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Interview with Paul Pisano

Paul Pisano

Abby Kennedy

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**Interview with Paul Pisano for Rural Diversity (SOCY 77)--LDS Community
Conducted by Abby Kennedy on March 4, 1999 in Olin library**

AK: Can you tell me about yourself? Just... where you're from, where you've lived and so on.

PP: Okay. Well, I grew up in **Pokasola** Idaho which is sort of, I guess you could say in Mormon Country, but kind of more on the periphery so it's not where the majority is but it's a prominent part of the population. Um... I grew up there through high school, started my undergraduate at Utah State University in Logan. I did my freshman and the first quarter of my sophomore year there, and then I took a two-year leave of absence to serve a mission in Italy for the church. I came back when that was over and finished up my undergrad and Linda and I met during that time and we got married. After that we moved to Bloomington; did a year there, then moved to Cincinnati. That was an interesting time too... we were both originally in the College Conservatory of Music there but she wasn't quite satisfied with her program there in costume design, and interviewed for the one at Ohio State and was accepted, and so for three years she had either a dorm or an apartment in Columbus at which she stayed during the week, and came back down on weekends. We've got a lot of stories from that time. (Laughs)

AK: And how did you end up at Kenyon?

PP: Well, she had finished her degrees and was freelancing already, for a year, and found out about the costume design position here--it was a two year position--and interviewed for it and got it, and then once we got here I kind of wiggled my way into the piano department and the Italian program, and here we are.

(AK asks about speaking Italian. PP talks about learning the language, mentions that missionaries undergo training before they go on their missions:)

...Before you go to the country you're assigned to, if it's a foreign-speaking county, they have an intensive nine-week language training program and training in missionary work in general. And I remember that by the eighth day we had surpassed what I had learned in two quarters at the university, because it was just continuous, all-day. There were funny little penalties for speaking English without permission, like there was a bucket of pennies going around and if someone caught you speaking English you got handed the bucket until you could catch someone else. Funny punishment system.

AK: I may ask you more about that later... Can you tell me about your involvement with the Church?

PP: When I was born, my mother was, in Mormon parlance today we would say was a less-active member and my father was Catholic in fact--he was a less-active Catholic--and the compromise they came up with at first was to go to the Methodist Church down the street. I was only there until I was four, so I only really remember the nursery, but they told me later that they went for a while, and then one day the minister made an anti-military speech--this was still during Vietnam, of course--and my dad, being retired military, didn't take to that too well, so they left and started

sending me to my mother's church even though she wasn't really practicing herself. And I probably stayed in it as much because of influential youth leaders and things, until I--of course, you ultimately arrive at a certain intellectual and spiritual independence where you decide for yourself, and I did decide that that was what I felt close to. Of course, you have to pretty much have arrived at that to serve a mission and leave school for two years, so--I should clarify, although you may know this already, that it's a volunteer effort; it's not a paid job or anything. And since then I've continued to be involved and served in various callings more at the local level of the church. Currently, I'm what they call a state missionary which is kind of like a part-time missionary as opposed to the full-time missionaries (who do their two years) and I'm the pianist for the primary program for the little kids.

AK: When do you think that time was when you really figured it out for yourself?

PP: I think about when I was fourteen, about ninth grade. Another thing that was influential was the seminary program--which has little to do with what most people associate with seminary; a college where you get a divinity degree and that kind of thing. This is actually for high-school-age kids. Here in Ohio where there isn't that much of a Mormon population--Latter-Day Saint population, I should say--the kids get up; well, the class itself is held at 5:45 in the morning and they go for about an hour of study in either... it's a four-year rotating program; one year it's the Old Testament, the next year it's the New Testament, another year it's the book of Mormon, and the fourth year it's the Doctrine and Covenants and Church history. So, that's for ninth through twelfth grade. Where I lived, since there was a higher population, they actually, just off of high school campuses they could build seminaries where the kids, if they were satisfying their credit requirement for their high school, could actually take a class period and do this, so you didn't have to get up at five in the morning to do it. Where I grew up, out of high school campus of twelve or thirteen hundred there were probably about three or four hundred in the seminary program.

AK: You've already kind of touched on this, but I'm wondering if you could talk about how important religion is to you, and how your faith translates into your daily life?

