FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
(Funded in part by the National Endowment For The Humanities)

(Funded in part by the Keweenaw National Historic Park Advisory Commission / U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service)

CONDITIONS FOR USE OF .PDF TRANSCRIPT:
Finlandia University, formerly Suomi College, holds the exclusive copyright to the entirety of its Finnish Folklore and Social Change in the Great Lakes Mining Region Oral History Collection, including this .pdf transcript which is being presented online for research and academic purposes. Any utilization that does not fall under the United States standard of Fair Use (see U.S. Copyright Office or Library of Congress), including unauthorized re-publication, is a violation of Federal Law. For any other use, express written consent must be obtained from the Finnish American Historical Archive: archives@finlandia.edu.

PREFERRED FORMAT FOR CITATION / CREDIT:
“Maki, John”, Finnish Folklore and Social Change in the Great Lakes Mining Region Oral History Collection, Finlandia University, Finnish American Historical Archive and Museum.

Note: Should the Finnish American Archive be a resource for publication, please send a copy of the publication to the Archive:

Finnish American Historical Archive and Museum
Finlandia University
601 Quincy St.
Hancock, Michigan 49930 USA
906-487-7347 - fax: 906-487-7557
The Reverend Keith Nelson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motive for Coming to Pelkie Parish</td>
<td>948,49</td>
<td>Loss of personal identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition of Church &amp; Community</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>Middle-class social activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Challenge of a Rural Community</td>
<td>948</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor's Biography</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>From Symbol to Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Impressions of Pelkie</td>
<td>950-51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles of the Pastor</td>
<td>952</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Parish</td>
<td>952</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics of Parish</td>
<td>953,59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Organization</td>
<td>954-55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Position in Community</td>
<td>956</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Black &amp; White&quot; Thinking</td>
<td>957-58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining the Church</td>
<td>959-61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelkie's Aged</td>
<td>963-66</td>
<td>Community takes care of aged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Values &amp; Material Consumption</td>
<td>966-67</td>
<td>More on Human Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Relations - The Transition</td>
<td>968-70</td>
<td>The Need for Small Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Dictates Lifestyle</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>Excellent! Comm. Cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Chartier Episode</td>
<td>971-75</td>
<td>Change of Pastor Image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences with Community Hierarchy</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>From Rites &amp; Rituals to Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to Youth Members</td>
<td>978-80</td>
<td>Role of Women in Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Value Conflicts</td>
<td>980-82</td>
<td>Again, Goals and Visions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling Disagreement</td>
<td>982-83</td>
<td>Replacing Rite and Rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;New&quot; Organization of Church</td>
<td>985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship Committee &amp; Financial Support</td>
<td>985-87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Esther Guild</td>
<td>987-88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining a &quot;Member&quot;</td>
<td>989-90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving from &quot;Tradition to Future Orientation&quot;</td>
<td>990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Confirmation&quot; as a Process</td>
<td>991-92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor not Viewed as &quot;Equal&quot;</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>Informative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Outsiders&quot; in the Community</td>
<td>993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People's Knowledge of One Another</td>
<td>994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes of Young People</td>
<td>995-99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization of the Young</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUBJECT: Recent oral history (1970-73) providing exceptional insight into the problems of a pastor in a small, rural Finnish community.

SOURCE: Reverend Keith Nelson recalls his experiences, gives the listener (reader) a sense of the unique perspective a pastor has of his own community, and allows the reader an opportunity to understand the changes currently altering the traditional way of life in the rural hinterlands of the Copper Country.

I: So, we'll begin with the question of what was the church like when you came. When did you come?

R: I arrived in August...the 3rd, 1970. I've been here a little over three years.

I: How did you come to hear about Pelkie? Why in the world did you come to Pelkie?

R: Well, I come from Chicago...and the polity of the church is that we have a synod president who cares for all the congregations in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan of the Lutheran Church in America, or the LCA...and when a pastor leaves a congregation it is his responsibility to make recommendations to a given congregation for a new pastor. He, then, recognizing that Pelkie was in a position of being able to only afford a seminary graduate, then comes to the seminary in the spring, early spring, February...and says, you know, is there anybody here interested in Pelkie. I indicate yes, I'm interested in a rural situation...not necessarily that rural, and not necessarily a three-point parish, but he says would you look and I say yes, and I did, and under the influence of a pastor who was in the area at the time, was willing to accept the challenge that the parish presented. I would not have accepted the parish at all had it not been for that pastor.

I: And this pastor defined it in such a way...it made it appear as a real challenge and something really problematic?

R: Right.

I: How did he define it? What was it that he said about the task that made you see it as a challenge and as something worthwhile to take on?

R: O.K. The way that the parish was presented to me was, first of all, visually...and along with the visual stimuli of visiting the parish he was making commentary at the same time...but to look at our area is to be depressed. Everything is unfinished, worn down, ragged, falling buildings, no upkeep, farms that have been deserted years ago and have never been touched since...large distances between farms and families...and services...so things were in the area very run down, farming was decreasing rather than increasing.

I: Decaying church in decaying community?

R: Yeah...well, first we started just looking at it as the community. What's the situation in our community...economically it's poor, we've lost the mines, you know. What is the situation in our community family-wise...well, kids are with you in the family until they've graduated from high school and then they leave...period...you know, there's nothing here for them to do so we will leave...then, on top of that, you ask the question what is the situation with the fathers...they have to travel great distances to get any work at all...and the only work that is available is at the mines, or at Pettibone, or in Marquette at the mines...so that families are being torn asunder because the employment that was based on a farm economy has disintegrated and they've had to go elsewhere for work...and they've lost a great deal of their sense of identity...so that condition in which the people lived was presented as, you know, being pretty desolate and despairing.

I: The guy sounds as though he was a very good sociologist.
Oh, he is a master...he was a MASTER...and not only was he a good sociologist, he was one helluva good psychologist because he sucked me right into the sinkhole...no bottom to the problem, you know...there's no way you can...I think that's the right word, a sinkhole...there is no bottom to it, you know...you can keep digging away, you're seeking to find the bottom and find the root and then build from there, like you have to find the footings, you know, to build a structure...I haven't found yet a handle-hold on any of the, what do they call it, bedrock...that solid base upon which to really build...that has been, that really then is the condition of the church.

I: So it was really this man who was the real influence?

R: That got me here.

I: Were there a few people in the community of Pelkie that really...

R: Impressed me?

I: Yes, made you feel good and feel that this would be a worthwhile place to live in, or something like that?

R: Yeah...Joe Maki...they invited us up and had us for sauna and dinner that first time we were here...and the Tepsa's had us over for dinner...and I think that Maki's impressed us with their openness...and with their willingness to have us into their home for sauna which we thought was kind of an intimate type of invitation...and that was very...made us feel welcome...then, the Tepsa's...I think nothing that they said or did was particularly impressive...but the thing that impressed us about the Tepsa's was that when we drove into their yard, you know, we just about died...you know, nobody who lived in a decrepit place like that invites a person over to their home for dinner...you just don't do that because you're living in despair, you know, you must be poor...and they can't have anything to be proud about, you know...to live in a place like that is so bad...but they never made any apologies for it, you know...they never said anything...they just, you know, well, glad to have you here, you know, and you go sit down and eat dinner...and when you sat down and ate dinner they didn't serve prime rib or steaks but they served a very...what we would have considered a third-rate cut of roast beef, see...and it was delicious, you know, it was a great meal...but they never said anything about the meal...they just said it's great to have you here...well, you can't help but be impressed with people who are more concerned about people...and relationships...than they are about any externals...that they don't even see them.

I: 'Course, you came from an area where the external appearance of a home was a very important factor.

R: Oh, absolutely...you know, I'm a suburban, urban mentality who comes out of a very middle-class and upper middle-class family.

I: Now that you've said that why don't you give us a little biography just like you're doing. Born?

R: Born Minneapolis...live on the south side of Minneapolis which was a middle-class community, probably the wealthiest high school in the city...but not like would they dine or anything, but it would be considered one of the top high schools both academically, sport-wise and the class of kids there...we used to always wear shirts and ties and wing tips and good clothes to school, that's just the way it was.

I: You would call it, then, upper class or upper middle-class?

R: Upper middle-class, I suppose.
I: What were the kinds of occupations that the parents there had?

R: Well, engineers...like my dad works in a factory but he was an engineer in the engineering department of the factory, you know.

I: Professionals for the most part?

R: Yeah, well, some were salesmen, of course, but then you had professional...almost all college graduates...the area was predominantly college graduates...didn't have very many blue collar workers at all, very few.

I: And then after high school you...

R: On to college at Augustana College, a private four-year liberal arts Lutheran college in Rock Island, Illinois...and went there for four years and received my B.A. in English literature and with a concentration in philosophy along side of that...and then immediately went into seminary...and that was four more years...and received...I got a B.D. but it's been switched now to a Masters of Divinity.

I: You mentioned something about at that time you were very much involved in politics, in social change.

R: That was in Chicago...that was when I was in seminary. We moved...my seminary experience was at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago in Hyde Park which is right next to the University of Chicago across the street...and that was during the '66 to '70 period...I started college...my freshman year, you know that was the year that Kennedy got assassinated, no, second year of college, I guess, he got assassinated...so I was in school that whole period of political and social turmoil, you might say...so there was very little what you would call stability at any time during my higher education...it was all, you know, kind of frantic socially, politically, community-wise...then while we were in Chicago at Hyde Park...the University...that's where we started to get involved with the black/white struggle having been surrounded in Hyde Park by a black ghetto...and I was teaching in a ghetto on a released time religious education basis...we started to become very sensitized to the black condition in our society and so became quite politically active in terms of trying to precipitate social change with the Democratic structures that existed at that time in Chicago.

I: Pretty heavy liberal activist at the time, right?

R: Right, right.

I: You mentioned something about your coming to Pekkie as a...

R: As a pulling away from that.

I: An escape from that or getting the heck out of that or decide to change from that?

R: Well, needing balance. I came to Pekkie purely to once again balance my thinking. I had come from a stable, Swedish, pietist kind of background...gotten involved in the social activist process of the '60s all the way up through the '70s...and well, the Kent State killings and all that...and it had really gotten to a height and an intensity, you know, where we were closing down the schools and tearing apart the structures of our curriculums and I was living that stuff.

I: When you first drove into Pekkie, didn't you see it as almost shockingly tranquil?

R: No, it was threatening.
I: What was your immediate impression after coming from that environment and driving into Pelkie...do you remember the first day you drove into Pelkie?

R: Well, yeah, but, see, there was a problem with...that they were building us a new home in Pelkie...you know, coming out of Chicago and the kind of environment that I had learned how to live in and how you have to speak your mind, I had thought nothing about writing back to the congregation in Pelkie and telling them what I thought they should do to the house to make it livable...because it was just totally unlivable as far as our way of thinking was, you know.

I: That was the old parsonage next to the river?

R: Right...so we wrote and told them what needed to be fixed and it just absolutely scared them half to death and there are people who don't go to church in Pelkie to this day because of that letter that I wrote, apparently...because they saw it as me demanding that they build a new parsonage, which I never did...but there were some things that needed fixing...well, they ended up building a new parsonage because it was cheaper.

I: It was not your suggestion but it was cheaper than the remodeling that you suggested?

R: Right, I never suggested that they in any way build a new parsonage...and I can document that.

I: O.K., we should get back to that alienation of the formerly in families at a later point because that was probably a very crucial event, wasn't it?

R: Yes, oh, very much. When I came to Pelkie, it was shocking, yes, but it was shocking insofar as I didn't know where...there were no handles in Pelkie...you know, there is no political structure in Pelkie, or Nisula, or Klo, there is none...there are no community leaders to whom you can turn to find out who is directing the people in the community to develop or to...the structures that exist in a community, there were none...my people...when I walked in...my office in the parsonage, or in the parish, had no organization to it...so I didn't even know who my members were when I came here...there was no way in which they could even be identified as to where they lived...so therefore I came into a place not that I saw as tranquil...it became almost a bigger threat than living in the city because there was no way I could put my finger on what needed to be done...there was no organization.

I: in the community?

R: Nothing, any place...and talk about a shock, about tranquil, it was tranquil like a lake is tranquil...and you jump in and there's no buoyancy to that particular water in which you're going...and it's clear...it's there...but you can see right through it so you don't even know you're in water...that's what Pelkie was when I first came here...there was no way that you could get a handle-hold on it, see...so that meant that I had to initiate the process by which we would be able to get some handle-holds on the community...and so we started with that...then, as far as the tranquil part, that came later...where you start to become overwhelmed with the...well, tranquil, yes, but not so much even just tranquil as nothing's going on...you know, tranquillity is a state of lying at rest, O.K....that means there had to have been activity to rest from...Pelkie has been different than that...the activity never gets started so you don't go to a rest...tranquility is not the state that I would call it...it's peaceful in many ways...non-demanding...there are no demands...well, I take that back...there are a lot of demands placed upon me as the pastor, but their expectations are very low...their standards were what I would consider to be non-existent.

I: Well, surely they expected something of a pastor. What do you think the old pastor did?
R: O.K., that's a very good question. The old pastor was seen as the one, as you probably traditionally have understood them yourself, he is the man who baptizes, he confirms, he marries, and he buries...those are his main pastoral functions...on top of that his next function is to preach...hold services...but one of the differences is that the tradition had been that the pastor would maybe be in the parish like once a month, or so, because he not only had to take care of Pelkie, he had to take care of at least four other congregations...he had a five-point parish...and before that they went up to twelve congregations that one pastor was taking care of.

I: What was the five points that he had to...

R: Askel, Alston, St. Henry-Nisula, and Our Saviour's-Klo...so there were five points that he had to cover, always...and the only transportation was railroad...so he had to...he couldn't afford to have a car, see, and so he would come into town and he would be there all day...he would have to have a day in each place where he would get there...and on that day all the kids that needed baptizing would be baptized, the services would be held, the confirmation classes would be carried on...and his main function was to be the carrier of God's word and power into those communities, see...and so he would be the traveling Godman, you might say...when he came God was there...when he wasn't there it was pretty hard to know where God was...and that meant that there was a tremendous amount of identification with the pastor as being the Christian...he was set up on the pedestal as the one to whom you turned as to being the paragon of Christianity, see...you were nothing, he was it...there was no concept, for instance, of now he has fed you, you have the strength to go on and carry on the ministry in your area when the pastor is gone...that was not done...with the exception of the lay preachers...there were lay preachers in those days.

