM that I knew very well were people who went to China and there were other students as well who became conscientious objectors and some who actually had to go to prison, other worked on farms and that. And then there were many students who went into the army navy or airforce and again we kept in touch with them as we could. So it was a way of having tight world contacts in the part of the world we could contact or could communicate with.

RG Did you feel a sense of excitement being in contact with a whole range of people from different countries, as a young person what was it like learning about all these people?

PM I don't think I would have described it as a sense of excitement it was just a part of what I liked to be doing, it just seemed natural to be interested in things like that. And in the work that these bodies, student fund for Europe for relief in Europe and the International student service work for students that needed help I mean it was just part of what one did.

RG So then you actually did end up studying overseas, you were living in Oxford and studying there for a while. And again your involvement with international students continued.

PM Yes I had a scholarship to study at Oxford and there was a SCM there, which of course I joined. But there was also, there were travelling secretaries who were involved with the International Students Service which I had been working with in NZ in fact I was invited to attend the first meeting which was held after the war. It was held in, the first World meeting, held in Cambridge. In I think it was about July of 1946 when I could not get on a ship, it was very difficult to travel at all and I couldn't get on a ship until June and the ship took 44 days to reach England. I arrived on the last day of the last sort of meeting of the Committee held after this conference and I met officials of the International body, those people who were working for the office in Geneva and some of the volunteer committee people on their last night in London which was my first day in London and in Europe. But I missed that conference. However, they kept in touch with me and I went to the next meeting, which was held in France in Convlue – near the Geneva border probably about August of 1948, and I was elected to the general committee which was the governing body as someone from NZ. And eventually at the end of 1948, asked if I would work in the Geneva office of the International student service. But I worked on the side which was called, it was funded by the European Student relief fund and it was really the e programme work with people who were displaced during the war and who were in camps all over Europe and who as students wanted to get out. Mostly they wanted to leave for the States, was their first preference and then Canada and then probably Australia and NZ, though they didn't no much about either, and we had people in those camps helping them prepare themselves and improve their English and I was the secretary of the international headquarters, responsible for these field workers, we had about 9 of them at one stage working at different camps in Germany, Austria and Poland and we also had a, kept in touch with a secretary in India. We were just beginning to move into Asia. Part of my work, well quite a big part of the work was the caring for, being a support to these programme workers who were living under rather difficult conditions and who would decided suddenly to come to Geneva for a weekend which meant that I worked the whole weekend with them and they would tell me all their worries, how they wanted a new winterised jeep. It was really a very interesting and demanding kind of job, and then of course we also had people, individuals who applied directly to our office to go overseas. There was a person responsible for that but occasionally I had something to do with these students who wanted to get to another country. I remember one who was Hungarian and worked in our office, and there were one or two who we gave jobs to for a short time if we could possibly find the money to help them live. This particular one wanted to go to university in Canada and I wrote a reference for him and he got the chance to go to university somewhere I think in Manitoba, and he wrote back and said that my letter had "burstled them into tears" so he got what he wanted and I trust he happily settled as a Canadian.

RG Where did the finances come from to send theses students to other countries?

PM They came from students from the Universities. From the Universities that were attached to international Students Service, we raised funds in NZ it was difficult but we did, it came from Colleges in the States particularly raised a great deal. The paid for students from Europe to come to the States and go and speak in the colleges. That of course raised peoples concerns and raised money, the funds, the clothing and books and other resources came mainly from the States and Canada, and Britain and just what people could do they did.

RG What numbers of students were you offering placements to in all these different countries? Hundreds?

PM Oh certainly hundreds, in every camp for instance of displaced persons in Germany or Austria there would be hundreds of students and they would come to the orientations course and we just worked with those who expressed and interest, we didn't fund them but we had to fund our workers who worked with them. That was where we needed

to find the resources, and then of course if they got the chance to go to Canada or NZ there were UN or the international refugees organisations would have the funds for the student to travel if the university didn't have the funds. We tapped all the sources we could find.

RG The team that you were a part of, doing all this work, were they mainly young people or was it a range of people.

PM It was a range of people, but mainly young and of different nationalities and the workers in the camps were certainly Young, Dutch, Canadian, American, British, one or two older people, but mostly they just out of university themselves, in the international office there was a range but again certainly under 40 and several nationalities. It was a really international group, and you needed to know French in Geneva and working in these organisation, I learnt French in School and it was certainly enough to get along with and I was glad of my grounding with the girls high schools because I had to do great deal of reading in French and correspondence in French but I had a French speaking secretary, I didn't dictate in French but I could read in French.

RG I'm just going to back to check my dates because I thought I had better put this on the tape. So you were there from 1948 to 1950 in this particular job?

PM Yes.

RG (Not sure if I should start another question).

PM I was with the International Student Service we had a conference that was scheduled to be in Burma 1948 and we could not go there because there was four of the members of the cabinet were assassinated and one of them was the person who had been (SIDE TWO OF TAPE ONE) I'm sorry that I can't set the date it was either 1947-1948 but that was the time when Burma really just left the rest of the world and it meant many years since then that we have been trying to have normal contact, so our conference was cancelled and we held it in France instead and the next conference which I attended would be in 1947 and after that we held a conference in Denmark and I also attended the first World Student Christian Federation Conference after the war which was held in Sweden.

RG And the conferences were about?

PM Well the conferences are always they have special topics each time but I couldn't say what particular topic that was chosen for that. It's a rule that as far as the Student Christian Movement is concerned and I suppose most other bodies, that they have a conference every year or three years and they take up the topics that is most important to them at that time. A conference that is held for the first time after about eight years takes up a great many subjects, but another conference which I attended where there was a great deal of anguish was the one that was in 1948 which was with the International Student Service and that was the time when there was the take-over by the communists in Czechoslovakia and there again people who were attending that particular conference knew very well those who were affected and imprisoned or killed.

RG And were there students from those particular countries that were able to attend?

PM No they weren't able to. So these conferences were quite often, well there was always some trouble. Another that I attended was the Indonesian, great deal of difficulty and great deal of trouble between Indonesian students who attended and the Dutch students who were present, because there was actual war within what then was Dutch East Indies at that time and part of the behind the scenes anguish and accomplishment of people leaders there was to help the students find a way of working together of understanding one another and I don't think I was ever at a conference where there wasn't some situation like that.