PP: Well, ideally to me religion in general is not just a Sunday activity--a feel-good activity to go hear something on Sundays, and forget about the rest of the week... well, first of all, in terms of even actual church activity, it goes beyond that. I think Linda told you about the home teaching and visiting teaching programs. A companion and I are responsible for visiting five people once a month, to serve as a representative of the Branch President because normally--I know we're getting into a completely different subject here--the structure of the priesthood in this church is as far as I know unique in that... whereas in most other religions, at least Christian religions I'm familiar with, pretty much everything falls on the pastor as far as looking out for his flock, so to speak... and that probably also has to do with the fact that it's a paid position, too. In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, there is no paid clergy; the branch president or the bishop (who's the equivalent of a pastor or a parish priest) is a volunteer like everyone else and has his own job for a living. Our branch president, for example, is the main computer specialist for Bank One. And being bishop takes--even though you delegate a lot to people like the home teachers and the presidents of several different auxiliary organizations at the local level--still, the branch

president or bishop puts in about 20 hours a week. So anyway, getting back to my involvement, because of the way priesthood responsibility is delegated in the church, I'm involved in visiting a few members of the church every month--looking out for their welfare and encouraging them to be active in the church and to keep up on prayer and saying the scriptures, and usually we have a kind of message for the month that we give them, and if they need transportation to the church, we're in charge of either providing that ourselves or delegating it or something. So that's still only a sub-answer to your question; that's only about the activity I put in because of my religion in my daily life... other than that, in terms of how it extends into my profession...

(Talks about being a musician; making that less of a secular endeavor; the effect of music on the soul, etc.)

...and just in the rest of my activities, we're taught to try to maintain an internal dialogue with God in all of our activities and direct our thoughts in that way, and when I put it in practice to the utmost, it affects every single activity that I do and even the thoughts that I think.

AK: One things that we have become interested in in learning about the church is the high rate of conversion. I wanted to see what you think... what's your personal theory on that?

PP: Um... well first of all, a lot of people these days are talking about a sort of spiritual awakening in general that maybe people are starting to see the failure of materialism and so I think there are more people looking for something in general and we're probably one of many religions who are feeling the effects of that in a positive way. As far the Latter-Day Saints in particular... a phrase that I heard said about the church that was very apt is that it's "a non-speculative religion in the midst of a world of speculative religions". We believe that follows the Biblical model... we don't feel there was a lot of speculation about the nature of God in those days because he was communicating directly through prophets or through apostles and so forth. And in that way, when, for instance, doctrinal crises arose or whatever, you didn't have a synod voting on it and going with the majority or a lot of speculative endeavors about it... for instance, in the early church, when they first started bring large numbers of Gentiles into the church, it became an issue: Well, all of our Hebrew members of the Church have been circumcised, do these people who are joining as adults have to go through that? The matter of taking the gospel to the Gentiles was a concern even before then and Peter, who was the chief apostle, received revelation in symbolic terms [paraphrases story]... anyway, the point being that this was settled by revelation and once the chief apostle had received that, it wasn't a matter of speculation anymore. So, to make that parallel with the Latter-Day Church, we feel that the president of our church--whom, as you know from Linda, we consider to be a seer and a prophet and revelator--plays the same role. The essential things are not left to a matter of opinion. This is not to say that the leader of the Church does all the members' thinking for them, and in fact, I get very impatient with people in the church who think that it excuses them from doing any thinking, from considering weighty matters and thinking, well, the brethren will answer that. I think we are responsible to take the gospels as it has been revealed in its essentials and then apply it to the situation in our lives where everything has not been spelled out.

In fact, there was in the church in 1967, a speech given by... not a leader in the church but, I think it was a professor at Brigham Young University, and--I'll have to let you do some