I: In your church or associated somewhat with your church?

R: From what I've heard now, yeah, I just heard that the other day...I never knew that before.

I: Who were the lay preachers to your knowledge?

R: Uno Kemppainen's father, I guess, was one...that's the only one I've ever heard of. So the pastor, then, was expected to be everybody's Christian, you know...and that was determined by a very strict kind of piety that was kind of quiet and non-rasuous...a very simple style of life...the Christian was a very simple style of life...so their expectations of the pastor were what I would consider to be kind of low in terms of what they would expect him to be able to do with them and for them...and also they were very high or they were very...I'd almost call them selfish...insofar as pointing the finger outward...he is the Christian...if you have a question about God or about what it is to be a follower of God, a child of God...ask him, don't ask me...so there was very little concept, for instance, of the priesthood of all believers, see.

I: He was the symbol...and the symbol was very important.

R: So that's pretty much the background of the image of the pastor...now, the church, however, that was built...and when they talked about the church they talked about the building...that building was those people who built it.

I: And who built it?

R: Which one, the one in Pelkie? Well, the Johnsons helped build it, I understand...the Johnson and the Perander clan...the Maki's...Pelto, I guess, would have been in that group there...Turunen, the old Turunen...they would have been the builders of that...

I: Any others you recall?
R: Those are the only ones I really...Hill, possibly. They built it and so it was their church, then...you know, the Johnsons stick out in my mind the most as being the ones who consider themselves to this day to have been the founders of that church.

I: We'll get at that, definitely. How did he run the services--this old pastor--this was Pastor...

R: Oh, it was always in Finnish...everything was always in Finnish.

I: That's very important, right?

R: Yes...everything was always in the Finnish language...confirmation, Sunday School, Communion...was always in Finnish.

I: And that was right up until approximately 1970, sometime?

R: Well, yeah, well, we still have Finnish services...we still have Finnish services once a month at Faith...well, I take that back now...they share services between St. Henry and Faith...there is a service once a month in the parish...that our people from Pelkie go to every month...one month it'll be at Faith and one month it'll be at St. Henry and then back to Faith...back and forth...but they travel between those two to go to the Finnish services. Pastor Martin Halinen still carries those on.

I: It was mainly, then, the official act, the ritual acts, that they considered important?

R: That's right.

I: What was his arrangement economically?

R: The old pastors...well, back, way back, I really don't know...the congregation would pay him.

I: In monetary terms?

R: Yeah...well, both...they couldn't pay him much monetarily 'cause they didn't have much money themselves...but they would pay both with money, provide him a place to live, and see that he had food to eat and that kind of thing.

I: That was probably a very important part of the pay, so to speak?

R: Oh, sure. The last time, in fact, the last pastor right before me, was being paid money...but that was still, I'm confident, 'cause when I've looked at the schedule that he was being paid by, they must have also considered that it was their obligation to help provide food and stuff, too. They still do that for us, also...many people share their gardens, share their meat after they slaughter...bring bakery, lots of bakery, all the time even to this day...and yet now I'm being paid much more than any previous pastor was ever paid.

I: In monetary terms. And what your salary now is...

R: $6,700.

I: But there still is this tradition of paying you in non-monetary terms and this is pastor payment...I, for instance, and other people do not get free meat and things like that. What kinds of gifts do you get...just for my own sociological point of view, what kinds of things do you get, specifically?

R: Do you mean from the people? Bread and nisu and pies and all the garden products, every one of them that's been raised in the area...more than we can use.
It would be senseless for you to grow a garden?

Senseless...purely unadulterated...this year...it varies with the year, of course...like last year the gardens weren't nearly as productive as they were this year...so we still received things last year, but this year we have received much more...last year we received about as much as we could use...this year we've received so much that there's no way we can use everything...we've got beets and carrots and corn coming out of our ears.

Is it everyone that gives you stuff or do some few really pile it on?

No, some few really pile it on.

Are they the same few that are the kind of community leaders...like if I were to name them...would I name the Makis, the Tepsa's, the Turunen's, and...

Feito's...and Kaino Johnson...they're the ones who just really...and Urho Wuori's.

Pay in kind.

And they're also some of our finest contributors to the church financially.

Oh, monetarily as well.

Yes, to the congregation, now, monetarily they would be some of the largest contributors...those same families.

That's interesting...are there some people who contribute in kind but not so much monetarily?

I don't know of a one.

What ways can people contribute...O.K., they can contribute in helping you by giving you gifts of meat and things that you need for sustenance...of course they do so by titheing...and what other forms do they have of helping you? Favors and all sorts of...

Well, yeah, I suppose you could say they can help by maintenance of the parsonage and things like that, but that's helping the parish...to see that the parsonage is taken care of.

So they do provide you with the house...and gasoline...

Oh, yes...well, partially on the gas...I drive...

SIDE TWO

What was the organization of the church under this Pastor Groop?

Well, the organization when I came was that the congregation had a council all of its own of twelve members and...I think it's twelve members, it was, yeah...and that council met monthly to make all decisions about what went on in the congregation...Pastor Groop was the chairman...and I still am the chairman of the council as it exists today...except that now we have lowered the size of the council from twelve to seven, joined it together with the councils of the other two congregations, and they still have their independent council for matters that pertain specifically to the Faith congregation...most of which is building problems...otherwise all other business is taken care of on the parish level in conjunction with the other congregations' councils as a parish council and I chair those meetings...but we do have a lay vice-chairman who takes over my position whenever I have comments to make or recommendations and stuff like that...the constitution that we as a congregation
live under asks for committees...Pastor Groop never did set those committees up with any responsibility...I have since done that...we have the committees operating on a parish-wide level...we also had the...much more involvement on the part of the pastor's wife in making sure that Sunday School was taken care of and Vacation Church School was taken care of and all that kind of thing.

I: You do now?
R: We did have under Pastor Groop.
I: It was expected the wife was...
R: Would run things.
I: ...was also part of the pastor's role?
R: Right.
I: She was the pastoress?
R: In a sense, yeah...she was expected to...and there are still many in the parish today who expect that...I did a survey with them and they have that expectation still...that she should carry on...like one of them said when the pastor's not there, the pastor's wife should do what he would do if he were there, see...so she in essence is the pastor...she's been hired, except that she's not paid.

I: So then the couple is the pastor.
R: Right, in essence...is the way they've looked at it...we have not allowed them to look at it that way. My wife is a very strong person who is not easily forced to do something that she does not see to be her job, you know...or her responsibility...and I respect her very highly for it and support her 100 per cent in it...and she just doesn't do it...even to the point of if they call the house and ask for some information that she could easily give them, she'll ask them, "Have you called the office?"..."No."..."Well, I'm sure the pastor is there...why don't you call him?"..."Oh, I just thought I'd call you."..."Well, I think it would be wise of you to see if he's there."...and then she'll hang up.

I: You do have separate phone numbers?
R: Separate phone numbers.
I: That was not the case before?
R: Never, only one phone...never had an office...now we have...the office was always in the parsonage...I had that same situation up until the first of August of this year at which time a member in the parish's brother offered to let us use their home...which is a small, three-room house...as a parish office free of charge...and we pay all utilities and maintenance...and the council approved that...and so we are now in that and it's called the Lutheran Parish Center...it's just two doors north of the parsonage...it's been the greatest thing that's ever happened to me.

I: That role of pastor is a very totalitarian role in the sense that in this community your entire life is determined by it in the eyes of the people, at least...and your wife, too...Ann would be determined by the role...everything that she does...and you would be determined by the role in everything that you do. Now, how have you reacted to this? What have you insisted on?
R: First of all, we feel like we live in a fishbowl which just drives us both up a wall.

I: You use that term a lot...fishbowl...what do you mean by that?

R: Well, we live on the one main street in Pelkie, first of all...and so we have no privacy that way in terms of in and out of the house...when we're home, when we're not home...are we up late, aren't we up late...are we in the bedroom, are we in the family room...now, whether people or not notice that there's no way of really ascertaining except insofar as people say, gee, we noticed you were up pretty late last night...or we noticed you were gone yesterday...or, you know, that kind of thing where it's just interest...they're just trying to say that they care...but in another sense, you know, it's nice to be cared about...but it's nice to think that you have a life of your own, also...but my job runs my whole life in Pelkie...I have no...until we got the office away from the parsonage there was no distinction between my life as a person and a father and a husband, and the pastor of the parish...they were one and the same...and there was no way I could draw a distinction...and I just could not tolerate it.

I: What were some of the violations of their expectations that you did and did knowingly and insisted upon because of your definition of your total position in your life in that community...one illustration, for instance, is the drinking of beer...defined in the Finnish mind as the "devil's blood" or something like that...pastors as symbols of Christianity or as its surrogates for God do not drink beer and you do.

R: I do.

I: When you first did this what were the reactions?

R: Violent, volatile and quick-moving reactions.

I: Did any people explicitly tell you that...

R: No, nobody ever confronted me with that...nobody ever said Pastor, you shouldn't drink or we really are disappointed that you are...

I: Isn't that odd that no one would confront you with...

R: When it was that important to them? Nobody ever did. I felt it must have been a custom from my own heritage back in...when I lived in a small town in Iowa for a few years...I, at that time, knew that the pastor...my background dictated to me that I should not...that it was going to be difficult for the people of Pelkie to accept my drinking beer...it was nothing that the people in Pelkie ever said to me...but I do know as a fact that that really blew their minds...that I drank beer...now, the reason...there were some very good or strong reasons why I made it perfectly clear to the people in Pelkie that I drink beer...and I drink beer on the parsonage lawn when I'm barbecuing even from the time I began...and I do it expressly recognizing the fact that there is the attitude amongst the Finnish people that either you are an alcoholic or you are a member of the Temperance Society...total abstinence...there is no such thing as moderation...alcohol, as you pointed out, is considered the "devil's blood" or something...well, this, to me, represents an alienating influence, a separating attitude between people...they can not minister to each other if they will not accept the fact that one drinks over here and if they do, they are no good, see...you don't write people off just because they drink a few beers...a person's standard of worth is not determined by their beer consumption or non-beer consumption...their worth is a given...you take that for granted...you give them that...you don't have that proved to you by their drinking or non-drinking.

But I know that it's true in the Finnish mind from my own experiences here and also from
reading "Boom Copper"...this Angus Murdoch said that there are two kinds of Finns...the drinking Finn and the temperance Finn...and he painted a stereotype of a drunken Finn who, with his "puukko", that is, his hunting knife, would go and slay a horse when drunk and disembowel the horse and cut up a whole bunch of people...it was an extreme stereotype of a drunken, rampaging, violent sort...and then another kind who would simply eat potatoes and drink coffee and sweat in the sauna and work like a maniac...but he traced this dichotomy and other people define the Finnish people, too, as being "either/or".

I: I think that's been the tradition...and I would buy that tradition, you know, as being still existent.

R: Yup. Their minds...you're either a drunk or you're an abstainer...it's not a...there is still no room for moderation...you're still...extremists.

I: I wonder if their mind is that fundamental "either/or" in all things or is it just in the spirit of alcohol consumption...are they really "black and white" thinkers?

R: Yes...they can not...I don't want to say that for every one of them, but the predominant mind set in my parish is "either/or".

I: "Both" is a difficult abstraction for them to entertain?

R: They can't do that...they can not discuss...that's the way it is...that's the way it is...it's not that way, see...and there's no middle ground, you know...they don't see things as process, for instance...as a developmental, growing, becoming kind of situation...this is where it's very difficult for them to live with the concept that they need to worship regularly, I think...now I've introduced the notion to them that worship is something that you do each Sunday, every Sunday, whether...we carry worship services out on a rotating basis...two services each Sunday out of the three churches...and the people rotate...so the hours of the service change each week in the given church...and I've insisted that it's important to worship regularly every Sunday and they don't see that...because I say we need to grow in faith each day, you know, through repentance and prayer and we come to worship together to be strengthened by that faith so we can be renewed and go back to service in the name of the Lord.

I: But they either are a Christian.

R: Or they're not.

I: ...or straight to hell.

R: Right, that's right, see...and they don't see the function of worship as being that growing...if you're a Christian, you may worship regularly or you may not need...or you may feel yourself you don't need to worship...but they don't see it as a process in which you're involved as you mature in your thinking...Christian education...you arrive at confirmation and that is the end...there is no such thing as adult Christian education in our parish...never has been, there isn't to this day...they will not respect another lay person to teach them...only me...and I refuse to teach everything...I won't do it...because there is no sense to that...they're capable of discussing and growing together in their Christian faith.

I: Have you encountered any other instances where their "either/or", "black and white" kind of thinking has made it difficult for you to...

R: I had a discussion with a member of the parish who is esteemed as being the community leader and head of a...well, he's a very responsible person in the community who is the
very, very, very core example of a member in the church... and yet he has... the church has in the last number of years... it's seen the validity of having lay readers in church as assistants to read lessons and help with the petitions in the prayers and in the confession... this particular man was... it was his turn to... we assign them monthly and if they don't want to do it... if they don't want to "read" in church, we call it... then they just ask some other member to read for them and that's fine... they have that option... but as a member of our parish, now, it is assumed that your turn will come up and you will assume either the position of reader or find someone to do that... this particular member refused to read, but not only did he refuse to read, he said, "If you insist that I read, or even if you don't insist that, but you insist that I find someone to replace myself, I'll quit."... either/or... either you do it the way I understood it to be in the past or I quit.

I: You ran into some resistance in other innovations that you made... there've been so many... the liturgy... what was involved in the liturgy, or in the service, before you came and what did you do and what was the reaction?