RG OK maybe we could move on to... You came back to New Zealand in 1950 and you spent several years working for the New Zealand Student Christian Movement as a school secretary, a travelling secretary and a general secretary, maybe you could tell me about a little bit about what some of the travelling around New Zealand was like, and what your work involved?

PM Well I was appointed as school secretary succeeding a teacher who had done this work and then became Principal of one of the Girls Schools in Wellington and to me it was something quite new what I did mainly was to go to schools where there were small Student Christian Movement groups they were not very many and then chiefly to go into other schools to tell people about the work of a Student Christian Movement, but what the school Principal would be interested in would be my experience of working overseas and my international experience and trying to give the school students an idea of the difficulties under which other people studied and so I would do a great deal of speaking in school assemblies and that was very nerve racking. I remember very well the first boys school I ever spoke at and that was Wanganui Collegiate and I really was very very concerned about speaking there and when I looked at the group of boys, I looked up and saw it's actually a kind of gallery in the hall where they were meeting probably the six or seventh form what-ever form they had which was the highest with grins on their faces and that really spurred me, I thought right I will make you listen and after a while I realised they were listening and I looked around and to see

where else I could direct my attention, but I came away very worried as to whether I had done the right thing and wasn't the principal talked with me, I couldn't know whether it really was what they wanted or not and when I arrived at the (I remembered thinking I will never know) and I walked to the next school which was the Technical High School and was greeted by the Principal there who said (Mr So and So) told me that you had said (such and such) and he was very pleased so that was my answer that I had struck the right note. That's a personal sort of impression that I had, another school I remember particularly was Marlborough College which had a huge hall, it was one of the schools that was built out the or took over the hospital that the Americans had built during the war and this was a great assembly and I had to stand on a stage with about 40 staff behind me, but with a great space between me and the staff and just stand towards the beginning of the edge of the platform without a chair or table not a thing you could rest a finger on and I remember just moving my foot and discovering that the heel of my shoe was quivering so I knew that I must keep still and that was really quite worrying but again I had comments afterwards from different people and found that the staff and the students were on the whole really interested to know what other students were thinking and feeling. By that time we were dealing with people in China because the people too there was the beginnings of the long march and there were the students that were moving back all the time out of the war zone and there were those who were very much affected by the Government raids on their hostels and that and it was something quite out of this world to speak to people about that and so that was my entry really into talking about the concerns of young people.

RG Was it quite an unusual job to be doing at that time, were there many other people from other groups and organisations travelling around the country and talking about similar things?

PM I don't know if there were many but I think school principals had the same problems as they have now having all sorts of requests for people to speak to them and they need to know just what they are letting loose on their student audience and some needed some persuasion.

RG Do you feel that you had quite a responsibility in conveying these stories?

PM Oh yes, I think you have to be sure of your facts and you have to be sure that you are not repeating something that may damage the people to whom you are speaking to and you are trying to deal with a community that really has no idea what it's like to live under different conditions and so often people would want to know, want to have names and they want to have assurances that the money had arrived and this that & other which could not be given, you had to trust the people to whom the funds were sent and you had to trust them that they were letting you know what had been done and that still happens today, it's still very difficult to convince some people that what they might give and they may give exceedingly little to a Christian Aid or a some kind of appeal, that is getting to the right quarters and if there isn't trust it's very difficult and so you have to be very sure how you speak.

RG So on the whole, would you say you got a good response from the schools?

PM Yes I did, certainly in the schools and also as part of the schools work, well it wasn't a part of the schools work but because of the schools work I had of course contacts with the clergy mainly of the different churches in the National Council of Churches and there would be people who would say would you come and speak to my women's group or my youth group and they quite often would say, just lift their horizons and that was all they would ask. So you would talk about things that were just completely almost unimagined by the people in the group and it was quite interesting work and I met some very good people and it was the support to those who were in the little local community trying to do some-thing, to have a person come who actually had visited a certain country or knew people of a certain group and that. So there were lots of ramifications and it kept you of course all the time thinking about the international aspect of it, which was not what you would do in most jobs.

RG You mentioned before that there was much more of a growing awareness about Asia, what were some of the responses from New Zealanders at that time when you were talking about people from Asia, were they really keen to know, was it all new information for people?

PM Well when I was in Geneva first in 1948 to 1950 then that was just a beginnings of India and Pakistan, the division was in 1947 they were joining or involved in the University International Student Service which actually in about 1950 was called World University Service and then when I came back to New Zealand we had Reverend Alan Brash who was the secretary for the National Council of Churches who was pointing us all towards our near North to Asia and we had some of the Asian Christian Leaders and other leaders coming to New Zealand so the kind of work that I did, fitted in with, or I hoped it fitted in with the work that the Council of Churches was also doing and our Students in the Student Christian Movement, in particular the theological Students were involved in working with the Council of Churches, we held the first Theological Students Conference which was organised by the National Council of Churches and the Student Christian Movement. Alan Brash was the Secretary for the Council and I was the Secretary for Student Christian Movement at the time or the one that was responsible for that conference and Alan happened to be travelling in Asia, so we had a great deal of administrative work had to be done before he came back. We had several after that, but the first one was to me, really memorable and at the first one we had the only woman

theological student whose by now of course she became a ordained Minister in the Presbyterian Church and she's now retired, but gradually you saw the changes in that way to.

RG Who was that Patricia?

PM That was Nan Burgess, and there were other ways in which we co-operated with all the churches or those churches which wished to co-operate. I found that most were very co-operative and we had of course people who were not so keen on what we did and felt that we were not really bringing people to a commitment to Christ in the way they felt we should that SCM always or welcomed seekers, people of no religion or those who wanted to find out who had questions and as well and in the schools and in some cases we had quite good relationships with the leaders not always with all the groups and sometimes we did have combined missions to students but other times we did not come to agreement so there different points of view and there was always room for discussion as far as the Student Christian Movement was concerned.

RG And did you, I have one question that I am very interested in and I'm just looking at the sheet of paper with the list of all the places that you worked for Patricia and one thing that often occurs to me how did opportunities arrive for you to go from one thing onto the next and from being within the Student Christian Movement, did that open doors to you to then move onto other lines of work that you have mentioned?