reading on your own to get more to the specifics, but--it was more a kind of sociological observation that he made, and he took both of the symbols for it from the Book of Nephi and the Book of Mormon. There are a few chapters that deal with a dream that **Leehi**, the first prophet in the Book of Mormon, had in which he saw a rod of iron conducting to the tree of life, and all kinds of obstacles preventing people from getting to that, and if they held of the rod all the way to the tree, they would be all right and they would partake of the fruit of eternal Life. On the other hand, there's another example where the same prophet, as they're being guided to--you know they were basically exiled from Jerusalem, and the Book of Mormon is actually an account of how they wound up in the Western Hemisphere, and one of the instruments that they used as a guide was a **leeahona**. It was a kind of a compass, but it was more than a compass, they also received direct revelation written on it... anyway, read First Nephi and you can get this a little better. But the leeahona, unlike the rod of iron, simply pointed in a direction. It didn't conduct you all the way, step by step. So, this guy--his name was Richard Poll--his observation was there were people in the church who he called the Iron Rods and people called the Leeahonas. The Iron Rods being those who looked for every detail and every answer in their lives in the scriptures and if it wasn't specifically found [there]... if it wasn't answered through those avenues, it wasn't a question worth having. [adds that he is speculating and paraphrasing] Whereas, people with whom he identified himself as Leeahona people, who said: you know I still have problems with the question of human suffering and the existence of evil and these kind of things, some of which would be answered--enough to sustain their faith--felt that there were some things left up to their own... you know, God gave them reason, too, and he wasn't going to answer everything for them, and that was part of the act of faith; going forward without all the answers, or figuring some of them out on your own. A later article that was kind of follow-up to this, not exactly a rebuttal, felt that he had made an Either-Or kind of [distinction]... you know that there are two kinds of people in the church, and this person suggested that these were two extremes on a continuum, maybe, and that there were all kinds of degrees in between... one example of which being the person who looked for answer in the scriptures and the teachings of modern prophets, reasoned on his own or her own, but also really sought to receive personal revelation through the Holy Ghost. And, without really trying to categorize myself, I'm inclined to feel most comfortable with that as a kind of a third distinction. What was the original question?

AK: It was about conversion...

PP: Sorry, I get so far... well, anyway, I won't try to come up with a good segway; I'll just jump back into it. Anyway, another thing that makes the Church so appealing is that it requires change in people. I think there are a lot of things out there... that offer spirituality without religion, or spirituality--they probably wouldn't ever say this, but--spirituality without morality. One criticism that the church receives sometimes is that there's a certain perceived exclusivity to it; if you're not a member of the church, you can't--and not even all members of the church can--go to the temple for instance. And that isn't true at all. Anyway can go to the temple if you're willing to satisfy certain requirements, and when that objection is raised, I think the real objection is that we should expect, Heaven forbid, anyone should change. You know, it's really popular to accept people as they are. And that's not to say that people aren't inherently good... I think we're born with a dual nature (and this again is in contrast to a lot of other Christian thinking)

[talks about dual nature of mankind; nature of God (otherness); mankind's ability to understand God; Joseph Smith's teachings on this subject...]

... The Church expects us to conform our lives to God rather than conform God to our lives. And there's a scripture... I'm going to actually read this is you don't mind...

[End of Side 1, Tape 1]

I think this is just very descriptive of a lot of our culture today... "They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God". [Passage from the Doctrine and Covenants, Chapter 1, section 16] It goes on, but that's the phrase that jumps out at me is that part of the fall-out from this generally very positive movement of everyone seeking their own spirituality is that some of them fall into the pitfall of creating God in their image; taking their lifestyle and assuming that is the thing by which all things should be measured, and God should be this; God should be that. Whereas, in our church, and I think in a lot of other churches as well, the character of God sets the standard and it is we who should conform to that.

[returns to subject of dual nature; premortal existence; the Heavenly Mother, baggage of mortality & excessive appetites, etc.]

... repentance is necessary and that's what the church requires of us and for everyone that--I think about 300,000 people annually worldwide--joins the church, for every one of those, I have no idea but I think there are at least that many if not more, who seriously investigate then decide not to. I have no statistics on that; I don't even know if it would be possible to compile them, but I think many of them--some may disagree immediately--get at least the idea that it's good thing but it just takes too much effort and too much sacrifice.

[talks about Joseph Smith's lectures on faith & the importance of sacrifice--putting God above all other matters; mentions Neely Maxwell's interview with Hugh Hewett on PBS]

... The Gospel is demanding and requires people to be the best they can, and when people are the best they can be, they are happier. Or when they're trying to be, anyway. It's impossible, I think, for anyone who is living out the worst part of their nature and who is also honest with themselves to say that they're happy. There's a saying--It's almost reached cliché-status in the church--there's a phrase from the Book of Mormon that says "wickedness never was happiness"--just that it's impossible to be happy when we're doing anything that isn't right. There's always the role of ignorance too; of course, slack is cut for us there too, and that's where the role of temple work comes in...

[explains the Biblical basis of the Baptism of the Dead; other ceremonies performed in the Temple; eternal family; "checklist" of requirement to enter the temple; stakes vs. wards; Words of Wisdom=health code...]