R: Well, the liturgy, before I came, was out of the Red Hymnal, strictly, which is our normal hymnal... Service Book and Hymnal, it's called, SEBH... and the lessons were read by the pastor... the confession was led by the pastor... and the people did one short response in there... the liturgy was spoken... I sing it now... I believe, I can't say that one for positive but I think that I introduced the singing, but I'm not sure... the service did not contain what is called the "handshake of peace" or the "passing of the peace" and that is now included in the service... we now have lay readers for the lessons, the Old Testament and the Epistle lessons, and for the petitions in the confession and the petitions in the Prayer of the Church... we have hymnals now that are an addition to the SEBH so that we have a variety of hymns of different modes... traditional, ancient hymns all the way up through hymns that have been written in the last few years... so they go... we have a continual... then we have... that was not there before, this contemporary hymnal... we also in the service have started to sing hymns that they didn't know... and one of the problems there, of course, is that the hymns that the pastor knows when he comes are not necessarily the hymns that the congregation that he comes to knows... so I would assume that they knew a lot of hymns that they didn't know and they knew a lot of hymns that I didn't know... so we've now introduced in the last year and a half or so, congregational favorites... so they have... every Sunday there's one hymn that for sure everybody knows 'cause it's a congregational favorite, apparently... somebody in the congregation asked to sing it so we will sing it... then there's the Hymn of the Month which is a new hymn that we're introducing to them and we sing that same hymn each Sunday for a month so they'll learn it... and then there's maybe a Hymn of the Month that we have sung in the past that we're repeating now two or so years later to refresh their memory again... we're trying to help them become acquainted with the whole Service Book and Hymnal rather than just a few hymns... we change the liturgy back and forth... there are different settings... there've been quite a few innovations, I guess, in the liturgy... the reception, you ask, how was that... well, I think with any change you get a mixed reaction... we have offended, apparently, some persons that I have not even been aware of... that they were being offended because they refused to say anything... all changes that were made in the liturgy were approved through the council... nothing has ever been changed without the approval of the council... so it's not just me that's changed it but it's always gone through the channels of responsibility... there have been people who indeed have refused to come to church because of the changes... but we've picked up a lot of members who would not come to church before because they felt it was kind of a dead exercise... so we have many more young people in church... we have a number of... some of my most ardent supporters are some of the older members who find it refreshing, for some reason... to have these changes take place... so it's been a mixed bag... but attendance, I would claim, is every bit as good as it's ever been in the history of the parish... and our income far exceeds any income in the history of the parish... I introduced a stewardship program in the parish with pledging...
we will be having our second annual stewardship emphasis in November, now...we will once again run into a great deal of criticism but the results will be much more beneficial so therefore we take the criticism.

I: Before you came, how was money given to the church...or how did the church get money?

R: Through envelopes...they gave envelopes...way long time ago in the Suomi Synod, you know, they had a black book called dues...that's what's killing us...that's the thing that we're still trying to get over that tradition of that black book 'cause people felt that they were being taxed, you know...to belong to the church you paid so much...and that made you both a member, to pay the dollar a month or whatever it was...also it was a demand placed upon you whether you could afford it or not, see...so you could buy your way into heaven, one way, and another way...sometimes people could not afford to pay those dues, they were called dues.

I: Is that what was done here before you came...was that done in this church?

R: Long time ago.

I: I mean, was that done in this church?

R: Oh, sure...black books are still in existence...I'd love to have a burning ceremony...maybe I should do that during my stewardship campaign this year...burn the black books...that's not a bad idea...to have people realize that there is no such thing anymore as a black book.

I: There are black books?

R: Oh, yeah, they're historical documents, you know.

I: Even in the church of Pelkie...lists of people who have paid and how much?

R: No, I'm talking about...yeah, from the '20s...1920s...if you wanted to look at what was the giving level of the people in the Pelkie church in 1923, I probably would have the book around there someplace, I don't know...it's probably up in the belfry someplace.

I: Right up until...

R: Oh, that was...I don't know how long it lasted, but the latest it could have lasted would be like 1957.

I: What happened after that, do you think?

R: Well, then they joined the LCA...'62 was the...well, the Red Hymnal came out in '58, you know, and then in '62 they joined the LCA, you see...and in the LCA you just couldn't get away with that stuff...I mean it's just totally foreign to our concept of stewardship...there's no bill...it doesn't cost you anything to belong to the church...never has, never will...no cost in terms of bills...you never can buy your way into the kingdom of God...you give your tithes in response to what God has done for you...because He has blessed you vitally, you return to Him...a gift...but I can't really tell you the exact date that those black books went out of use.

I: How does a person get into the church?

R: Oh, well, that's a problem...that's another change, I guess...lot of these changes you have to realize that I instituted I didn't see as changes...like a stewardship program is
program is a standard procedure in every congregation that I know of except this one... it's just...the people are very nice there and you don't want to make them do something they don't want to do and so they just never did it, apparently, I don't know...I also believe that the churches never had strong pastoral leadership before...you know, who would be willing to take and do some things that needed doing that the people didn't always like...they weren't always comfortable with...you see, I happen to believe that it's not ever comfortable to grow...you know, children, just in their physical bodies, it hurts...their bodies ache when they grow...so we grow...and we get headaches when we're struggling to learn some difficult intellectual concept...when you're struggling to grow, to understand something, you can get a real headache out of that deal...so, too, a congregation hurts, you know, when it grows...nobody ever wanted to cause them to hurt so that they could grow...I had to come in and help them grow...you have to realize that when I came here they were barely going to continue to exist.

I: So how did one become a member before you came...what did a member mean?

R: I don't know, I don't know.

I: What do you suspect a member meant?

R: You had your names on the rolls somewhere...you attended church there in the past...that's undefined...that's where we grew up...Maybe at Sunday School, went to confirmation there, or something...of course, now, see, in the records you would be considered a member...an inactive member...you may even be dropped from the rolls...but you're always a baptized member...baptized, confirmed member, you know...you're never completely dropped as if you don't exist to that church, any more...so they're right, they were members if they were baptized or confirmed there...but membership in the church, you know, in terms of being a member, I look as a dynamic, kind of an active word...membership in an organization...I don't claim membership in my fraternity any more...I was a don...we had a small fraternity...which was not a national, just a local fraternity in our college...but I'm not a don anymore...I haven't been active in that for ten years.

I: What do you mean by membership now, then?

R: Well, membership now is a person who is a baptized, confirmed person who is contributing and/or commuting at least yearly...at least every year...now there's no notice...con- tributing but there's no figure added to that...just contributing...or commuting...I could commune once...receive the sacrament once...that would be an active...that would be a member...that's all...now to become a member today you go to a pastor's class...you have to go to a pastor's class...or come by letter of transfer and I still want them to go to pastor's class...I'm having a little tough time with that and I'm not trying to be...I'm not particularly dogmatic on that issue...but I encourage it as best I can...so that they would attend that class...because I'm trying to develop a community atmosphere...if you're going to join the church, you gotta get into it somewhere...you might as well start with pastor's class...you now...have a little education, continuing education, and develop some relationships with some other new people coming into the church...and then from there, we give them a job of some kind...either to participate in the LOW, or in teaching, or in the choir...what are your interests...what do we have to offer here for you...I have a hard time bringing new members into the church, however...and I've not done nearly one-tenth of what I was hoping to have been able to do for the parish in terms of new members because the people don't want them...in other words, they don't want to integrate them into the congregation and accept them as one with them...equal...they're kind of strange...

I: You mean people reject people from coming into the church?

R: In essence, yes.
I: Well, how was this rejection...what do you mean, in essence?

R: Like, what are you doing here...I never thought I'd see you in church...is that rejection...I'd say so.

I: That sort of...

R: Mentality.

I: Behaviour, too? I mean, when someone strange walks in...what's their experience?

R: They feel like they're walking into a fishbowl.

I: People look at them?

R: Don't greet them...some greet them...I don't want to paint a totally black picture...some of our people are more than anxious to integrate these people in the congregation...but it only takes one person to drive a person who has tried to make a...
SUBJECT:

SOURCE:

COMMENTS:

R: That is exactly the way it was when we came...and now I don't even think about that stuff anymore...I go into these old houses...doesn't phase me in the least...you never even reflect upon the levels of poverty or income anymore...that has nothing to do with anything anymore.

I: But it did before you came here?

R: Oh, sure...you know, what kind of...how did you reflect your position or status in society...and socio-economic basis...how was that reflected in your life...never even notice that anymore.

I: You've changed.

R: Terribly...now I'm afraid to go back to the city and get back in that kind of a bag again 'cause that's what they're tied up in, you know...very strongly...last night at the council meeting and now also in the evangelism meeting...that is, with a new pastor coming in...to help him become integrated to the community and become aware of the roads because when I moved here I was from the city where you had square blocks and addresses with numbers...and you could put a person's name to that number and you knocked on that door you knew who was going to answer...but here, there's no way to even find where those people live...and oftentimes you look for mailboxes and there's no names on mailboxes...and there's no numbers, either...so you just have to know who lives where...well, I'm not accustomed to knocking on doors...that's what I was when I first came...now, I know most everybody...whether they're members or not, and I can knock on anybody's door...and they'd know me.

I: Probably now if someone were to ask you to get to Joe Maki's, you'd forget all about addresses and you'd say, "Go down Pappen...go down to Nen Kuivinen's house and turn down Pappen and when you get just next to Norman's, turn right and you're in Joe's."

R: That's right, that's right...or, "Go down here to the third house on the right and then go up and it'll be your second, or third, house on the right on the Pappen Road." And then the person would get in the same kind of confusion I did...that was, does he mean including vacant houses...in that line...or just occupied houses...or just vacant houses...or how do you count houses...

I: Or what is Pappen Road?

R: Yeah, what is Pappen Road...and some call it Limestone Road and so you don't know...it is really...

I: I mentioned that approximately 24 percent in the Felkie area are under the poverty line which is at approximately $4,000 income, and you said, "You know, it doesn't show that much...it doesn't seem like it's all that bad..." and one reason I think this is is because they've developed a way of life that enables them to live without money...to say that they are deprived or poverty-stricken is to take an urban monetary definition of poverty and apply it to these people...like the old people...and we'll rap about the ages...they get along there...now, you're probably aware of the problems of the aging...that's probably coming up in a lot of the literature that you get through the church...one thing that virtually all theologians, well, not so much theologians but ministers, are now becoming concerned with.
One of our LC1 clergymen is the chairman of the Upper Peninsula Conference on Aging.
John Linna, fantastic man from Crystal Falls...close, he's close...John Linna...he's an extremely capable man...if you don't know exactly what you want, he'll hang up on you...he won't waste any...he's the funniest man you ever met..."don't waste my time"...

Why do they survive? How does Pelkie take care of the aged as you've seen it...the old people...or have you thought about it?

Oh, yeah...there's a great deal of confusion in Pelkie right now about how to deal and care for the aged...because we're in a transition period...Laina Pelto carries on the old function of caring for the aged, O. K....and that means that every day she goes to Alfred's mother, Mrs. Pelto, Grandma Pelto's place, and also to Mrs. Niemisto's, unless Rachel or Bernice take care of Mrs. Niemisto, and sees to it that they've got their groceries and will stop at the store and get their groceries...and see to it that they've got enough wood in the house and carry it in if they don't...cleans for them, washes clothes for them...

Does dishes occasionally.

Right...irons clothing as needed, you know...make sure that things are in order...so that's the traditional way of doing it...in other words, providing for all their needs...if they don't have money to buy the groceries, they buy it and bring them...not a great amount but...they're short, you know, buy them a ham...that'll last them a couple weeks...one ham is a lot of food so you put that in the refrigerator...or bring them nisu over...

Constantly baking for them...

Well, doing little things...but, see, now the problem is

But that's also done with Waino Maki.

Waino does that for Pauline...and he comes...and it's the same thing that happens with Mrs. Pelto and Mrs. Niemisto, too...they come and do the lawn...make sure it's always mowed...Waino Maki does that the most for Pauline...mows, trims, paints, repairs, cleans, straightens...they are very capable people, those that take care of the old...they are old themselves and they take care of the real old...they're very sensitive to what the grandma wants to do herself, you know...and lets them do that...in other words, they don't step on their toes and say, "Oh, poor, old Grandma, you can't do anything"...they let them go as far as they can go on their own, but then they're there to pick up at that stopping point...like, let's say grandma can make...she can boil the potatoes...but you have to get the potatoes to her...the grandma is capable of making rugs, but she's not capable of carrying in wood, so you make sure that she's got the wood...so you know what they want to do and are capable of doing, but then you step in and care for them from there on...and not with great money...it's not money stuff...you're not spending...

Time.

It's lots of time.

How much time would you say Laina spends?

Laina, I would suggest, spends four solid hours a day.

Every day.

Every day.

With both Mrs. Pelto and Mrs. Niemisto.
R: And the running...not, maybe, in their presence...but doing little jobs to make...that those two are cared for...Waino Maki, in taking care of Pauline, spends maybe three... two to three hours a day average...365 days a year...you have to remember that when we talk about caring that means every single day...you don't miss...now, let me say one other thing on aging...how do you care for the aged...something I really find very exciting, and it took me a long time to discover because in the city we have had to organize something like this and put it under a big heading and we have this kind of ministry going on.

I: How is it done in the city?

R: I was going to go on to another area and I'll go back to that again...it's this idea of this "everydayness"...the telephone calls that are made every day to just talk about something...whether news of the community...gossip...just to have something to talk about...but the phone call is not made to so much share gossip or to find out what the weather is in your area or what not...but to find out if the person is alive or if something has happened during the night that they're sick...or to find out if they need to get someplace today...that's the purpose of the phone call that is hidden behind, you know, how are you today...what's the weather like over there...gee, did you hear that Pastor Nelson resigned last night...that kind of stuff...that's all peripheral...that's just the entrée...to finding out the real information that you're still living and breathing in your house over there by yourself, and that you're not sick and that you don't have to run off to the doctor and you didn't have a stroke during the night.

I: One thing I want to mention is this idea of knowing what they need and knowing what they can do not only in physical things but just the little things that make them happy and that the helper knows that they must be able to do in order to be happy requires something, I think, that's not available in a home for the aged...it requires intimate knowledge of that person...the kind of knowledge that you have, for instance, of Ann...you know the little things that make her happy...it's impossible to know those little things unless you spend time with a person...and when you have in like a home for the aged a new nurse or a new shift, beds being moved and things like that...