PM Yes it did. It wasn't always an opportunity that I saw as an opportunity at the beginning, when I was working with the Student Christian Movement, I of course met people in other voluntary organisations like the YWCA and YMCA and through that I was asked to work for instance; for one year I worked for the YMCA and YWCA together and actually worked in the YMCA office for a while with young people in these recreational courses teaching leaders or making opportunities for leaders to plan youth programmes and I was the organisational person I wasn't the one who did the teaching and that meant travel. That I did in between SCM work and YWCA work, the YWCA the General National Secretary all the time I was working with the SCM was Delight Lynn who had been very much involved in the Student Christian Movement. So she immediately got in contact with me and with much persuasion got me onto a National committee which was suppose to help recruit young women into the YWCA and I'm not sure I did that, but I was on that committee, and then came their request that I work for them and I did resist that for quite awhile because kept saying that I wanted to work for students and eventually the World YWCA said we work with students and asked me to work with them so that opened up the opportunity in Geneva in 1959, the YWCA of course kept at me so of course eventually did work for the YWCA in New Zealand.

RG Did it feel a bit daunting moving on to YWCA; was it a bigger organisation and more demanding in any way?

PM No, I wouldn't say it was daunting some of the work was new and it was more structured and there were YWCAs going concerns in about 13 Associations at that time, and I did have some difficulty I think because I hadn't worked in a local association and there's always some people who compare you with others so I had to be rather careful. I think it was just different in some ways but I have always been interested in administration anyway so that was not different and it was still a lot of committee work and one of the things I have always tried to do is to make sure that decisions are not made by one person, they are made by the committee it's a participatory process and it's not my committee and I decide the committee has made the decision then you have the committee behind you if you are speaking of what the particular body is doing and that's something that still I think a difficulty with some of the people who work in voluntary organisations it isn't their board it's the board of the organisation and they are just one representative they may be the spokesperson but they are not making up the policy.

RG So were you quite involved; and was it part of your role to create policy and decision making processes?

PM Well just part of it, that is what I am saying that I didn't produce the policy at all, no doubt you have a great influence if you have ideas you can put forward, but you must make sure it is the policy of the board not yours only, at least in the organisations that I worked with that has been the aim, I mean there may be some that work in a quite different way but as far as the YWCA is concerned or the Workers Education Association or the SCM it is definitely everyone participates and everyone is responsible for the policy.

RG Well we don't need to go through each position as such but maybe you would like to talk a little bit about the various roles you had with the YWCA, maybe in general, I know that you have worked in New Zealand and the World Wide YWCA in Geneva and also you were based in London for a time, but maybe if you would like to pick out some moments when there were significant changes occurring or groups of people that you met or some times that, are really key moments when you look back over the years.

PM It's hard to pick up particular moments over such a long period, to take New Zealand, one of the most rewarding times was actually with the YWCA in particular, was when the National YWCA worked with young Greek immigrant women and we discovered that they were just being placed in hotels mainly and in restaurants but without any support from people in the community and there was a very good organisation set-up in what was then called Lower Hutt where there was an Irish woman married to the Greek Consul who of course was very concerned about these Greek

women coming to New Zealand under the immigration scheme we had and there was another Irish woman, a Catholic woman, our one was a Protestant one; who was a Sister in a school and who had some connections again with Greek people and we set-up, well we badgered the Internal Affairs Department until we got the promise of two days, now in Australia we discovered that the Government allowed the YWCAs two weeks, but we had two days of orientation, we met the girls we had them to stay in a YWCA hostel and we taught them about the money system, how they could send remittances home, how they could write and something of the regulations they would have to meet and help them make contact and then with the two Irish women we had another quite different group meeting to deal with whoever came from the Tokelau Islands and the Government there brought about two hundred families because there just was not sufficient food for the people living in the Tokelau Islands and they were brought over to New Zealand and they came with no knowledge of the country at all, they did not have the right clothing, they had never seen a tram or a bicycle, the men had never worked to a time table, the women had never seen any of the vegetables that we had, didn't know anything about the cooking and these two Irish women from the North and the South worked together to teach the women how to cook, how to shop, how to buy furniture and they went into houses where there were was a fridge that just had raw fish in it and or they had a packing case in the middle of the room, that is what their clothing was in and they were of course getting colds and pneumonia and they were really very unhappy and these two worked out a program and worked out a kindergarten to which the grannies could come with the children and gradually introduced the children into the State kindergartens which they were afraid to send them at the beginning. So those were two very good things that we felt we did well, needed at the time, and the other great point I think in my connection particularly with the New Zealand YWCA was in 1967 the World Wide YWCA held it's world conference in Australia and that was a tremendous experience for Australia and also for New Zealand and I had been working in Geneva and thought that it would be good if we could have some of the experience of the world executive people who came from 20 different countries in the world, within our own religious sort of experiences and to help people to see how the church is ecumenical and so I ask for, actually named people on the executive who might come to New Zealand for a week before the world conference in Melbourne and I wanted people from the Catholic, the Protestant and the Orthodox churches two of each, well in the end we did get one Greek Orthodox person, we couldn't get an Egyptian one which we had hope for but we got two Catholic people, one from the Philippines and one from India, and we had a Protestant from the United Church of Canada and we had two teams of four people say, one four went to Auckland and Christchurch and the other four went to Wellington and Dunedin and then we met together at the end and we had to work with people in New Zealand as well to get this organised so for the first time the YWCA worked with the Catholic Women's League which they had never done before and with the Women's Committee of the National Council of Churches, they had worked with them, and that was a great experience for the Catholic women who were rather afraid at that time with good reason of working with other people because it was frowned upon by some of the authorities and we had one of the people was a Catholic from Brazil who talked with the Catholic Archbishop about what preparation she had in Brazil for coming to this conference and this tour and how she had gone to speak to each of the Protestant groups, he just found that quite unbelievable, and this person also made a tremendous impression. She was an Olympic Tennis Competitor and she made a great impression with everyone she met, she stayed with a family in Christchurch and the family had met each morning in their prayers with their intentions and the little boy of six said "thank-you God for Marly she's so gay" and that was something that could said then. This was really a wonderful way of women meeting one another, in New Zealand as well as meeting people from other countries and we had after that, something that I never dreamed of Catholic Women being nominated and joining the boards of the YWCA and some of them are still on the board or still have connections, so that was really was a move forward. But I must say it was help by the fact that I knew (THIS IS SIDE A OF TAPE TWO)

RG You were saying Patricia...