AK: It seems so interesting to me that, the things that you're saying, that sacrifice and

willingness to change and stuff like that would appeal to people...

PP: It may seem kind of paradoxical, yeah, because it seems like a lot of people would react by not wanting to change, and that's why I say that there's at least an equal or greater number for everyone one of those that join the church that don't, that investigate and choose not to.

AK: What do you see as the most important tenets of the religion, if you had to name two or three?

PP: Well, this isn't even my personal--it's kind of *sine qua non*, the whole idea of modern-day revelations. That and the Book of Mormon, which really is modern-day revelation; of course, we believe that it was written in antiquity but that it was brought to light in modern day. But, yeah, without modern-day revelation, we would be another speculative religion, like anyone else. This whole idea that I was referring to before that human being are, in a very real way, children of God, not in the sense of being mortally created by God, but that our spirits were also. And that therefore we have the potential to become like him; the divine potential, that's very central... I think the structure of the church--while we're not saved by programs, we're saved by Jesus Christ, but--I think that the way the Church is organized is very inspired because it doesn't put the responsibility all on one leader and a circle of people he can depend on; it makes us realize all of us are responsible for building up the community of God.

(Tape battery runs out--about five minutes are lost here.)

So, the question was, how would I characterize the latter-day saint community. Well, like anywhere else they're influenced not only by their faith--for the most part, that would be the greatest influence, but-- there are certain cultural influences that are all around us, many of which we're not aware of. In the particular congregation here, as Linda mentioned to you, there are some people who have grown up in Mount Vernon all their lives; there are Columbus transplants; a few people like us from further away, and... I don't know, the simplest thing that comes to mind is good but imperfect people. The ones that are actively participating are really trying, for the most part, they're trying to--one thing that's interesting about smaller branches of the Church like this is that everyone, virtually, has some kind of a calling. Whereas in a more standard-size ward--about five hundred people I think constitutes a ward--it isn't so uncommon to not have a calling, but in a branch like this it's a given, and you may even have more than one. I have two in fact but the (garbled) primary, so it's not like I have to spend time during the week on it, but it is fun. So, in that sense, you might even say--and I hate to make such generalizations too, but I think--I'm sure Linda told you that a lot of the membership of the church that grows up in very heavily vast majority or member of the church kind of demographic, there are those who are very committed, and then there are those for whom it's a kind of tradition; everyone around them is going to church and participating, so they just go along with the crowd until, you know, sooner or later, something happens where they wind up being faced with the choice of whether they really believe it or it's just a comfortable thing to do. And I think you find much less of that--pretty much anywhere else in the world where the church is--I think there's just a lot less of that taking it for granted. And also, a lot of most other places, I mean, families are converts--which most of the members here are actually, at least the adults. Many of the youth in the church either

were born with their parents already members or they joined the church soon after and so they've been exposed to it since they were very small, so--and that's an understanding that some people outside of Utah have that some people inside Utah don't; that having known another lifestyle, another world view, and then changing, and having had to make some serious--I hate to overuse this word--sacrifices to do so. Not that the several-generation members aren't also making sacrifices, because that's the nature of the religion, but I think some of them don't really realize they're making sacrifices because it's been habitual since they were children. So, in that sense, maybe people in the church in Mount Vernon--that's one advantage they might have. In other respects, they are very similar to other people in Mount Vernon, in Knox County. You know, it's funny how different the culture in Knox County is from, say, Columbus, just 45 minutes away, primarily because the interstate doesn't go by here--so there are certain things that like anyone else in Knox County, they don't have a lot of exposure to, unless they're actively sought it, in terms of education, the arts. Things that to many more rural people seem like unnecessary frills; that don't have anything to do with survival. You know, raising a family and providing. And because this is obviously a more rural economy, it tends to be more middle-class or even some that are closer to the poverty line. Which, for some people, that again, can be kind of a prod to be looking for something. Some people are humbled by that into looking for something better, and that would be true of any religion of course. Other people, if they've had too many hard knocks in life--of course it depends because many people have had hard knocks and just keep coming back, but some people--it hardens them and makes them cynical and less religiously inclined.

Another thing we have an interesting mix of, going back to the idea of Leeahona and Iron Rod and whatever this third category would be; there's quite a fair mix of that in this particular congregation.

AK: More so than the last church you were part of?