R: That's mechanical maintenance...see, that's purely...in housing for the aged...in homes and whatnot...they have just a lot of mechanical everyday housekeeping duties that don't allow them the luxury of knowing people...in a small community like Pelkie...this is the same case in our...and this is why we were so intensely interested in getting monies for developing units of housing in Pelkie...because the same situation exists still in the Barage housing project for the aged...that people care about people...here's people living in a little apartment kind of setting...that have very low incomes and very low rents...but they are cared for by the community people...by the families, the neighbors and the old friends...the goal around our area, and I'm not trying to get into a political discussion here, is to have provided housing for our older people who are growing older so that they could stay in the community because they will be cared for in our communities...that we're still that kind of community...they will be cared for...but...stupid-ass Nixon cut HEW right out of the water...it just makes me so angry when I think about it now, and I haven't thought about it now for a long time...that really our people aren't getting that chance...and then the other thing that makes me so angry is that there are some farms in our area that are now going to waste...that were productive two years ago...two years ago still producing very efficiently and excellent crops coming off the land to feed cows and whatnot...because there is no place for the parent...the people...to go as they retire, and they want to stay in their community...and if I was those people I would do exactly what they are doing...and I'm speaking particularly of Urho Wuori and Esther, who are not opposed to the idea of moving...it's just that they have no place particularly to go...and if they allowed somebody to come on the land and work their farm while they still lived in the house,
which has been talked about, Urho could not help but feel that he must be out there helping...if anything happened, you know, he would want to be there to share his experience...but we have no place for the people like that to go...same thing with Kate Kuivamen's place...it's good land, good farming buildings, you know...takes some updating but could be done quite easily...so the community, this care for people, is a time-consuming thing, but I think some of our dynamics of our people is that, as I mentioned in my earlier interview, they are very people-oriented...they're not things-oriented...and therefore they'll go care for another person by talking to him, but you don't necessarily care for a person by bringing him something...in other words, if a person is...now, we just talked about the need for old-age housing, that's something they just can't get fired up about in Pekie...they really didn't want to sign up for the petitions that were necessary and work hard to develop that as a goal...because that's a thing, a building, you know...we're only interested in the people...and the way you care for people is go visit them in their homes...well, we're saying that they need a place to live.

I: Oh, you mean it almost develops to a point where it is a problem?

R: Oh, yes, too much people...and not enough...they can't get organized to take care of a problem.

I: Now, how would this be done in the city...how has it been done?

R: Well, O. K., let's take that deal about old people being in their own houses, and they need to be cared for...and those phone calls we were talking about whose real goal was to...the phone call's goal is to find out if the person was still alive...in the city what would happen is you would set up a volunteer coordinator that would line up other people that may be shut-ins too, to do calling every day, and you would set up a program with check-in points and dates, and you would have to organize for doctors, and you would organize for meals to be delivered, meals on wheels or something like that...it would be a whole sequence of time together, services and resources and people and phone numbers...it would be an administrative responsibility for which then you would do a lot of publicity work to get the people involved and to...and you'd have a system of rewards...of saying, oh, how wonderful you are for having shown this interest in caring for people and that kind of thing....and in Pekie...

I: Does that often require hiring a person to run the thing?

R: Well, you may...it may have to be...if the church was doing it, it would be a volunteer agency kind of extension of the church's ministry...and there are many churches that have that kind of program going...you have your calling network...a person is responsible to call three or four people every day to just find out how things are...what's happening...what do you need...and seeing to it that those things are met...but like in Pekie it's not organized.

You have a natural calling network...you have the natural care and the natural feeling of responsibility...it's through kinship...or is always...Rudy Tahtinen, for instance, helps Ilmi Pelto, Mrs. Grandma Pelto, and also Pauline Maki, helps them over and over on many things...does not belong to their church but he must do that because he knows that it is right to do that, so he does it...so it's not just kinship, is it?

No, not just family...now, let me see if I can give you a specific example of that...O. K., I guess maybe the best one would be how the Johnson clan watches over Sally Kemp...they make sure that they get together regularly...and the phone calls made...now Sally works but Sally lives alone...and they check back and forth on each other.
I: I must differ with you here...I have a tape-recorded interview from Sally Kemp in which she says that they will never help you...you always have to ask them...you always have to humiliate yourself and ask...they are the kind of people that will not ever, ever help anyone, unless in their own clan, unless the person asks.

R: O.K., I had just...the reason I mentioned it is I had never seen it exhibited, but someone told me lately that Sally Kemp and the Johnsons get together.

I: Oh, this is a recent thing?

R: I don't know.

I: My information is from last summer.

R: No, this isn't recent...maybe it was somebody's assumption...I was going on conversation from the community, not facts...and that's good information to have 'cause I would have assumed similar things that you have just said, but I was trying to give the Johnsons credit when I didn't, never had any other thing to give them credit for.

I: Now, your idea of having a housing facility close to Pelkie...

R: In Pelkie.

I: Right in Pelkie?

R: In Pelkie...you know where Sylvia Jokela's place is...behind it...there's a flat plateau area in there...and we've talked about...Ralph and I...Pastor Groop...I give him credit...that's where he and Ralph were working on that diligently.

I: Can you find Pastor Groop anymore?

R: Yeah, he's way down in Wisconsin now...he'd be a good man to talk about that...well, Ralph was the one who was the spearhead and did all the nuts and bolts work...and I have a file on that Pelkie Housing Authority in my office.

I: O.K., I'd like to see that, and also can you send me Groop's address?

R: He's just moved...I can probably dig it up someplace...he was in Newberry which would have been on your way down-state...he was there for the whole time I've been here until he just left here a while...

I: This idea, though, presupposes a concern for people that is found in Pelkie.

R: I think that the real...I have to be careful when I say that they have a concern for people...many ways I get very disheartened...in other words, my hopes of what we could be doing for people is certainly not realized or fulfilled...so in other words, when I speak...I'm speaking...when I say care for people...and people-orientation rather than thing-orientation...that is much greater in Pelkie than anyplace I've ever been, but we still find ourselves falling quite a bit short...but going back then to the positive side...I just wanted to put that in as a modifier so that it doesn't sound like we see only one side of the picture...but the people-orientation is most exhibited by the fact that visiting still does go on though it's lost some of its vitality...visiting still does go on...when you go to the store or when you are with people through the community and whatnot, you don't notice clothes, you don't notice cars they drive unless they've had to buy a new one...and that's almost kind of a weird...you don't buy new cars...or you don't have to get another car...you drive your car forever except the postman who have to buy them because they wear them...
Talking about that from a sociological point of view, I think that was where one of your problems in the community entered...difference in life style you find in terms of consumption.

Absolutely...I was a member completely of the consumer society...we were very much into that kind of mindset...clothes used to be a very high priority on our list of values...you had to be dressed properly...and coordinated...you bought quality and style...not high-fashion things but, you know, the solid, middle-class well-dressed Swede...so you weren't loud, by any means, but you wore quality, I guess...but here, then, you start to find out that there are many more important things to do with your money.

What do they do with their money?

Save it.

That's right...they do not have any...

Don't spend it...just don't ever spend it...you save your whole life until you die and give it to the government...I can't even get them to make wills...boy, now if you want to talk about stupid Finns, that's gotta be stupidity...because it's been unknown to them in their whole life what it means to write a will or to use your resources for increase, or you take loans, mortgage large items, you mortgage them, like houses and cars and whatnot...because you pay back in cheaper dollars...inconceivable...just because last year when I bought my woolens I paid $5 and this year I'm paying $6.50, and last year I earned $3,000 and this year I'm earning $4,000, that doesn't mean that if I had invested in a house at $5,000 last year, and I've taken a mortgage on it for twenty years...it'd be like paying it back with air...can't conceive of that, see.

And when they buy, it's with cash.

On the line...it's absolutely out of this world.

There really is money over there because of this very hoarding activity.

I'd hate to tell you how many people are buried with savings accounts in excess of $20,000...no heirs...

But their life style...you'd never guess it.

Below the poverty level, below the poverty level.

You know, they must have had it so hard years and years ago.

Did you ever see the movie "The Emigrants"?

Is it that bad...I should see that.

You should see that...and then the new one's out now, "The New Land"...you should see that...that really does help you understand what...what they came from...that happens to be Swedish...but it's the same thing.

Talking now about this caring the people are into...this idea of helping...I was going to talk about this later but I think now is an appropriate time to bring it up...it might be a little painful for you in going through it, and that's the whole Klaine Chartier tragic
episode...it was tragic but at the same time it brought out the very finest in the people. Can you kind of from a historical point of view...how it developed showing in as much as you can the idea of how it brought out the best in people and how the people helped, and the whole thing, because I wasn't here at that time.

R: O. K., there was one other train of thought that I had started out with this afternoon that I don't want to forget saying something about it and that was this whole area of how Felkie is in a time of transition, and that the Pelto-Niemisto-Pauline...is one style...that's the old style that has been the solid tradition and it's still going on very strongly with others besides those three that we've used for examples...but we are also in a period of transition and that is best reflected by the gals who are still able to get around on their own...but need personally to have the thought that people care about them, too...that they'll stop in to visit...

I: For instance.

R: Well, Kate Kuivanen is the one I'm thinking of particularly at this point...she's of- times...I couldn't even begin to mention all of the times she's said to me, "Well, people, they just forget about widows...you sit in your house by yourself...and nobody comes to visit...and nobody comes to have a cup of coffee...nobody pays any attention..."...I think, of course, you have to take into account the personality of Kate, who is a tremendously independent, considered to be a rather wealthy...

I: And a bitch.

R: Well, yeah, bitchy...she's just very stubborn...she's got an opinion and by god that's it...but one thing about Kate, of course, that's endearing is that she'll disagree with you on every point but she'll come back...she may hate what I do but she likes me and she'll keep coming back...or she likes the church...put it that way.

I: I don't think, though, that this specific thing is tied to her personality...it's good that you made that qualification but it seems to be the case with Sally Kemp, Elma Hietikko, with Violet Hakola...and it's not also with the females, it's with the males.

Males, too...the same thing...they feel a sense of isolation.

And I think that's because this whole visiting custom is tied up in couple visiting.

Right, that's what Kate pointed out.

It produces an imbalance, somehow, in the whole system...when a couple does not come...I've encountered occasions when I've visited people and they'll say, "Where's Elaine...how come she's not here?"...and they were actually mad at me for...

For coming alone.

Yeah.

I get that still even when I come alone...and that's my function...I mean, I'm pastor and I visit people as their pastor...or I visit people in the community as a pastor in the community...I'm supposed to have my wife and the boys along...and it took a long time...that was a very difficult lesson for the people to learn...that my schedule, and my wife's and boys' schedule are not one and the same...and it was very painful for them, I think, to have to learn that my wife and the boys...

DE TWO

...schedule were different from mine and that they considered...my wife considers her
schedule equally as important as mine...and so that when she wants to get involved in
something, or take time to do something, or put the boys to bed on schedule, that's what
she does whether I'm going visiting or not, or whether somebody would like her to come
over or not, she has to do her jobs and her thing...but they've learned now that the
pastor is the pastor and the pastor's wife is a part of his family...that his job and his
family life are somewhat different functions...now this transition again...there are many
people in our community today that are suffering from a sense of isolation, and I'm wonder-
ing...just, you know, sheer guess or speculation or feeling on my own part...if this
problem hasn't somewhat developed because of the ease with which people could visit...
that is, we are able to get around really quite rapidly and we can go where we want when
we want and stay as long as we want and leave when we want...it used to be that you had
to plan ahead and make an honest-to-goodness effort to visit...you made an investment in
your neighbors and in your people that you spoke to...that was certainly passing the time
of day but it was a key part of your day...you had taken time out of a day that was going
to require maybe two hours of buggy riding or an hour of driving an old car through muddy
roads to visit somebody...or to get to the store where you could see your friends...now
we run to the store to pick up one item and are home again...if I forget something I'll
run down the store and pick it up...you don't take the time to visit in the store...you
don't take the time to visit at the school...you don't take the time to visit at the
post office like you used to...and so society has...its pace speeded up in Pelkie also...
and I think its effects are that we forget...you know, people have forgotten those widows
and those widowers and they no longer put them into the plan...not that they don't want
to...it's just that they don't...and leave it at that...

I: When they recognize it they think it's horrible

R: Boy, they're just appalled.

I: If they were to be listening to us right now, they would say, "This is horrible!"

R: "This is terrible!"...they would feel just terrible.

I: I think, though, the big transition on that is this change from a family farm type of
income...when you're living in the community and at home you work and you can stop work-
ing because you are your own boss...and you see your neighbor and feel you can talk to
him...and also...but when you go and get the job outside the community, you drive longer
distances, you make other relationships, friend relationships, at work...when you come
back...you leave those friends at work...and you come back into a situation where you
become increasingly more of a stranger to the neighbors around you.

R: Even Pelkie is becoming a bedroom community...you know, we talk about suburbs being bed-
room communities from the city...the urban...Pelkie has become for many a bedroom commun-
ity.

I: Especially these long...

R: White Pine.

I: Do you know any of those people...any of those long distance travelers...who is one, now,
that we can think of?

Well, Waino Wuori is one from up Elo way.

What's his life like when he works...

Well, see, he was a logger when I first came here...and, therefore, was still in the com-
munity quite a bit of the time and things were going well...he and his neighbor and one
other fellow worked together...now his life is dictated to by his job...thirteen hours a
day he is gone from the community...his whole existence is working, traveling, and sleep-
ing.

I: Where does he work?
R: White Pine.
I: Eighty miles away, roughly?
R: About 80 miles each way.
I: Forty-five minutes in the summer
R: To work? Oh, no...I'm sure that it must take him all of an hour and fifteen minutes on
the best of days to get to work.
I: In the winter almost two hours...one way...four hours driving, eight hours working.
R: Fourteen hours...summers thirteen
I: And there are people who work at the Tilden Mine...Marquette or Ishpeming...80 miles away.
R: Yeah, Stan Michaelson's now working at the Tilden Mine...he's from Tapiola...just enormous
amounts of drivers going out.
I: I'm going to interview some of those people specifically as targets and ask them how their
life has changed.
R: Stan is...well, Waino would be very good because he was in the farming kind of environment.
Let's see if I can think of another one that would be able to really tie into that.
I: but I think this is the big change...I think when this happens, you begin to lose
touch around you, and when that happens the care of the aged stops, too.
R: Yeah...O.K., I think the ones who are still caring or that are visiting the aged and
taking care of the aged are the ones who are still predominantly tied to Pelkie...in
other words, their living and their life is still focused in and around Pelkie...but
those who are traveling, or those who are doing a lot of driving, or are younger and have
gotten involved in other kinds of activities...they just don't think about it...they
haven't considered those older people...when they start to...have that brought to their
attention...they're appalled at what they have gotten involved in...that they've forgotten...
but they're incapable of changing it.
I: I'm beginning to think that the only way for a sane existence is for sociologists, theo-
logians, and all sorts of people to get together and design small communities like Pelkie.
R: Where people can live, work and...I think that's what they're trying to do in some of these
architectural communities where they are trying to develop shopping, living, working,
schools...all in a small community...the only problem, of course, with that is that they're
putting people into buildings like we're sitting in right now where you don't have your
space...I think people get closer together the further they live apart.