PM Yes I was helped very much in my discussions with the Catholic women by the fact that I knew and had worked with Catholic women in Europe, there was a organisation called Women's International Ecumenical Liaison Group (WELG) and that had Orthodox Catholic and Protestant women in it and they had met with the World Wide YWCA or at the World Wide YWCA on different occasions and I knew the people, but I also knew a person an Australian who happened to be coming fortunately to New Zealand in just about a week or so after the I had my first discussions with the women in Wellington on this planning and she was Rosemary Goldie who was stationed at the Vatican in the Ministry of the layerty and she was coming to meet people in New Zealand and I was able to say "talk with Rosemary" because she would know what people were doing in Europe and that was a really great help in moving things along though most people didn't know but it was really quite a land mark in ecumenical affairs at that time and I knew of course that in other parts of the world there were YWCA people right at the beginnings of doing something ecumenically for instance in Columbia the YWCA managed to get Catholic's and Protestant's to work on the day of prayer together they couldn't meet in anybody's church but they met in a huge park and they had thousands of people who came it just tremendous and the Philippines women did much the same thing they really suffered for it, some of them were excommunicated from their church for quite a long time and the Pope had sent out an apolistic delegate to tell the YWCA and YMCA or tell the people to have nothing to do with YWCA, YMCA and that did happened for a time in New Zealand, but not while I was working with them.

RG And did that make your work more difficult?

- PM It made the work of the Catholic people more difficult if they wanted to, I mean they had to suffer for their beliefs if they wanted to work with other people and some did and some did not but it was a question that we had to face and I remember being tackled on questions like that once in Madagascar when I met a Council of Churches group and they were all men, I had a YWCA women's secretary with me from Madagascar and we had to have the discussions all in French and I really was not used to doing philosophical conversations and I had to defend the World Council of Churches on it's what they called it's racist policy, what it was doing in supporting victims of racism in Africa and I didn't get very far I didn't think but when we left the meeting the meeting continued and we left and a young man came after us and apologised to me for some of the opinions expressed and he was one of the Ministers, he didn't agree with what had been said and so we had our difficulties.
- RM When you were travelling to these different Countries, were you going by yourself?
- PM Oh yes always, the only time that I was ever with anyone was when I went to Zaire which is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and not very democratic and it wasn't when it was Zaire and there we had a joint YMCA, YWCA which had been set up by a Danish people who had a joint and still have a joint YMCA, YWCA most of the Northern Countries, Baltic Countries, have joint groups and most of the rest of the world does not, and it was very difficult in Zaire because the time that I went because the women were not very well treated by the men and the women were doing really the main work and I went with a Swiss YMCA Secretary so that is the only time I have ever travelled with someone. I must say it was very nice because he was a real gentleman, and he carried my heavy briefcase, he didn't have to that but he did and we had to speak in French at all the meetings and then be translated into sometimes three other languages and by the time they had got through to the third language you had sort of almost forgotten what they were talking about and decide you had enough, but they tended to ask the man to speak first and or the man to speak and not think of getting the woman to speak until one of the younger men would say that I should speak or say something to them, but the rest was all by myself and I would say I would prefer it really because if you are travelling with someone else you tend to have to, you've got to work out what you are going to do together and that is so with friends or family and you may not always do what you want it's a bit scary sometimes and it certainly was in certain countries but having someone with you wouldn't have made much difference.
- RM What would have been one of the most frightening moments for you?
- PM Well, probably one of the worst of all was arriving in Ethiopia but the first time I felt very uncertain was arriving in Uganda and I had to land on the airport which was just grass where the Israeli's had stormed a plane that people had been held hostage on one of their planes just the week before and I was very conscious of this as we arrived and I didn't have the visa sort of in my hands, I had been told beforehand, we had come from Kenya that they would get this visa, that they would have it but I had to trust that they had it and also I was very worried as to whether I should say that I came from the World Wide YWCA because the YWCA in Uganda was in a way forbidden, they weren't allowed to have any meetings and they weren't allowed to changed the officers and they had to sack alot of their staff because they didn't have any means of finding money for them and so I really didn't know what to say whether I was coming to visit friends or what and when I got out of the plane and walk across there was a wire fence just in front of a small airport building, there were three women that I knew there and they just called out and waving a piece of paper and this was the visa that they had managed to get and it said Patricia Morrison of the World Wide YWCA so I knew that I could mention the YWCA. So that was a bit worrying, I had also known that a colleague of mine from Sera Leon had been there the year before or some months before and she had been followed all the time, so she was not at all happy that I was going she felt that I should go, but I had been asked to go and the head of our organisation said to me as she was taking me to the airport, "you don't mind going do you"? So I told a little white lie "No I don't mind" but I was really a bit worried and I thought I hope my father doesn't know what I am doing.
- RG Why was the YWCA only sending one person?
- PM Well we haven't the money to send, I mean people don't travel in groups unless you were going to a conference, you were always on your own any organisation at least any of the voluntary ones I know, it's just one person goes it's very seldom you have more than one. We certainly didn't do that, and at that time I had been to Uganda before and had a very wonderful visit with and we had travelled hundreds of miles across the countries seeing little places really in the equivalent of the bush and had gone to the opening of a new little group in one place where they had a little bush outside a door and we cut a tape, well I did, to show this was now open then I was interested to see a man come out and lift the little bush and take it away. That time the visit was really interesting for the contacts I had with, we always have a National Programme Secretary the one who is always responsible for all the major work that the different YWCA groups do and she was an Indian women living in Uganda as there were many Indians and then Idi Amin got rid of them all or they mostly had to move and she was a Muslim and this was YWCA and I didn't realise she was Muslim until we were sitting in the jeep in which we were travelling and then about 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock in the afternoon whatever was the correct time, we were talking in the back seat and then she said "*please excuse me but it's time for prayer*" and then she observed her prayers and then she said you might wonder that I am a Muslim she said so do my friends and she said they used to say to her but that's a Christian organisation what are you doing working with a Christian organisation so she said I told them, "*well we have a vocational school where we teach people to type and they can get secretarial jobs, we have a school that teaches people to be kindergarten teachers it is the only one in*