PP: Hmm. I think we had a pretty fair mix there too, as well, even though it was in Cincinnati. It is kind of ethnically homogeneous, of course, whereas--I think Linda told you that--in one of the wards we were in in Cincinnati, we were pretty close to downtown, and we had amazing racial diversity. Not only racial but socioeconomic, and about every other kind. Is there anything more specific you'd like me to say about that question?

AK: Well, I kind of wanted to know if you think the church is a community. I mean, that wasn't my question exactly, but...

PP: Well yeah, I do... do you mean in the sense of like the Amish are a community--like a separate community? How do you define--I mean I know that was something you were interested in...

AK: I'm not sure... community's such a nebulous word.

PP: Well, it's a community in that they have chosen to be bound together by certain beliefs and lifestyles and even--and this is something you'd probably be interested in too, which exists everywhere in the church, but--the Church in general is kind of a funny mix of participating as citizens in the world around them in general, and participating in the community as more of an

independent entity. There was a time in the history of the church when it was very much--

[End of Side 2, Tape 1]

AK: You were saying, in the time and the history of the church...

PP: Yeah, there were--Joseph Smith and a couple of his successors were really trying to get the membership to live what was called the law of consecration which is, in the most superficial way, kind of like socialism, I mean it was a communitarian economy, of course, differing from many socialist dogmas in that religion was encouraged rather than discouraged. That was tried for several years; in fact, there are still communities in Utah--there was one place called Orderville, another name for which was the United Order, and this community was living this law perfectly well, and then it fell apart over something--somebody wanted a pair of jeans, or something like that. I'm really oversimplifying but it takes a lot of humility to live that law and the church proved to not be ready for it. So right now, the church is living what we consider to be an inferior law, or a preparatory law, called the law of tithing, so instead of everyone putting all of their earning or assets into the kitty and then distributing according to need, everyone pays ten percent of their income. And in addition to that--that's operated church-wide, and that goes to things like building chapels and temples and the physical needs of maintaining the church. On the local level, every branch or ward of the church also practices fast offerings. On the first Sunday of every month the congregation together conducts a 24-hour fast and contributes--as kind of minimum--the amount of money saved from not eating those meals, but usually it's encouraged to be more generous than that. That goes to the fast offering fund and that goes to help people specifically in that congregation. Thus church also conducts fast offering on a church-wide basis for relief efforts, like they've had a few projects in Africa and raised things for the big earthquake in Armenia a few years ago; they've raised money to build a concrete plant and rebuild the house and things like that. But anyway, the church really encourages its members, if they're really in a difficult financial situation, rather than to get onto government welfare, to receive welfare from the church--the primary difference being that the welfare system within the church is much more actively involved in trying to get the people who are temporarily participating in that independent, and helping them to find employment. In most units of the church--I'm using the word "unit" to mean branch, state, ward--there's an employment specialist who's kind of on the lookout for things for people on church welfare to do. And there are things like literacy programs as well, to help them get skills to be more employable.

AK: Are there some here?

PP: Frankly, I'm not sure. There may be an employment specialist; I'm not sure if there's an illiteracy program, and offhand I'd say it there's not it's just because of the small size of the congregation; they just haven't gotten all the programs into it yet that some of the more established units have. So anyway, at this points it's kind of an interesting point between a communitarian economy and participation in the national or global economy. And like I said, it's partly because the church found out that we're not ready for full participation in the communitarian economy--and that actually was a cause of a lot of the persecution in the early

days. I mean, the persecutors used other excuses, like beliefs they found strange or whatever, but, like for instance: They had a community in Illinois called **Nahoo**, and it actually became the biggest city in the state. And you've got the biggest city in the state and it's independent from the economy of the state. It's got its own economy; it's got its own militia--that has a negative connotation in our day but state militias were a lot more common in those days. And so people found that threatening, and they were eventually kicked out of the state. In Missouri, I think it was partly that the church was perceived as abolitionist, and it was a slave holding state, and part of it, some members of the church brought it on themselves. At the time it was thought that the church was going to plant roots permanently in Missouri and [disclaimer about exact facts] my understanding is that members of the church in Missouri at that time boasted about that fact to people who were not members of the church; that they were going to come into the state and be the most influential; that they were here to stay... it's even referred to in the Doctrine and Covenants that the members brought it upon themselves. You know, Joseph Smith was brought to trial something like fifty times in his life and was only convicted once--for treason, that was the most common charge brought against him. And I think the reason why he was accused of treason was because he was trying to introduce this communitarian economy and here we're in the middle of rugged 19th-century American individualism. It was just so counter-cultural that it just didn't sit with people.