That has a lot to do with it...I've noticed when talking to town people here when we say
what is a good neighbor, they say, "Oh, someone who's helpful but who won't bother you"...
you don't hear anyone say that in Pelkie...I mean, there's not this perception of "too
closeness".
R: Nobody lives too close...you've all got space...Ralph and I live about as close as anybody lives to anybody in Pelkie and we don't live very close...I don't know what's going on in Ralph's house...I don't know when his lights are on or not on.

I: 'Course across the street you have that little string of close little huts...Tahtinen's, Pelto's, Niemisto's...

R: Yeah, but those are grandmas...grandmas kind of stuff...well, I don't know...but they're pretty distant too, I think...they don't notice...it's not the same kind of closeness as if you had that many houses close together in town.

I: O. K., you've touched the question already and...well, let's go to this Elaine Chartier episode.

R: O. K....Elaine was a young, 38-year old woman who was a baptized member of our parish and whose mother is now living in the low-income housing for the aged in Baraga...and she has seven children and was very close to her family and had done an excellent job of raising her children...and was in the hospital for the birth of her last child...and after she had been out of the hospital about ten days or two weeks, she contacts hepatitis...and she went back to the hospital and they couldn't treat it but they hung on to her there for a couple weeks and then sent her to Wisconsin...Madison...for treatment, and it was a "touch and go" situation there for a long, long time...and the kids weren't really told what the situation was and then finally she did die.

I: But during the course of this "touch and go" dimension, the whole town, except for the kids, was totally seized by it...a complete seizure.

R: Yeah, that's all they thought of or talked about...that's kind of an overview of the sequence of events that took place...the activities that took place in the context of that sequence of events in Pelkie was that our community became like members of the family of the Chartiers in that it was the paramount thing in the community mind...they couldn't much get together and talk except to ask what have you latest heard about Chartiers...how are the kids...was Jim home...has he been drinking...have the kids been getting enough food...have any of them been sick...who's bringing the food over...who's taking care of the clothes...have they had their house cleaned...has Diane, who's diabetic, been taking her medicine...the context of the conversations was always the Chartier family.

I: It was a prelude to a conversation on the streets...you could not talk to a person on the street without saying that...it was on the lips of every conversation.

R: To my knowledge that is true...I did not have anyone that I talked to in that community during that period that was not seized by the Chartier family.

I: When I passed through it was...toward the end...it was the same way...I noticed that there was this helping thing all of a sudden...Jim works...

Jim is a construction worker and he is also a heavy drinker, and Elaine pretty much raised the kids and took care of them and trained them and loved them...and Jim was not highly respected by the kids, even...so what happened was that the community had to provide the love and guidance and care for the kids that the mother provided...not what Jim provided...so that's what they did...they became surrogate mothers in the style of Elaine...that is, that you just lavish love upon the household...and that was reflected in the fact that food was provided for every meal that the kids were home...dishes were done, clothes were washed...I asked in church one Sunday at Faith for people to sign up to bring meals and I probably had 40 families in church and 33 signed up to help that day...so there was an enormous res-
pense on the part of the whole community to help...now, that was not just church people
in my congregations that started to help, but people in the whole community...I went to
a...the Pelkie parents group meeting at the school and that was one of the major items
of concern at that meeting...was what should we as an organization be doing to help...

can we put out...and their decision was to put out little cans to collect the money to
help pay for transportation of Jim or the kids or somebody down back and forth to
Madison...so that they could go visit Elaine because that was a big expense...one trip
like that was about $100...because of transportation and food and lodging and everything
else...so they put out cans all over creation...oh, my goodness...and I don't know but
they collected 2 or 3 hundred dollars in a short period of time...all the way from Chas-
ssel to L'Anse to Nisula...that whole segment in there...just like that...they saw to it
that they bought a washing machine for them after Elaine died...they went and bought a
washing machine 'cause there was none in the house...community bought that.

I: Who are the spearheads...of some of these...not asking for credit or medals...but it's
always a source...or several sources.

R: O. K., it got started...the whole thing started with Mrs. Peterson next door 'cause
their kids get together a lot...Mary Peterson is a neighbor and the Chartier kids come
and play with the Peterson kids a lot...they get together a lot...so Mary was very sen-
titive to the thing and the baby...Mrs. Chartier brought the baby to Mrs. Peterson when
she went into the hospital, I guess, is how it worked...then Mrs. Chartier from down
the road...John Chartier's wife, Frances, is a...well, they're cousins, I guess...Jim
and John are cousins...so that relationship...Frances started to get together with Mary
and help find out what the identifiable needs were...and then Evelyn Turunen is also a
friend of Mary Peterson...and got acquainted with what was happening with the baby, and
Evelyn is a lover of children, you know, little kids...so wherever there's a baby or
something, she'll find out and do whatever she can to help...and, well, from there, then,
I got called in...Evelyn called me in and then it was just a matter of getting it organized...
and that's what I did...in terms of getting a list of people...I identified a need that
could be...I knew the people were all willing to help but it was a matter of getting them
to do it in an effective and useful way, and that was one of the main needs at that point
was food on the table every night to feed these kids...seven kids had to eat...so I then
asked for people to provide food and they did...then it was a matter of seeing that...

I: Many of the different women of Pelkie arranged it...I'll do it, then, such and such a
night.

R: Evelyn and Hugo Kemppainen's wife, Eva, got to work on the organization on who's going
to do what when...assign people who had signed up...and ask them to bring it on certain
dates...so that's how that meal thing got organized...then we were also calling down to
Madison to keep in touch with what the situation was there and I had called down and to
make sure that chaplains were caring for Mrs. Chartier down there...and that kind of thing,
and then the clothes was another...you know people signed up for food, clothes, washing of
clothes...others came in then to clean...they signed up to say that they'd be willing to do
that...and everybody in the community just kind of let...as soon as they found out who was
organizing it and who was setting up the schedules...then they got in touch with either
Evelyn or Eva and got their name on the list.

Or Frances?

Or Frances...I think Frances helped with that...or mostly Eva and Evelyn did the organizing
of the schedule...now, Frances was in there as a very supportive role but she's also very
nervous and shy...

And very new in the community.
I: She had this great desire to do something and she couldn't quite channel it to satisfy herself.

I: Oldest daughter?

R: Of Mrs. Chartier that died, and that's Joyce... and so she's kept the family together now... and Mrs. Hakola helps and Mrs. Peterson... and I really don't know what's happened now in the last month or so... but it's going along very well... I guess it was an example of how the community still identifies as a community... and if you're a member of the community... whether you're... I would go so far as to say if you have been there for any length of time at all... couple years, even... and you had let yourself become known... or had related to the community in any way... the community then steps in in your hour of need and cares for you in appropriate ways... and they did, there... they did very effectively... I came in purely as... my job in that particular situation was purely professional...

I: Did you perform the funeral service?

Yes.

I: And that was in the Elo Cemetery?

Yeah, Elo Cemetery and Elo Church... that's where she was baptized... she never joined the Roman Church.

What sort of a thing was that funeral?

Huge... enormous numbers of people from the community and kids and... there was a very... Maine was an extremely well-loved and highly respected person for her motherliness... she was an excellent mother... and highly acknowledged as that in the community... her funeral was a very beautiful funeral... and it had been my hope that the Roman priest would have been involved in it but he was late or something... I don't know exactly how it worked out.
he was supposed to have been in it but he wasn't...but that's all right...because I had been with the family through that whole time and they knew me and so they weren't alienated by having it in the Lutheran Church, I don't believe, though all the kids are Roman...and Elaine had seen to it as she had promised to when they were married according to the contract that a Protestant has to sign in the Roman Church...that the children would be raised Roman, and so they were...so she was a straight arrow that way...she just never went to church herself, I guess...it was a beautiful funeral...of course afterwards the luncheon for everybody...the community provides that in church...they bring in all the foods...they have a big feast...as is the case with almost every funeral...where you have a...kind of like a reception afterwards...it's really something.

I: Did you notice anything different about the funeral than other funerals? Was there a community warmth...at the feast afterwards...did you notice any kind of feeling...

R: Well, let's put it this way...at that funeral it was a matter of Elaine having been a vital member of the community and so it wasn't somebody who had come back...it wasn't somebody who was old and dying...it wasn't somebody who...the people didn't...have an ongoing relationship...almost everyone there felt close to the family and felt the sorrow that the family felt...and experienced the kind of sense of loss that the family experienced, and due to that express their very supportive kind of empathy with the family...the community, however, oftentimes...you know, they're really quite a warm community yet...it's not something...funerals around here are a little more...how would you describe it...a funeral is both a social time as well as a time of sorrow and mourning and sense of loss...but they have a...well, many more people attend funerals here than they do in the city...everybody goes to funerals...you take time out to go to funerals here...whereas in the city...unless you're awfully close, you don't get there...you may get to the visitation the night before, but here people see the funeral as being more important than the visitation.

I: Many people say...or many sociologists or anthropologists say that depth crises like this pull the community together...the very act of coming together to say farewell, and coming together in times of crisis like this, as peculiar as though it may seem, pulls the community together like something else never, ever could...and in the process of one of the members suffering and dying...the others are created as one...as one leaves, that one leaving transforms herself in this case into some sort of basis for unity for the rest...and one dies and then the rest get together and the unity spreads...really getting into that happy, but I kind of sense that...I sort of felt that this that event provided an occasion for people to get together...I don't mean getting together in a fun sense...but to get together in a real sense...

R: They really did. The community got together in a very real sense...very supportive, working together, pulling together, taking care of a task, caring about people...

I: That's the main thing, yeah.

R: Very supportive of the kids, seeing to it that their medications were taken care of, and that the food needs were taken care of...and not in a mechanical way...when they went to bring a meal they stayed for the meal...to see that it was hot and things were ready and served it and the whole bit...it wasn't just a "slip it in the door" kind of thing..."here's some food, we'll see you"...and clean, you know...I can remember being over there and there were some ladies there...the kids were all there...they looked in the refrigerator and there was some food that had been stuck in the back, you know...because there was a lot of food accumulating...and then they took it upon themselves to say, "Well, would you like it if we cleaned up this refrigerator for you?"..."Well, of course"...it got taken care of...it was a very intimate kind of involvement in this crisis...they didn't just look at it from a distance and deal with it from a distance...they were in it as if being part of the family.
I: Did you notice any...that's why I asked that question about after at the feast...or during the funeral...did you notice anything like that...because it seemed like this was sort of an extraordinary event of this particular kind...the gradualness and the perceived inevitability of her going...

R: I would have to almost say no...nothing extraordinary at that point because almost always the feast afterwards is a rather personal...each person coming up to the other members of that family who has lost the one...giving them a hug and letting them know in a physical as well as verbal way that they too feel the loss and wish to share their sorrow...and that's pretty much a regular feature of a funeral...and also the idea of frivility also enters in...levity at the funeral feast where they do start to laugh a little bit...it's that kind of mixed...

I: Tension release.

R: Yeah, there's that mixed bag at every funeral...so I would suggest that the feast followed the typical pattern of our funerals...because it had been a heavy time for a long, long time...and they need that feast...I happen to be a very strong believer in those coffee feasts afterwards...I think they're great...because they do provide that release finally...we've been looking forward to this death and it's been approaching...and we've been worried about it all the time and then it happens, and then we go down into the depths of despair over the loss of one we have loved...
I: Why did that whole deal start?

R: Well, my perception of it was that around the parsonage...there was a parsonage that the older pastors had lived in since 1925 when it was built...and it's an old building, not inadequate in any stretch of the imagination, but it needed a great deal of modernization done to it, and it needed insulation and windows and heating and wiring and roofing and different things done to it that had just been neglected...and the neglect had resulted from...and we'll talk about that later...the organization...where there was no Property Committee, for instance, that really took that as their responsibility to make sure things were "up to snuff" all the time...like now, we've lived here, just to talk about that a second, we've lived in this parsonage now for 3 and 1/2 years, and we've talked about the water problem, but it wasn't until the ladies came in yesterday to try to scrub the basement floor and ran out of water that all of a sudden a few of them are saying, "Something's gotta be done about that water problem"...that's again...and I've also pointed out to them that there's a problem with the roof...a lack of insulation in one section, apparently, that has resulted in some water spots on the inside and some things...and nothing has happened about that until yesterday when they were there and saw the water spots and tried to wash them off...they don't come off...now maybe something will happen about it, see...unless the people are actually involved in the taking care of it...O. K., that parsonage, the old parsonage built in 1925, was not maintained by the parish like it should have been...and that was the result of...once you get the building built, then it's supposed to just take care of itself, apparently, though they would never think of it that way in their own home...and, see, they neglect, I would suggest, have neglected to realize that the pastor is no more than a renter in the parsonage...that parsonage is not his...he's not putting any equity into it or building anything...so he's just residing in a building that they have provided, as if they were paying him $200 a month and he was paying that back to them for rent...you know, he's not getting ahead...so he doesn't maintain it other than you would maintain your own home just to live in it, clean and that kind of stuff...well, there hasn't been a Property Committee so that parsonage got really run down and way behind schedule...O. K., when we came I let it be known what needed to be done...the Council, then, told me that they agreed with that and the Vice-Pastor who was here and the Council and some people get together and formed a building committee and there was a great deal of discussion which then resulted in the building of a new parsonage...the land was contributed this time by the Turunen's, and I have new found out that the land that the old parsonage sits on was part of the Johnson land and they gave that land when that was built...so when they built the new parsonage and we moved out of that one and sold it, that was taken, apparently, as a direct affront by me of them, that their place wasn't good enough.

I: They had evidently built that, too, and...

R: Had a great deal to do with the building of it, I'm sure...helping build it and clearing the land and all of the accompanying work as well as giving the land...and also the pastor, then, was their neighbor.

I: Was he on very close terms with them, too?

R: No...it is my understanding that they have never been particularly close to pastors...never particularly close to them...as a matter of fact they've even had squabbles with the pastors...but the idea that he was kind of within their view all the time and was their neighbor...they kind of owned him, I would suggest was kind of residing in the back of their mind, maybe.
I: A possessiveness feature.

R: Yeah...this is our church...that's the parsonage that we gave the land for...and he's our pastor...a possessive control kind of thing...

I: Do you recall anything that Groop might have mentioned...

R: I never talked to Groop about this parish...I never talked to Groop about this parish... when I came in here I was totally ignorant.

I: It would be interesting for me to take one or two tapes from him and then show them to you.