*Uganda and everyone wants to have someone who must be YWCA certificated and we do this and we have a hostel and we have a restaurant, do you think this work is good?" "Oh yes" they said; "Well why don't you come and join us, she said?"* She really was a great person and I met others Muslim and Hindu in Africa and in Asia who were working with the YWCA and they accepted that what we were doing was something that needed to be done for women and for youth and they would come along with it and we didn't insist that they be anything but to have their own religion. The other really most scaring thing was Ethiopia, when I went again probably on that same visit to Africa, I went a lot of times to many places in Africa, but this time I couldn't get a visa, was told that I could get it in Kenya and we went to see the British Embassy I suppose it was and the person there was not at all helpful, wanted to know why I was going and said I shouldn't go at all and well we didn't get anywhere, so then I heard that I could get the visa on arrival I could just buy it there or pay for it and say what I wanted to do, I was going because our YWCA was in great difficulty they weren't having board meetings, most of the executive board had resigned and it was really very difficult with the Government, the Government wanted to take over their work and yet have them still doing the work and there were guards, well I suppose Security Guards which they felt they had to employ to look after the building and these guards came to these staff meetings and were making the decisions and they were actually telephoning Geneva telephoning me about the money they wanted, money that must not come from a Western Country, so they thought that we could get money from Russia; now we didn't have a YWCA in Russia at that time, which was in the middle of a Cold War, there is a YWCA now and there had been a YWCA long before, but we didn't have one then and obviously I mean they were just running the show and so I went to talk with the National General Secretary who had not left and what board members we expected to meet and not even the President came and one young well in her thirties I suppose, board member came. The National General Secretary and myself and that was the meeting. Well I arrived at the airport and there was just about nobody around no traffic and no people inside at all except staff people and I had to go to a desk, *"What have you come for?" "Well I have come to see friends"* and *"Where are you staying?" "I'm staying at a hotel"*. I gave them the name of the hotel and I actually hadn't booked there but I knew that I would get in alright and they didn't ask anything else and then I went outside still seeing no one and not knowing what to do and somewhere in the distance on a sort of veranda there was a woman walking up and down and after awhile she came over to me assumed of course that I was the person from the YWCA and we went to the... I had a letter from someone in Nairobi to the Women's... it was a UN organisation working with women but I am sorry that I've forgotten the exact name. And I took this letter there but it meant that the group knew that I was in the country and I had not felt that I would not to get very far if I tried to find a British Embassy after what they had said in Nairobi. So this person was the National General Secretary whom I hadn't met before and we met in the building of the YWCA which was a very nice building and they had once done tremendous work, and social work and they had trained a lot of people and after awhile these other two started speaking in English and then they started laughing and I said *"What are you laughing about?"* and they just said, *"Well it's just as well these walls can't hear"* and so I invited them to come back to the hotel with me and we sat in a corner and had afternoon tea and we decided that we simply had to close the YWCA down and that's something that I had never ever been involved before in closing one, opening one yes but closing one. But there wasn't anything to keep going and the actual Programme Secretary was away on a Government training course and she hadn't come. Well when I got back to Geneva, she telephoned very angry that she had not been able to meet me and that she had known that I was coming and they still wanted to continue but we couldn't do it and the YMCA at the same time had decided to go along with what the Government wanted they had a very big staff and their staff became part of the Youth Department of the Government and we didn't have a big staff we had two or three but we didn't that we could do anything more, again some years later there is a YWCA there.

RG And so what year was that?

PM In the 1970s, I couldn't tell you it was 78 or 77 something like that and it was a very sad time, but it was a help to these two that I met and especially to the one who was the National General Secretary she did leave later and came to England and I used to meet her sometimes in England I don't know where she is now, well the political situation eventually change but it's never easy and the Zaire one I don't know the situation at present, but at that time it was very difficult, under Mobutu, they had banned the YMCA, YWCA, the Girl Guides and the Scouts.

RG Why?

PM Well they weren't Government youth movement, and so they had their own Government Youth you see and they didn't want anything else, but in a strange way they allowed them to continue to work and when I went twice, I went more than twice to Kinshasa; Government people came to meet me and you had to be very careful what you talked about, you weren't quite sure what they wanted to know and yet they were banned, it was very very odd.

RG So you never felt personally in danger for yourself?

PM Well no not in danger, no because you were always with the people of the country and they would not have let you into a difficult situation and they were always, especially Zaire they were very helpful. I mean I never saw or scarcely ever saw an European I didn't have anything to do with them unless they were connected with the particular YMCA or YWCA but in most countries it was the people of the country entirely and you just assumed they would look after you. In Uganda the second time I went they said *"last time we took you to such and such and such and such, this time*

*we want you here, we just want to talk”* and when they talked it was in closed rooms and very quietly and very carefully, never a mention of the name of a President or anything like that.

RG And when you would return back to your headquarters, did you have to write up reports on all these meetings and such?

PM Wouldn't write it. No, No that's the sort of thing I was meaning when I talked earlier on about people in New Zealand wanting to have things in writing, wanting assurances of this and that, you can't do that, you can't put people in danger by mentioning anything, but of course I reported to the staff and we would report to the World Executive, when it met but that would be confidential if it was likely to endanger people, just as we had two South African people on the World Executive who would come once a year if they were given permission and they weren't always given permission to come, when they came they'd always talk to us about what was happening there and what was happening in the churches as well and what happened to them when they were in prison as they were every now and then.

RG Patricia I was just thinking, can I ask you how many different countries did you visit with your work?