AK: To jump back, do you feel like the community of the church in Knox county has been isolated from the rest of the county at all?

PP: Oh, from the rest of the county? I don't know, because the membership really comes from all over the county. It's actually the only physical meeting point--well, I'm not really sure about the county boundaries, but we have members coming from Fredericktown and even as far away as Sunbury... Danville, even Gambier. So that doesn't strike me offhand as something that would be the case, because it isn't comprised primarily of Mount Vernon-ites. But I don't know that for a fact.

AK: Do you think people in this area might have misconceptions about the Church?

PP: Oh, I'm sure, yeah.

AK: What do you think those would be? And have you ever had any contact of this sort...

PP: Well, for one, I think academia in general seems to be somewhat hostile--maybe not much more so than they are to religion in general, but--the whole idea of living your life governed by faith and something that (for most of us anyway) is unseeable just doesn't sit well with people who are more materialistically or scientifically inclined. That anything that can't be perceived with the five senses or a magnification thereof of some kind doesn't exist. Or, the idea of modern revelation doesn't sit well with people--this whole idea that if a prophet receives revelation on an issue that if we really believe that that comes directly from God than there's not much need for intellectual pursuit on the matter, anymore. On that matter; not in general. That certainly doesn't sit well with a lot of academic people, I think. Of course, those aren't really misconceptions. Misconceptions would be more like... probably one of the biggest ones is that women are kept

really subservient and have no say how either the church or their families are governed; that it's very male-autocratic-patriarchal. That would be the biggest one, I think. Once in a while, there's some poor soul who thinks we still practice polygamy or something. Actually, most exchange students that I've known, most of them think we still practice polygamy, because a continent and an ocean away, information doesn't quite get there, and the communities of Mormons that they know of are so much smaller in comparison to the rest of the population that they're not able to represent themselves clearly. They don't have a lot of media access or anything, and so people are pretty much free to think what they want. Of course, this area specifically--I mean, obviously, you go to Mount Vernon and there's a different denomination of church on every corner--when the church here was first built, there was another church in the area that was going to the paper every Sunday. The minister was going to the paper and submitting an article bashing the Mormons. I haven't read any of these; I don't know what he was bashing them about, but I'm told from--

AK: How long ago was this?

PP: I think it was in the early eighties that the chapel was built and I know someone I can find out from who was here when they were meeting in a glass-blowers hall with eight people in the early seventies who could tell you when that started (Who?). The church has only been here I Mount Vernon since the early seventies; that's probably good for you to know. So basically, he was just putting these diatribes in the paper and finally someone called him on it--well, the paper apparently just wasn't even really reading them; just said "well, he's a minister, he knows"--and so someone went to the newspaper and pointed out something specific in the article that was going to press or had gone to press and said "hey, this isn't true." And so they refused to publish him. But my understanding is that he then had his wife take them in so they wouldn't recognize him... so there is some degree of antagonism from other Christian communities. I'd be more likely to apply actually antagonism to the clergy, and only some of the clergy--and more just misconceptions among the congregation as a whole. You know, we get a lot of flack about "what goes on in the temple that's so secret? There must be blood sacrifice..." you know, that kind of thing. People are inclined to assume the worst just because we--I told you pretty much all of the activities themselves that go on in the temple while not mentioning real specifics of the ceremony, and those are things that we do keep quiet about just because we consider them sacred and we don't discuss; I mean, we don't even discuss them with each other.

[AK and PP agree that the allotted interview time is over; PP offers to continue the interview later. Says he can answer another question.]

AK: Do you think the church is accepting of other religious or minority groups?

PP: Yes. There's really a lot of what one might call ecumenical activity in Salt Lake City. The big Catholic Cathedral burned down and the Church was instrumental in having that rebuilt. I noticed you had Jews on there [gestures toward interview schedule] and I think the Church enjoys a unique relationship with the Jewish community that many other Christian groups don't have. I have actually a whole article on that...

[elaborates on relationship between Judaism & Mormonism.]

I'd love to get into the issue of blacks in the priesthood with you, but maybe we should do that another time. Maybe we should do another interview...

[End of interview]