R: Very much, very much

I: But did they have influence at the time when you first came...when you first came here who were the, if you want to say, the power base of the Pelkie Church...the local power base?

R: The local power base was the Johnson clan...that includes Peranders, Johnsons and some Maki's, Pelto's...

I: Alfred and Laina?

R: Alfred and Laina...see, Laina is a Johnson...Taimi Maki is a Johnson...Dagmar Perander is a...well, her husband is a result of a marriage of two families, the Perander and the Johnson's.

I: And the Emil Johnson's were in there?

R: Emil Johnson's are in there...the Wuori's, Urho Wuori...Esther, see, is a sister of that clan...Lampi and all her brothers, then.

I: That's a pretty tightly knit cluster.

R: Very tight.

I: Were they represented on the church council, for instance?

R: Yeah, Dagmar was the representative of the clan on the council and she quit shortly after I...after about a year that I was here because she wasn't getting any support...I opposed her on almost every issue...or let's put it this way...she opposed me on almost every issue that was brought up.

I: Was she sort of the representative of the Johnson lobby, as it were?

R: Yeah, I think so and, see, Joe was on the Council, too, Joe Maki...Taimi's husband...but Taimi and Joe don't agree with the Johnson clan...they're a part of the clan but they don't associate with it any more...very little...

I: As a result of this?

R: No...I think they've just...their children have had a big impact upon them...and they didn't like that kind of close-mindedness, I think...they just got fed up with it...the backbiting and the bickering and the controlling...even Laina isn't that close to that clan anymore...nor is Esther...you'll see Taimi, Esther and Laina hanging together.

I: Well, that's what I mean...the emergence of this particular event split the clan...
R: Over the parsonage.
I: ...the clan split over loyalty and commitment to the church.
R: Right...and the way in which that commitment would be expressed, and it all started about the parsonage, I think, is where it really started.
I: And it would seem to me that the result of the clan being split over the issue would even more make the opposition hostile to you because you are responsible for splitting the clan...indirectly.
R: That's right, that's right.
I: What were some of the experiences that you had that...some of the issues where you came face to face...
R: With opposition from the clan or the people?
I: Yeah, some experiences that you recall, historically, if you can.
R: I suppose one of the first confrontations that we had with the clan was over a trip that I took some young people on...no, back before that...it was all the way back when they called me here, the church councils had indicated they wanted youth work...they wanted somebody who could relate to the youth and I took them literally at their word on that...that they wanted somebody who would be willing and able to work with the youth...well, my understanding of a way to work with the youth is to find out where the kids are...what their needs are...and then meet those needs in a way that is meaningful, and then provide them with direction through those vehicles...in other words, I don't come in here with a prescribed program and this is What I think you kids should be doing and you buy it...I come in and find out who they are, what's going on...where's their thought patterns...and what kinds of things are they wanting to be able to do...and then make use of that kind of enthusiasm and then put in a Christian kind of perspective.
I: But you ran into opposition right away on this.
R: Very strong opposition.
I: Who was in the Council at this time, to your recollection?
R: Oh, boy, I'd have to think back...
I: Dagmar?
R: Dagmar was there...Ernest Heikkinen was there...Joe Maki...Rennie Moilanen, I think...Reuben Turunen...boy, I can't even remember, hardly...there were twelve, though...it was a big council at that point...so anyhow...then, when we started doing youth work, that meant that we were having discussions about different things...we talked about dancing, we talked about card playing...and the kids said they wanted to be able to...at their meetings...as part of it to play cards...or maybe even have a dance once in a while at the church...well, that immediately brought me into direct conflict with the church council and the clan, best vocalized by Dagmar at that point, that that is something that we do not do in this church.
I: They wanted to be able to hold dances at the church?
R: Yeah, and to be able to play cards at the church...so then some of the younger men from Elko, the younger members up there...Gary Lyttinen and Stan Michaelson and whatnot...they said, "Well, why not"...so I got support from that front, see, and from down here I was getting the flak...Pelkie was where I was getting the most flak at that point, you know...
Ele was wondering why not and St. Henry just kind of sat back and didn't say anything at that point...and the Johnson clan was kind of leading the fight here against doing anything with the kids...then we kind of...the motion that was made to deal with that was, "We do not encourage card playing or dancing in the church"...but there was no absolute "no"...ne, there was a "no" to dancing but "we do not encourage card playing in the church"...

I: What was the specific objection or what was in their mind that made them not want dancing?

R: O. K., sex...they think it's a sensuous, lust-based kind of unholy activity...but they will allow their girls, or their kids, to go to school dances.

I: But not in a church.

R: Not in a church...the building takes on some kind of a sacred dynamic to it...its very existence is sacred, somehow...the building...so the building was reserved for worship...so everything you did there was in a very quiet tone...you never ran around in the church...kids today...like my confirmation kids or whatever, as they run up and down the stairs and some of the older members walk in, are just horrified that I'm not screaming at them and saying, don't do this and don't do that...because they see the building as sacred...and I don't see the building as sacred...I think the building is a place that is set aside for worship when the community gathers there for worship...then it is sacred because it's a special place at that point...but it's not in and of itself a sacred place.

I: Were there other issues?

R: Yeah, O. K., then we got on to a trip...we took the Luther Leaguers on a trip to Chicago...and took about 26 teenagers on a trip for exposure which was a masterpiece in planning and Christian education in terms of experiential and experimental education, and the residuals of that kept our group going for a year and a half...just by virtue of the fact that it had happened and they could reflect on it, and the momentum of just that one four-day trip kept the group going...and that came off as a vacation for the kids...as a waste of money...the church has no business taking kids on trips.

I: Briefly, what did the trip entail?

R: Leaving here at 6 o'clock on a Thursday morning, going from here to the synod office first to meet with the president of the Lutheran Church - Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod, the LCA, and finding out what the synod is all about...meeting with a deaconess who was working in a church in the inner city...what is a deaconess...how does she work...then going on to the Lutheran Church Supply Store and find out what kinds of things does the church do through its publication house and its supply stores, Christian education materials, the whole bit that way...different kinds of parameters they became acquainted with there...then on to Carthage College, the LCA Lutheran college on the territory of the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod, and spending time there with students and touring the campus and finding out what church colleges are all about...and four-year Christian education is...going on from there to stay at a church...becoming acquainted with a massive church that was willing to open its doors to a group they'd never heard of except that it's a sister congregation so they found out how the church is large and involves other kids...if you share our fellowship in the LCA and Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod, we can go anywhere and be welcomed...they provided us with food and a place to sleep, and the whole bit, all free of charge and very cordial...going on from there, then, down to Chicago to be at the seminary for a 10 o'clock chapel service, and after chapel having coffee with seminarians and meeting with a couple seminarians to describe seminary education, then attending classes...this is all on the first day...going to find out what a seminary is...no, it's the second day, now...what seminary education is all about...having lunch there...then going down to a place, right after lunch, to a place called Christian Action Ministry, CAM Ministries, west side of Chicago...inner city alternate highschool education school that's been set up by a group of five congregations headed by the LCA
congregation in the area to provide for black kids who can’t handle five days a week, eight-hour school days but need the money to work or something...they can’t really afford to go to school and buy the clothes and not work so they’re providing alternate education that’s certified by the city and so it’s O.K., and finding out how the church is involved in people’s lives and meeting needs in very real ways in the middle of a black ghetto...going right from there and setting...putting side by side in...taking right down to Mayor Daley’s office and talking with one of his youth officers...who says there’s no problem in the schools, you know...we’re doing the best thing in the world for all these black kids and providing the best education and meeting all their needs...which they just came out of a place where they just met 50 black kids who say that they can’t handle Chicago schools and the only way they can make it through life is if they have something like this...going on from there to meet with a fellow who has none of those ideas who’s the project coordinator and the supervising manager for the building of the new Sears building.

I: It sounds like an incredible education trip, using trip metaphorically and literally, but what was the objection?

R: Waste of time, waste of time...that’s not the church’s job.

I: Were there specific complaints about the...

R: Oh, yeah...well, then they got into the black ghetto, well, see, they don’t need to know that...why does he have to be pulling these blacks in here all the time...you know, he’s just a Communist trying to pervert the minds of our young people is the attitude I get...

I: No, really?

R: ...the attitude I get...new, those words were never used...ever...I’ve been called a Communist to my face...but I’ve not ever...what I just said, you know, trying to pervert the minds of our young people as a Communist plot idea has never been said to my face, but that’s the kind of feeling that...it’s unnecessary, it’s completely a waste of time, money, energy, we can’t afford that.

I: Were there more confrontations other than this...it seems to center around the initial movement from the parsonage and the slap in the face that they perceived that that was...and then your handling of the youth program...they perceived you as the corrupting agent.

R: Then also when I first came...when I first arrived here at the new house, now, I’d been here about a month or two...and I had a lot of my friends over the Labor Day weekend come up from Chicago...and they had the traditional 1970 hairdos and the bib overalls and they were camping...they had their canoes on the top of their cars...the typical...

I: Counter-culture.

R: Counter-culture image...and then I, of course, bought our beer supply at the local Co-op which really blew their minds...you have that...like some of them...that group of counter-culture people are good friends who came up...and there were some blacks...and like shortly after that, again, a couple that is a good friend of ours...a black and a white girl...a black boy and a white girl who are married came up and stayed with us and went to church one Sunday with us and this kind of stuff...and that really...they thought I was for sure trying to change the churches into black churches...I also had a beard, remember, when I arrived here...I had it for two years while I was here...and so all of these things, you have to realize, really caught them pretty off guard, you know, they weren’t ready for this kind of bombardment of whole new set of ideas all at once...and see, then...but what was fun, I was going to say, was like that weekend when all those kids came up and we used Turunen’s Pond back here and they camped back there and we had a picnic and then I told a lot of people about this picnic how these kids had built some of these camper...these ovens out of...you get green logs and cut them and notch them and you make a very
het oven so you can bake cakes and make pies and all that stuff and roast chickens and
stuff in that oven that you have made out of just natural wood and they did stuff like
that...and one of them was an artist, so when it came time to serve the meal, he had
made a centerpiece that was about over half the table, this way...you'd be able to eat
around the edge without the...but it was with ferns and greens from pine trees and
stuff, you know, and then the food was placed in this centerpiece so it was kind of like
a cornucopia, you could say, and it had all these beautiful...all natural flowers and
items that he had found in the woods that he had pulled together and made this beautiful
core of natural setting...something like you would see in an outdoor chef's book or gour-
met book.

I: What was the impact of this...did local people come and see this?

R: They didn't see it...they just heard about it...and some of them thought that was...
they couldn't hardly believe it.

I: But it was kind of far out, too?

R: Oh, of course...just, you know, really weird.

I: Did you have specific encounters, face to face encounters, at all?

R: No, very few...the kind of encounters I would have with the Council when
it came time to get some things organized...and I would say, "Now we have no committees
around here and there's a lot of work to be done and you've gotta get hustling on this"...
and so I'd list the committees and say, "Now, which committee do you want to be a part of,
you just sign up for whichever one you want, and if you don't sign up, then we'll just
appoint you 'cause you must not have any preference"...I sent the sheet around, and two
people out of 30 signed up...that's pretty blunt...we're not going to do anything, that's
not our job...so I asked them...

I: The idea, was, of course, that the pastor does all the work or what work there has to be
done.

R: There's no work to do...the pastor only preaches on Sunday and comes visit...and that's
all this committee stuff, that's just not even real...so that called for a confrontation,
you know, at that Council meeting at which point, then, I just lit into them...because
then I said, "What do you mean not signing up?"...and they just said, "We're not going
to do that"...and they said it just that bluntly...now I can't remember exactly who said
that...but we're not going to do that...and I said, in essence, "Well, that's fine...then
I'm not going to do anything, either...because I'm certainly not going to do this work"...
and I lit into them for about 45 minutes, I can remember that night...and just really
chewed their better half, and we had about half sign up by the end of that night, then...
now, I admit we never get those committees really functioning, except for a few people...
but, boy, every year they get assigned to a committee and they know they're supposed to
be there, and if they're not there, that's their...they know that they're not there.

I: Who were the initial ones that started to support you...do you recall them?

R: Joe Maki...Floyd Volts...Reuben Turunen...not so verbally from Reuben but he was just
there...Rennie Moilanen, I think.

I: Bernard Tepsa?

R: Bernard Tepsa...from this parish I would say these were the...Urho Wueri who's a part of
that Johnson clan but doesn't agree with their thinking...and he was more hesitant to
support me, but as time went along and he saw the proof of the pudding then he started to
support me quite strongly.
I: That is really a change...what you are actually doing is introducing rational administration...bureaucracy in a small scale into a community where it was never before known.

R: Never before existed...but like now I have a girl working here in the office, Faye Ravi, who just this morning...this is my last day here in the Parish...and who just this morning came in...and she's been working here as she is able from her job...to come in and help get things organized here in the office...saying, well, a church can't function unless you have some basis of organization so information can be gained, you know, and programs can be organized and carried out, and you know where the people are and who they are and how things go...and so that would carry us over, then, to this question of administration and organization.

I: We're just about there now and this might be a good way to go into it...is there anything else that you wish to say about this opposition conflict...you mentioned once that you did go to the Johnson's and you had some sort of verbal encounter there...it wasn't hostile...

R: Oh, yeah, I would say it get to be at the end...I took abuse for only so long and then I finally had to confront them with the Gospel...I visited the Emil Johnson home after having avoided it...I visited it once with Bernard Tepsa to start with and get a very cool response...then I visited it one other time with a questionnaire and got less because I told them that their mindset was needed in the church, too...if they are indeed part of the ICA, the ICA needs to know what they think, too...and so would you fill out this questionnaire and send it off, I'll never see it...so I tried to give them a right to express themselves, you know...and acknowledge the fact that they disagree with me...fine, that's your privilege...but one of the problems around here is you don't disagree with people.

I: To the face.

R: Yeah, and you don't even acknowledge that you'll accept a person who disagrees with you, for some reason, I don't understand particularly well that...but if you believe that the way Christian education should be taught in the church is the memorisation of Bible stories and that's Christian education...and I believe that Christian education is memorizing Bible stories only in so far as they affect your life and you can apply it in everyday life...if I'm going to tell you that God so loved the world that He gave His only begetten Son, and I'm going to tell you that...then, I don't see any sense in learning that unless you knew what that means for you today...0. K., now we have two different opposing views...now for me in this community to come up and say, "That's fine the way you want to carry on Christian education...I can see your point there...I just don't happen to agree with it...I would go about it in another way"...then you're at a stalemate...there's no way you can talk any more...you can not agree with a person, validate his thinking either than the way you think...either you think the same way or you don't talk to each other.