PM I haven't the faintest idea, about 12 in Africa but over the whole world I don't know it was all of the Caribbean, always Canada and the States and when I was making a world visit if I came back to New Zealand and then most of Europe but I didn't have so much to do with the European work and then Asia most of the Asian YWCA's but I didn't get to Korea and at that time you couldn't visit China, but I spent a great deal of time always in going to India and Pakistan but also Hong Kong and Thailand and once to Burma that was a little bit frightening too, very really, but it was quite funny in the end, it was then possible to visit. Well when I left Geneva I knew that I could perhaps be there for 24 hours and you had to get a visa in I think Australia and anyway as I travelled I discovered that you could stay for longer and that the best place to try to get a visa was in Bangkok so in Bangkok where I was going anyway I spent some time with the General Secretary at the Burmese office trying to get a visa and the man there was quite upset that I only wanted to stay for one night and why wasn't I staying for a week, it was possible then to stay a week and so I finally said I think I would stay for 3 days but I didn't and I didn't like to say to the YWCA that I was a YWCA person what I did was to cable a named person and say that I would be staying at the Strand Hotel which was just a name to me but a romantic name and I hadn't booked of course but I had to do something say something and I would be there for this particular time. Well when I arrived at the airport in Burma, in Rangoon we had to line up and each person had to say where they were staying and there was a young man in front of me and he said he was going to the YMCA and I nearly fell over and the woman said *"I don't think you can go there it will be closed"* and the young man said he thought it would be open and she said you should go to a hotel and so she told him a hotel and I had been to Rangoon once before and this was a huge hotel and the cost was quite high and because practically nobody was staying there. It was one of the ones the Russians had built and given to the Burmese in compensation for the rice which they took from them and so this American boy said he couldn't afford that, so he would stay at the airport and they seemed to be going to allow that but they didn't want he to go the YMCA it seemed. But the next day I was taken to YMCA by the YWCA people and he called out to me, he had just decided he would go there and he got in alright of course. Well I got to the hotel and they said *"oh there was a letter there for you"* and here was a letter in the box for me from YWCA saying that someone would call for me the next morning and they duly did and they had arranged a meeting, they had done all this in about two days and they had a meeting of about sixty people and they had two soldiers, there so I was very conscious of these soldiers and I was very careful what I said about contacts with the rest of the world and that because we were not allowed to send any money I think we'd got to a stage where we were allowed to send scraps of material so they could make things and anyway when the questions came the questions were from the very things I hadn't said and I really didn't know what to do and I did my best but I couldn't quietly ask someone can I answer this then as soon as they broke for morning tea or whatever it was I asked one of the people about these men and they said that's alright they don't understand a word of English and they just come for the meal, they come whenever there is a meeting and it was a sort of neighbourhood groups and the YWCA led the neighbourhood group and these soldiers were just there as part of their duties. But they showed me around, I saw some of the people that I already knew in to their homes and went to this particular hotel I was taken by a group there and also went to YMCA to meet the people there and tell them so I'd would have a message back to the YMCA in Geneva, that was really a very pleasant visit. And since that time I don't know how it is at the moment but after a few years there were people coming Burmese nurses coming to the nurse's conference in Geneva to the World Health building and they were brought to see us and again they always had somebody with them from their Embassy, so there were moments. Some of the meetings that I had with the people within the countries were living under great difficulty were very interesting and also very concerning but sometimes quite exciting. I remember going to a very tiny group of young women probably aged between say 16 – 25 or so, who were living in a little house that they had managed to rent in a small town away in the North of Pakistan and they wanted to know about the YWCA and I told them about different projects around the world and when we came to discuss a bit more one of them sat forward and said *"tell us what are women doing to liberate themselves"*, I thought what a lovely question. Then in some of the other countries for instance in Liberia I mean all of these countries now have been through much much worse conditions than ever pertained while I was there and really dreadful suffering, but Liberia I found in a very difficult situation there, their President was actually the wife of the President of the country and that meant that the Government was in away or could be much involved in what they did and that was very worrying to some of the

YWCA members and of course they talked about it quietly, but there wasn't very much one could do about it. Later on of course they suffered a great deal when the President was killed and as you know some of these countries are so involved whether they want to or not in the politics of the country that they have a very difficult job to carry out ordinary work. In Sera Leone which again has been hit great suffering recently, when I went there that was one of the I don't know whether you call it a highlight but it was certainly a tremendous moment in my life as a YWCA person. I have been more than once, but this particular time I was going to especially

RG THIS IS SIDE TWO OF TAPE TWO OF INTERVIEW WITH PAT MORRISON.

PM So I was going to Sera Leone to meet the chairperson of vocational school which Sera Leone YWCA had set up this was something almost unique I think in the YWCA the Sera Leones used to have only secondary school which was for academic studies and there was nothing really for the ordinary person vocational training and the YWCA started a class for training people for certain jobs that they thought women could do and had about 30 in the class, that grew to a secondary school of 750 and a very big staff and the staff being accepted as Government Staff and paid for by the Government and it was I remember telling someone in the International Labour Organisation the ILO about it when he was going to make a visit to Sera Leone, he didn't know about it and he came back so enthusiastic with such a school. Well I was going when the school had been progressing for quite awhile and we had a Swiss secretary there sort of like a fraternal worker and she was there helping them plan for some of their vocational work. I was met at the airport by a group of women and they were very quiet and that and then they said to me "*you realise that Miranda Coka has been very ill*" and I didn't know at all she had been ill and this was the person that I had particularly wanted to see and she had died that day or the day before. So in fact I was there about four days and the whole four days were taken up with the funeral and we had the next morning there was this Swiss person and another person from the World staff who was in Sera Leone at the time, and she was helping the family arrange about the funeral, the night I arrived we had like a wake and sang hymns for hours in some church hall and the next day was the funeral and we the Sera Leone people had to look for certain things. One of the things they wanted, well, my friend was looking for was a lace handkerchief, I said, "*what do you want that for?*" I said "*I've got some handkerchief*" because I had brought some at the last minute I had remembered that I didn't have any presents and I had brought some late night shopping practically in Geneva and she said but you wouldn't get it back and I said that's all right and what it was, was to cover the face and so the person who was very much a World Wide YWCA supporter would have, I think liked that touch. Then we went to the funeral and we had to be there before one o'clock I think in the afternoon but before that I had been told by the general secretary that I would pin the World YWCA badge and I didn't know what that meant but it turned out it meant that these badges or whatever tokens of different organisations would be put on the body in the coffin and I said oh! I just said the first thing that came into my head I couldn't do that, they looked a bit disappointed or something then I said oh! Well I will. I didn't know what it meant and when we went there we sat and there were a great many people there we sat for quite awhile and someone said to me when you feel like it you will just go up and I will come with you and people were up and moving around the coffin and the person was dressed in a long white satin I suppose it could have been a night-gown or it could have been a dress but with a frill or something and these badges were just pinned on to this and it was really a moving experience but it was very easy really to do this. And then at a certain point I had to take up a wreath from the World Wide YWCA and place it at the head of the coffin and I did it with the Swiss person from the two of us put it together then we went to the service. Most people walked to graveyard but I was with someone who had a disability and she was allowed to have her car so we went with her and then again as one of the first people who had to shovel with a little trowel some sand or gravel into the what do you call it but the coffin was then closed and then we had along service before that, there was quite a few Muslim women present because Muslim girls had come to the school and the Mayor of the City was there and representatives from all over the town and then, I realised that we had 7 hours in which we had taken part in this service so that was a sharing, it wasn't at all what I went for but still a sharing of their life and that. Things like that happened in different places.

RG I was just thinking maybe you could just outline for me the type of programmes or projects that the World-wide YWCA was able to get going that really addressed or basic needs?

PM Yes well, we always made it a point that we did what the women of the country wanted, we didn't suggest to them unless they asked for ways in which something could be done but they would come to us with what they thought was most needed in their country. For instance, in Madagascar in the main city it was to rent a stall in the market place to sell things and they even have the money to pay the rent and it was really like \$500 American dollars they needed a year. Of course they had many other projects they wanted like hostels which cost lots more. But that is one small thing. In Tanzania women were taught tie dye process and they made clothing and they ended up having quite a big shop in which they sold garments, I got some beautiful dresses there and their person who was in charge who designed and cut and that became the head of a fashion firm in another country, through her experience in the YWCA. In Ghana one of the people helped set up a bakery and then she herself branched out into a big firm of her own. In Uganda I think I have mentioned the Kindergarten trained people, was the only training for kindergartens in the country, and it was the only way in which people could have professional work done to get someone who had been trained by the YWCA, so they had kindergartens throughout the country with YWCA teachers. They also there wanted to help people in the villagers and they dug fish ponds and provided the fish, the stock so that people could make money from what they grew and they also had pigs, goats and one of the kindergartens I saw in Uganda was one

of the most interesting I think I've ever seen and it was one big room divided by curtains made of seeds and nuts and that and they have two or three classes meeting, the children sat on mats on the floor and they had their implements that they worked with would be like peach stones but painted different colours and they'd have all sorts of nuts and that, used as counters and it was really wonderful what they did and the chief in the village had given the land and then the men of the village had built the building and everybody owned it they were all so pleased with it. Another kindergarten I remember, where I had to speak to children from about three years old and they were in Sialkot way up in Pakistan in the, what I would call the horse country everywhere you went there were horses; and it was really lovely seeing the green grass and the horses you almost thought you were back in a part of New Zealand somewhere or a part of Switzerland actually where there is province Canton which has a great many horses. This was a little kindergarten of about probably 40 or 50 children, I think only one teacher and they played games outside and I took some photographs, I was very pleased that my photographs went into a world series that went round the world and the teacher asked me if I would talk to them and these little ones had to sit or stand, we went inside I think for that part of ceremony and I had to think what do you say to a three year old especially if you say it to thirty three year olds. So I tried to remember other kindergartens and I told them about a kindergarten in Fiji where there were people of different countries and I told them that I came from a land which had mountains and something like the hills they could see and then I told them about these children doing finger painting and actually I knew very little about finger painting and of course the teacher wanted to know they did it they would like to do it and send it the children in Fiji. You never quite know what you are going to be asked to do, but then there were times when you had to join in discussions on very serious subjects you know peace and human rights and questions on what the YWCA did and how it joined in and whether it supported marches against torture or against the disappeared one in South America and committee meetings where we agonised over what we could do to help people and when I was working later on with the YWCA in Great Britain I was most interested to meet a Korean Woman who had taken part in a protest in Seoul and had been imprisoned for three weeks, it was to be for longer but she said that the University students would lose time and not be able to go to University again if they were imprisoned but she was 70 something, she didn't look it, it didn't matter to her she had the time. So she took part in this protest on the steps of the Government Building and was arrested and it was Amnesty International she said had helped her, but there were so many letters about her she was had been I think a head of a University Department and they just got well fed up with the letters that they received and she met us in London and people who to do with Amnesty International to thank them for their intervention, so and I actually met her again in never thought I would and I met her again in a meeting in Malaysia about 3 or 4 years later when I had to come back to New Zealand and I went to the conference of church women in Kuala Lumpur and she was present and when she started speaking I realised that I had seen her in London. We had to try to decide how we would support the people in South Africa throughout the time that they were working under great stress and sometimes imprisoned, we of course protested and we set up special sort of protests around the World we did World Wide YWCA appeals as well as through Amnesty International and these women made a difference even in the prisons, once the President and the National General Secretary were both imprisoned, no special charge against them at all and they had found that the first thing that happened to them in this big prison in Johannesburg was that the women had their panties or nickers taken from them. They just didn't have them and these two YWCA women protested in the prison and they went at it for about two weeks and all the women were reissued with their clothing. They also at the time, took part in the week of prayer which the World Wide YWCA and the World Alliance of YWCA's have together in November and that particular one was a topic called "*people like us*" or something and we had planned it in Geneva about 18 months before, so we had no idea how it would be used and they used it in the prison with the other prisoners and the women wardens wore them and someone brought a letter in to me and said "*get out your tissues*" or something and read this and they had told us how they had conducted this and how other people you know like us they were much, much worse than these people in the prison and they took each article you know the 7 days and dealt with it well at the end of the time when these two were finally released the woman warden left her job. She said she couldn't do it any longer, so their witness was terrific really. And some of those of course became parliamentarians you know in the first Parliament after Mandela became President and they also did the YWCA generally did a tremendous amount of training of people for the voting in the local places and they carried out quite a big campaign and some of our people who went from New Zealand met them and knew what they were doing.

RG What has it been like for you Patricia personally to have seen first hand the circumstances of all these different people and all those different conditions they are living under, I mean for you as an individual what has it been like to have seen so much, to have heard all these stories and have just taken in all that information?