I: You mean it's not possible to have a small disagreement?

R: No, I don't think it is...I don't think it's possible to have a disagreement...variance in viewpoints...and still be able to work together...at least I have yet to see how it works...with that clan...I've got other members around here...Bernard Tepsa, probably one of my staunchest supporters, and the person I'm having the hardest time leaving behind in terms of just friendship...for my coffee drinking buddy, you know...he disagrees with me on lots of things...but that doesn't stop him from going into other areas...so with that clan I'm saying that you can't have divergent viewpoints...either you see it their way or you don't see it at all...so when I went to visit them in their home this last time, that was when I was told who I was and how I thought and what I did...and how indeed I was a Communist...and after listening to it so long I finally had to turn around and say, "You know, for a person who hasn't been in church in over three years and who hasn't talked to me in two years, you know more about me than I do...and I've learned a great deal here
today because I never knew any of this stuff that you’re talking about and...

I: The idea was you came from way out there at a seminary where they heard that there’s...

R: Communist influence...the LCA is Communist.

I: Therefore you are Communist.

R: So therefore...much like you...you’re a Communist, too, you know, because you come in here and ask questions...it was really interesting this morning I talked to Gert about her mother...Gert Makela...and she’s really upset about her mother and how her mother thinks about the church, first of all because her mother never comes to church anymore...and also we were talking about this your position, and she’s convinced that it’s been Peggy that has really perverted her mother’s mind, and also then Mae Maki came across and said that that’s true.

SIDE TWO

R: The confrontation then went on with Peggy and Emil to the point where they, then, were almost to my face calling me a Communist so I finally called them on that...I said, “Are you telling me that I’m a Communist?”...and they’d say, “No, we wouldn’t say that”...and I’d say, “Well, why not...everything you’re saying here points out that I come from a Communist seminary, I speak like a Communist, I don’t preach the Gospel, you know, and all of these things...why don’t you want to call me a Communist?”...well, they just don’t want to do that...well, then I said, you know, “My concern in coming here today was to enable you to worship...my concern is for you and the development of your faith and response to Jesus Christ...and if you can’t worship with the community, the Body of Christ, and hear His word proclaimed and receive the Sacraments for the strengthening of your faith and the upbuilding of your participation in the community, then you are being weakened daily...because you’re not having that encounter with the Word or receiving the Sacrament...and I would pray that you would find a church home in which you could do that...and if it’s not Faith, so be it...and I said, “I’m here as an ambassador for Christ and an agent of reconciliation...and that’s what I understand the Gospel to be...it’s a reconciling message...it’s one in which love is proclaimed, and I haven’t heard one word of love or reconciliation out of your mouth all day”...and I said, “I don’t need to listen any longer to that kind of talk”...and I get up and walked out.

I: That sort of put the frosting on the faction cake.

R: But who was in church on Christmas Eve...Peggy.

I: She was?

R: Blew my mind.

I: That’s very interesting.

R: Very interesting.

I: Maybe it’s because you’re going and she...

R: She’s glad to see me go...she just had to hear it one more time.

I: Do you think so or...they are very proud people, too.

R: I don’t know why she was doing that...

I: You know, some people ever something like that can say, leek, I was wrong...I’m sorry...
but they have this collective egoism of the clan that...

R: Lempí, of course, has been coming a little more regularly lately...she won't talk to me but she comes to church...she'll come to church...the brothers never come...Lempí...I inadvertently...the way I figure her...I inadvertently hurt her...and that was one of those things that...if she wanted to be hurt, she was going to be hurt, if she didn't want to, she wasn't going to be...and that was a situation where we were having a Bible study and somebody asked the question why Paul says women have no status in the church, and I came back using scripture and pointing out his cultural background and the effect of that upon his definition of women's roles, and we aren't living in that environment any more.

I: That's pretty abstract reasoning.

R: Yeah, but it got to the point where I said women have a right to speak up, and they have a status...and though Paul talked about celibacy as being important but not the important thing, and all that kind of stuff...well, then Lempí wouldn't...she didn't come to church at all after that whole discussion about women's place being equal with men...she never came to church again.

I: That undermined her whole life

R: Undermined her whole life.

I: She has essentially seen herself a servant to her brothers...

R: Her whole life...and remained celibate...and she has seen herself as the humble servant of the male as God has called her to be that...and that's a position...that's a high calling...like Paul was called...and Paul is the saint...she took it as I was cutting her completely down...as her position was of no value whatsoever...inadvertently, answering another person's question in a way in which it needed to be answered, and I firmly believe, and I would say the same thing to Lempí in that question's context, but I can come right back and say that, "Lempí, what you have done God recognizes, and He knows that you have given yourself to the service and you have earned an honor and a position of respect in His sight as well as the sight of your brothers and of the community...you have done well...it just doesn't mean that everybody has to live the way you live"...but that's why I'm saying you can't have two views that are different...they're not opposing...they're different facets of the same question.

I: Black and white, either/or mentality...but to entertain both...we mentioned this before.

R: Same thing with drinking, either you're a drunk or you don't drink at all...when the pastor came in and bought beer at the Co-op they didn't know what to do with it.

I: He was put into the same category as the local drunks whose lives are destroyed.

R: Yeah, no good...lost.

I: You mentioned that Dagmar was opposed to you at first...it seemed that she might have been under relative or kinship pressure at first, and might have been essentially bowing to that.

R: I think she has been...I don't know whose person Dagmar is, and I doubt that she's her own...her husband is a strong negative influence upon her in terms of the church...Dagmar, I firmly believe, would have worshiped regularly had Edwin allowed her to...but she hasn't, she's been very, very poor...Edwin and I are probably at much stronger loggerheads than Dagmar and I are...Dagmar and I may disagree but she'll argue with me and will discuss it and dig out where our differences lie...but with Edwin it's either/or.
I: O. K., now we saw that you brought some changes into it, and in our last tape we discussed the structure of the old church, essentially the pastor did the service rituals and he handled that plus he visited people...and you, then, organized the church into some sort of a committee organization...now, can you describe these committees, sort of list each one for your own benefit...name the committee, name its function, when did you create it, why is it necessary, what problems does it have...

R: First of all, the committees that I have are constitutional...in other words, I'm doing nothing that the constitution that these congregations that they are under has not already demanded...in other words, when they were incorporated under the present constitution, these committees were a given...they just never did it...no pastor ever carried through with bringing it on the community because the community was not equipped with any history of bureaucracy or organization, and therefore was a tense thing to get organized. What are the committees? Christian Education dealing with the schools, Sunday Church School, Vacation Church School, adult education, confirmation, anything having to do with education, Christian Education committee...Worship and Music, all the practices that take place in worship on Sunday morning...what kinds of worship service will you use out of the Red Hymnal...first setting, second setting...will it be read, will it be sung...will there be choir anthems, will there begraduals sung...will there be standing and sitting...will there be handshakes of peace...will there be children coming to the altar for blessing...will there be Communion practices where the people come continually or will they come by tables...will you have Communion wine or grape juice...will you have wafers or will you have Communion bread in loaves...will you have ushers at Communion, will you have ushers period...will you have altar guilds...that kind of thing...then you have Property concerning all buildings of the parish having to do with parsonage, church buildings, the installation of toilets (which has been done now in all three churches), the roofs, painting, maintenance, plowing of driveways, moving of grass, insurance coverage, electrical work, anything having to do with any of their property that has to be done...all of it...Finance...how is the money being used...is it being disseminated responsibly...are you getting the most mileage out of your insurance policies...they examine them, determine if it's a good buy, if it's something we should be involved in or not...they are involved with how the budget is set up...they have to negotiate with the Stewardship committee and develop that budget every year for the stewardship program...they have to recommend what can be afforded in terms of benevolence and what directions they should be establishing in that way...Finance committee has never functioned...they also set up the bookkeeping systems...the record-keeping envelopes system...they are in charge of securing the forms that you send out every quarter to the members to show them what they have contributed to the congregation in terms of their pledges and how they match...and this kind of stuff...which they're just now going to introduce this next year...used to be year-end and now they're going to do it quarterly...so that's a new step at least in one of the churches, they're going to do that...the other, Stewardship committee, that's the one that's involved with helping people find out how they can best serve the church, financially and time-wise...and the areas, and worship, and developing understandings of stewardship of life, the whole concept...it's not just money by a long...

I: So the Stewardship committee is sort of a way to funnel people into participating in all different ways...

R: The Stewardship committee is probably one of the most critical committees in a whole congregation because its function is not just money...that's Finance committee...Finance committee is really the one dealing with money...they have to look at the hard, cold cash...and say, this is what we got, this is what we can do...these are the bills we will pay now, these are the bills we will hold...we can build this building, we can't build this building, we can buy this insurance policy...we need it, it costs more money but we need that kind of coverage...that's Finance...that's sheer, unadulterated money...good business practices...Stewardship is taking people and helping them do what they want to do...financially, personally, time-wise, service-wise, talent-wise, helping them become aware of what's going on in the church, and helping them get involved in whatever facet is meaningful to them.
Q: Personnel Department.

R: Yeah, really is...could be the most exciting committee in any congregation...but unfortunately most people think of stewardship as just money, and that's garbage...one month of a year on the Stewardship committee is dealing with money...that's it...and then people criticize the church...like that faction we talked about earlier...they criticize the church for talking about money...because that's all they talk about is money over there...all they want is your money...I guarantee you they've never heard come out of my mouth one time that it costs money to belong to our church...not a dime.

Q: Well, since you brought that issue up, that is a touchy thing in the Finnish religious history...the idea of money.

R: "Pikku poiku" I think it was called, "pikku poiku" or something like that...little black book that was the dues book, that it was called...and they used to collect 25 cents from every person every month, or every family every month, or whatever it was...and see, there were people who couldn't afford 25 cents a month in those days...there were some people in those days who could afford $10...but they all paid 25 cents...there was no such thing as proportionate giving or anything like that...where now when we talk about stewardship we talk about percentage...I don't care what you give...a lady who's giving a dollar may be giving more than the guy next to her who's giving a $100...cause she's giving 10 per cent of her income that week...she gets $10 a week, a Social Security check at the end of the month, or something...but the other guy next to her is earning $20,000 a year, or $50,000, or something like that...well, he should be giving $500 and she's giving $1...same difference...but that dues book has caused more residual bad feelings...and people have felt that they can't go to this church because it costs too much money...because people used to go around and literally collect monthly and check off the receipts as they collected from homes...and, boy, I can't think of anything more menacing than somebody walking around in their black coat with a black book and coming to my door and asking for the 25 cents so that they can continue to belong to this church...and you have to come and say, "I can't afford to buy beans let alone give you 25 cents for the church...I'd have kicked him square in his ass...came around like that.

Q: It's the graduated income tax thing versus...

R: Fixed.

Q: Fixed income tax...what about...did you run into any objections on that from the higher levels saying we shouldn't have to pay...like there are generally always those sorts of complaints...when you suggest the graduated tax.

R: From the rich?

I: Yeah, discrimination.

R: No, well, see, it's not a tax...because here they give willingly...either you give because you want to give or I don't want your money...you give because you're a member of the church and you're actively involved and interested in its ministry or I don't want your money...the church doesn't want your money...in fact, I'll never forget the example that the pastor that I interned under used of a fellow who gave $800 religiously every year to the church...the end of the year he sent them a check for $800...that $800 is important to a congregation of 110 people...they needed that kind of income...and the man never set foot inside the church...never came to worship or to receive the Sacrament or show any interest in the church, just sent them $800 to keep his name on the roll...and he went over there and had to tell him that it's not your money we want, it's you...and that's the point...we're not after your money...we're after people...so they can hear the saving word that is Jesus Christ and be strengthened by His spirit, and life becomes a response to God, not to a building or not to a program.
I: Have you run into occasions here where people thought that they were doing what they considered their duty to God by simply supporting financially but not...

R: Oh, sure...but now I've not gone out and told people that we don't want your money...we want you...here...because most of the people who are sending in at the end of the year are sending in their 20 or their 50 or something like that...and you have to remember there is a very low understanding on the part of the church membership themselves of what churchmanship is all about...therefore, if you go out and tell people that they're not wanted...their money is not wanted...they'll think it's not good enough...and they won't be able to get past that...to the point of...that we're interested in you, and having the saving message that is Jesus Christ be brought to bear on your life...and it's not your money...you don't have to send money to belong to the church...why don't you just come worship with us...but, see, they can't hear that message...so you have to, like I was telling Faye this morning, I said, you have to play a game...like on the PEN list, there are a lot of people on there that aren't members...and Donna and I have talked oftentimes about having that list really be reflective of who the real membership is...and we've tried...but I always kind of hedge...I'm not real dogmatic that way...because I've tried to play the game so I can allow people to grow in faithfulness and response to Jesus Christ in the church, rather than come off and say, this is the way it is, that's the way it is, by the book...but you walk a tight line.

I: It would seem very difficult to institute some sort of tithing policy here where people are incredibly reluctant to announce how much they have or make...I don't know if it's like this all places, perhaps it is...but here it seems there's a great fear of letting people know how much money you make...you've encountered this, I'm sure, eh?

R: Yeah, they don't want me to know what they make...I make it very clear to them what I make...it's published each year...and I'm more than happy to have them know how much I make...in terms of I'm not either ashamed or proud...that's just the fact of life...what we live off of...of course, many of them, then, think that we're overpaid...which is O.K., but if they ever looked at their own income they're probably earning a lot more than I am...they just spend it differently...most of them spend it on savings accounts...it's incredible...they never spend money, they buy savings accounts with enormous amounts of money...and they die with enormous savings accounts and no will, and the state gets all their money...it's really unfortunate...I've seen more money go to the State of Michigan than I'd care to even think about.

I: O.K., now going back to...

R: Organization? Other committees that exist.

I: The Esther Guild?

R: No, that's not a committee...that's an LCW, Lutheran Church Women, which is the Esther Guild, which is an organization that I'd just as soon see die in our church...it needs to die so that it can be reborn...because as it is right now it's run by a group of people who have the mentality that we talked about earlier...it's either our way or no way at all...either you look at it our way or you can't do anything...and so there are no young ladies able to get involved in it...or in the church or in any ladies' group.