PM Well I don't know it makes me wish of course I could see the people every time there is something in the papers or in the news especially over Sera Leone I mean I've been terribly concerned about what is happening there and I don't know what has happened to the people that I personally know but in that I was able to maybe help a little bit because and that doesn't often happen, the United Nations Association in New Zealand had appointed a Human Rights Officer Richard Bennett who came to UNA National Council Meeting last year and I was there, actually sitting opposite him and he came he said to make a report on his work for the year on how the UNA could sort of move on human rights questions but to say also that he had been appointed by the United Nations to go to Sera Leone I pricked up my ears, looked at him and he said I can't find anyone who has been to Sera Leone, so I just said "*I have*". He wanted to know something about it and as far as I know he is still there, very soon I heard him speaking on the radio with Kim Hill, and he had I thought that fighting broke out in and really terrible situation just about two or three weeks later and I

thought to myself that he would be still in Geneva, because he was going there to be briefed, and about next day I heard him speaking and he was in the middle of Freetown, but when I hear these different places of course it takes me back to those that I knew and wondering where they are now and if I were a better correspondent perhaps I might know but it's also a background to what's happening and constantly reminding you that it's people, people that we know and what's happening to them, I wish I could visit again not particularly to some of these countries but see the people again and wish that I was closer and it does make you feel a little sorry that you are not in a place like Geneva, possibly New York I am not sure; not having lived in New York, I've visited often enough but not stayed there because there you seem to know things without having being told, things everybody knows, things happen, that's how it happen when I was there.

RG Why do you think that is?

PM Because we are all dealing with the rest of the world all the time and somehow, I mean people telephone one another of course, the news just gets around very fast and one of the very interesting things that I found when I first went to Geneva was the Working Committees which the World Council of Churches had and they always regarded the YWCA and YMCA as part of their sort of fraternal workers they called them and we could choose which committees we wanted to be on and so several of our staff would go to them, I have been to the one in Africa and I've been to the one in South America and one in co-operation with men and women, things like that. Two younger people we had were on Youth and Drugs and that, they said they had narcotics coming out of their ears, they were at week long meetings and there you hear from people on their world staff and other world staffs that are working closely with people of all these countries and they were telling you what's happening there and it certainly keeps you from thinking just about your own affairs.

RG And were there people through your organisation or other organisations that were an inspirational to you or that you saw as a mentor?

PM Oh Yes I think so and many of them very much I admired and was really very grateful for the opportunity to work for the World Wide YWCA because the people that I met in fact some of them I had already met in the years that I was working with the World University Service the International Student Service I knew them already then and then I met them again to work with them and they were tremendous examples of real dedication to the concerns of women and I was still friends with them of course and but all us now of that group are now retired but still or trying to keep up some of the contacts.

RG And I was thinking what were some of the things the organisation of the World Wide YWCA that you really think are some of the key strengths of that organisation that makes it stand out in the way it did and why it works so well?

PM Of course it goes through stages and things change and different parts of the YWCA will have different views at the time and sometimes they keep very close to their original aims and sometimes some people would feel they were not following what were their original aims and of course things have to change too but in general I think the main thing is that the YWCA has kept close to trying to do what it feels is best for women, what they probably say empowering women and sometimes it maybe something that is not very popular but it's still thought to be needed for that particular group of women and sometimes it's not very close to what most people think would be an attitude of a church or of a Christian sometimes it's hard to understand why one section wants to a particular thing and the others don't but in general they still accomplish a great deal and they'd particularly I think helped in some of the bigger organisations anyway they do help people who need support and those ones in real need just as we have people in our communities who are really poor and the kind of people who have to depend on food banks who don't have enough for rent or power well in most places the YWCA will be there it won't be in all of them. It won't be always like the YWCA of the USA which thirty years ago was protesting against the possession of guns and they protested so much that they lost their funding from many of their communities, the men left the boards that is the advisory boards, they just cut them out of their funding and the YWCA went through quite a difficult time and that was so long ago, and here they're still struggling with much more factual information as to what can happen if you do have a gun, but they really stood out as the YWCA in South Africa did and really suffered, some others are very conservative and sometimes you find the people, the older people are still in charge as they feel and the younger ones wanting to do something quite different. I was in Pakistan once and we were travelling with the fairly new president who was young I suppose she was in her maybe she might have been thirtyish, not sure and a young treasurer and we were flying from Lahore to Karachi to a meeting of the national committee and this young president said to me "this is the first time I've gone to Lahore without butterflies in my stomach" and I said what do you mean "she said I am going there quite happily" I said why "she said because you're coming" that is I would be taken the flak and because the signs of things that these younger ones wanted do, they wanted to work with Muslim women, they wanted to train social workers whether they were Muslim, Hindu or Christian and they wanted to, well they felt that this was a part of the work of the church and there were church people who didn't want to have anything to do with them and they had quite a struggle and so that sometimes you were the person in between, so there's just so much that it is very difficult to pick out any one highlight and except really working for understanding and for peace and that's why I worked with the different religions, to understand what each religion is about and really discover the treasures of those religions and

how we share them or we could share them, I wish we would and so that in the YWCA we were doing the same thing though we mightn't have thought we were doing it but it was an attempt at understanding one another.

RG We are coming up to the end of this tape and I only had two tapes and I'm just thinking maybe one thing to finish off on is just bringing back to you Patricia being involved with all this type of work. Do you feel that this is the sort of thing you'd always wanted to be involved in and has this been something that you've really seen yourself grow into and it's, would there have been times that you felt you didn't want to continue with this sort of work?

PM Well, there was a time when I was given a choice which was a hard choice to make between the work for the SCM and work for the Government which could have meant working with the Foreign Affairs Department looking after all the Colombo plan students who were coming in, a job that I was told I would have to create for myself which you don't very often get a job in the Government like that, but I felt very strongly that I should stay with the Student Christian Movement and I remembered old John Armott the famous First World Travelling Secretary said to work with young people of sixteen or so was what one would do in the time that one should work with them and I suppose because it was a Christian job I stayed with it. I've gone from one thing to another and the opportunities have kept opening up.



**Patricia Morrison receiving Christchurch Peace City Award in 2005 from Mayor Garry Moore**