I: Oh, it's an old ladies' society.

R: Oh, yeah, it's really bad...I had a lady in this morning that was telling me, "Could I go over to St. Henry's from Faith and join over there—they got something going over there"...cause it's very sad...it's restrictive right now...restrictive.

I: Restrictive to the old landed elite in Pelkie.

R: Right, and you just can't get into it or move it or change it or do anything in service.
or ministry...they feast upon themselves...it used to be a gossip society...and we've tried...there are a few great people in there who have tried, and they're about ready to give up, I'm afraid, and just quit...and hopefully, then, it'll die...and if it at least dies and doesn't get any leadership, then they can start anew.

I: I notice it was mentioned that...at least in the area that many women belonged to...it was also mentioned that they did do a lot of service things, like helping at funerals.

R: That they do

I: ...and baking for people who have just lost a wife or husband...and those sorts of things...they did actually perform some of those good will...

R: That it does, that it does...and weddings and funerals and coffee hours...they're there, they serve coffee and stuff like that, they take their turns.

I: And it seemed to me the names mentioned were Taimi Maki, Evelyn Turunen and Barb Volts, perhaps, that were the workers in it.

R: Yeah, now Evelyn is not a member of the Esther Guild...Barb and Taimi are...but Evelyn is one of the workers...she works in spite of not being a member of the Esther Guild.

I: Membership was withheld from her?

R: No, she refuses to join it...she can't stand it...Taimi has even...I think even Taimi Maki would quit and so would...

I: Well, what is it, who runs it, then, if they don't?

R: Those who say nothing...that sit there...Dagmar Perander, Sally Walitalo, Bertha Mustonen, Mae Maki...there's where Mae's conservatism comes in...where she just kind of buys in with that kind of mentality at that point.

I: Lempi?

R: Yeah, Lempi is there sometimes...I really can't...I have only attended...

I: Peggy?

R: No, she never...Peggy used to be in charge of all the funerals...see that they were all taken care of and everything.

I: So she was a member before?

R: Oh, yes...very active.

I: I think that in as far as the community grapevine goes, that might be an integral feature of it...I mean, the distribution of news throughout the community...

R: Sure, sure.

I: I point out that Nora Ruona isn't a member of that.

R: No, Nora is not a member of this community...Nora belongs to Baraga...I'm trying to think of other committees...Stewardship, Worship and Music, Christian Education...anyhow then there was just this idea of them having the responsibility of carrying out these functions...to look into the problems and find out what the jobs are that need doing and doing it.
I: Now, what seemed to be the major obstacles in this sort of...

R: It's not our concern, that's the pastor's job.

I: O.K., definition of role, it violated the role definition...

R: Right.

I: ...of both pastor and both member...you have a role definition of member as a participatory member and not just a person who perches on a bench once a week.

R: Right...another major obstacle to that way of thinking is the need for creative and inquisitive minds into ideas and into concepts and into methodologies like Christian education...you need to understand how education takes place, what's happening in the minds of kids today, and how best to communicate a message to the learner...and in finances, you need to understand the function of books...why do you do what you do, and what are you trying to communicate here...and also to look at the development of these committees was to see them as a positive opportunity to accomplish good in the church, but to put that kind of positive construction upon committee work was a very difficult thing...they saw it as a very intrusion into their life and into their style...that is not the church...the church's function is not to discover needs and then meet them...the church's function is to save souls...therefore, save souls is never defined as to how that's done...I asked the question, they say the function of the church is to save souls...O.K., now how do you do that...what does that look like in terms of ministry...I don't know...just save souls.

I: It has to do with this idea of religion for death, religion for life, too, doesn't it?

R: It's a difference between is religion a life-giving thing or is it a life insurance policy for your death.

I: Which at least from my background and acquaintance with the Finnish religion it's so you don't get your ass burned in hell...O.K., you mentioned something about a reluctance to assume leadership initiative.

R: O.K., the problem there is that there is one qualified man in the field of religion, that's the pastor...and he has answers...they don't see...they did not see the pastor as one amongst them traveling down the path of life with them and struggling to hear and know God's Word as he's going down that path just as they are...he had the guide manual. if you were an explorer and you had a guide, he knew the path, he knew the way, and he, then, told all those behind them how to get there...the pastor was like that...and so to have a pastor now come in and say, "We're in this thing together and we need to struggle and determine and to hear God's Word speaking to us in many facets and areas of life...where do you hear it and how is it calling you today...where is God's Spirit active in your life today?"...was a whole new ballgame...the dogmatic approach of me just saying, this is the way it is, that's the way it is...has been replaced by me, at least, in terms of, "We are inquiring together into finding out what God's Word says to us in these times and days and needs"...

I: Do you think this might have something to do with the avoidance of conflict in the community, face to face conflict...that people are reluctant to say in a committee, let's do it this way...and no one wants to sort of take leadership initiative for fear of imposing their will upon their local neighbors and that...because there seems to be this avoidance of authority...reluctance to assume authority.

R: Oh, boy, really bad...that's a major problem, major...on the whole, the authority...there are these who are willing to assume authority...but there are few that are willing to accept that person as a leader or as an authority...because they're amongst equals...and
they have a very low self-image of themselves, therefore that person is no better than I am so he has nothing to say, either...and they don't see themselves going down the path together, learning together...if I'm going to teach you a class in church, a Bible class, I am supposed to have the answers...we're not supposed to be discoverers, explorers, pioneers...you're supposed to have the mayor in a settled community who tells you what to do...he knows.

I: It might have something to do with the fact that everyone knows everyone else in this sort of neighborhood chatting kind of context...where you know the farmer down the road...he doesn't know anything, look how he runs his farm...what's he doing telling me this and new...whereas in an urban area where people don't have contact with each other in the normal course of life...they see each other for the first time in a church committee, you might find a different situation.

R: Where they knew him as a lawyer or a doctor or a business executive...and they'll say he must know something...they don't know him personally but that position he must know something, so they'll listen to him whether he's teaching a class in Bible study or whatever it may be.

I: In an urban area they'd know each other in terms of position...

TAP! 2

R: Where they know him as a lawyer or a doctor or a business executive...and they'll say he must know something...they don't know him personally but that position he must know something, so they'll listen to him whether he's teaching a class in Bible study or whatever it may be.

I: In terms of the future orientation as being difficult for them to conceive.

R: Oh, yeah, it's very difficult...gee, that's a hard one for me to get my hands on...maybe let's take, for example, the Christian education...Sunday Schools have been carried on traditionally in the church building as it is presently composed—an upstairs and a basement, two big rooms...that means that kids...you may have four classes downstairs and four classes upstairs in just little squared-off sections, and you can hear each other, and it's chaos, and it's a discipline problem and attention problem, and different things like that. now the Sunday School is expanding as we get more young families into the church...there's a need, then, for space...well, the traditional orientation is, well, we've always done it this way, this is the way we will always do it, and that's all we need...they don't like...you just need a stronger hand...discipline...the Christian Education committee, however, is called upon to look in terms of, what is it we're trying to accomplish in Christian education...orderliness...are we called upon to teach kids how to sit up straight, keep our hands and our mouths shut...and pay attention to the teacher with eyes forward...or are we there to help them interact with and reflect upon and be motivated by the Gospel...and how can you best do that...and so that means the question of buildings, materials, equipment...and they're having...it's been very, very difficult for them to plan or to look at it that way with some objectives in mind...some philosophical understandings of what Christian education is all about...for instance, even in the curriculum, they have trouble with the LCA curriculum because it's a developmental curriculum...you don't repeat the same thing every year...you do this this year and that next year and that the next year, and then you've got four years and you've done four different experiences, and you
are now that person who has had those four experiences, see, after four years of that curriculum...you're not this year doing one thing and next year doing it again and next year doing it again because you give the teacher in each year the satisfaction of doing something that you have not traditionally understood as Christian education, that is, reading the Bible and learning Bible stories...it's very hard for them to see how things develop or how it leads you somewhere...or how what you did yesterday is going to affect what's going to happen tomorrow.

I: And in explaining these programs you find it difficult for them to see the developmental sequence of...

R: Yeah...the best experience I think we've had in really seeing how that they are able to capture that mindset, but it is difficult, was when we introduced the idea of having First Communion before confirmation, and that meant that they had to...the way we did that was that they had to understand what confirmation meant to them...remember back...so we took them back on that journey to their own confirmation time.

I: That's interesting...what was revealed...what did happen?

R: Well, it was a time of...I got the document, I mailed it away...it was very interesting and you would have probably enjoyed seeing that...but it was a time of getting a new dress...or a new suit for many of the boys...that's what confirmation meant.

I: Long pants.

R: Yeah, suit, first suit.

I: Adult status, too, I think, in the community.

R: Right...it also meant getting...you now assumed your own responsibilities...yeah, adult status, that kind of thing...it meant not being forced to go to Sunday School any more...all things that had nothing to do with confirmation in terms of its educational purposes for Christian education...all having to do with the graduation concept...and that, then, pointed out, well, then, should your reward be Communion...well, of course not...confirmation and Communion are not necessarily synonymous...Communion is something, if we understand it to be the gift of God's grace to strengthen the individual by His forgiveness so that he can grow in faithfulness, then it has nothing to do with knowing...and that's what confirmation is...learning, understanding.

I: And you tried to...

R: Help them see the difference...that those two were separate...and we did it...for those who attended the class sessions...to come to that understanding...and it's now separated because of that...but this vision...this understanding that issues are not necessarily connected because they have always traditionally been understood to be so...that the church is not necessarily just something you go to once in a while, but it's something that you go to regularly like every week because you want to be there, not because you have to be...we've accomplished that...but they understood it before as something you just did when you felt like it.

I: I think there's a time orientation problem here...for instance, I don't think all people here have calendars the way you have a calendar, a schedule appointment calendar...have you run into any...have you noticed where people, at least initially, thought it odd that you would make appointments ahead of time and schedule for certain times?

R: Yeah...they had trouble with the schedule...they had trouble with some of my expectation standards...premarital counseling, prebaptism counseling...they had...yeah, appointments, that I didn't have time to just run around and sit and have coffee all the time...I have coffee with one person regularly...that's Bernard...and that's like me going to the cof-
fee shop...I'm not visiting him, then, as a parishioner, I'm visiting him like I'd visit one of my business associates as we stopped and had coffee every morning at 10 o'clock...there's no coffee shop in Pelkie, so I go to Bernard's.

I: But you do, or did, occasionally visit people.

R: I do visit.

I: I remember you were on a kick for a while, were you not?

R: I have visited almost everybody in this parish...almost, not everybody, but almost.

I: How are you treated...what's a typical visit like when Pastor comes over.

R: Well, you're...a lot of them you're put at the table by yourself...and you're set aside...this whole idea of the pastor being apart or set aside is carried out even in the visit...where they set the coffee table up for you...and you, then, are able to...and they'll sit around you.

I: They'll not join you?

R: Some do, sure...many have coffee with me, but many also hold you in kind of a position of awe.

I: Do you think that's communicated by that not sitting down at the table with you...only equals sit down at the table together.

R: That's what I think, right...the pastor is not one of you or equal to you, he's different...other...separate from...above, I suppose.

I: And I imagine the very best in the house is brought out, then.

R: Oh, every time...I've never sat down...except with the people who know me personally and have gotten to know me intimately...but the only people that know me intimately are the people who have invited me into their lives in some way by sharing a part of themselves that lets them know...let's me know who they are and they, then, get to know who I am...but to just be sitting over in your house waiting for me to come...they, then, set me apart...and also many of them don't know me very well.

I: Does that make you feel uncomfortable?

R: When I visit them...when I'm set apart...did at the beginning, very much so...doesn't anymore...I'm very comfortable with it now...'cause I respect them for that understanding...at the beginning I thought they were just plain nuts...now I think it's got some real value for those people...and I really have kind of a high regard for them...because they have...there's a section...there's a part of their life that they have held in high esteem, and much of their life has been very, very hard...and they've worked hard to get to the place where they could have their pastor come...and sit down and have something on a nice piece of china or with a nice cup and saucer, or something...and they're very proud of that, and I think that's nice, and I'm glad to have given them that kind of privilege...not that I care to be served that way, but that they can do it and find some satisfaction in it, that's worth a million dollars to me...to have given them that sense of satisfaction...I think that's very valuable...it would be awful if I was to come into their home and say, well, that's nonsense...which I would have tended to do when I first arrived...don't set me up here, I'm no different than you...you've got to be, Pastor.

I: You're our pastor.

R: You're our pastor.
I: O.K., this other thing that you brought up that I almost forgot about was the idea of the outsider...you said...

R: You never become a part of this community, you are not a member of the community.

I: Are you speaking now as pastor?

R: As pastor, as person moving into community, too, but as pastor...I'm not on the hotline, that's for sure, the wire...find out what the scuttlebutt is...but I have to...some people call me arrogant and stuffy and snobbish...and I don't see myself necessarily as being any of those things, arrogant, snobbish or stuffy...but I have made some decisions that may look that way...to protect myself from becoming contaminated too strongly by traditions that have been theirs, and, therefore, debilitating me from moving them into some new horizons that I felt they needed to move into, to be able to cope with a world by which they are being inundated daily...so, for instance, I don't read the Mining Gazette...I just don't read it...I have read it periodically, maybe 20 times in 3 and 1/2 years...that's all I've seen of it...if I had read it I would have known all the scuttlebutt that's going on in the area...and I could have gotten very involved in what's happening...but I have chosen not to in this particular community because it's a very easy kind of a mentality to get involved in...and so I have chosen not to...I've said there's more to life than that...and I'm going to help call you to something more than that...not that that's bad...not that your reading the Gazette is bad...not that those activities are bad...not that the things that are being said are bad...none of that...but there's more...so if I take the Gazette and I get involved in going fishing and going hunting and going walking in the woods, and all that stuff...which is fun...and now that I'm leaving I look forward to coming back and doing that stuff...but I'm here to work...my work here is ministry...and ministry as I perceive needing to be done in this area is not to perpetuate the past, but to grow in faithfulness as God's people...and that's...I chose to do that.

I: You mentioned that Ida Fitzpatrick always has been...

R: An outsider...she and Nora hang around a lot together...and Ida is not an intimate...she is the teacher...she has come in to educate our children...to teach us...she is not a resident, she is not a member...Mildred Tepsa, because she's involved in the church and has been for years more than a part of the community, but she's not a member of the community...she's the teacher...they're different...they're outsiders...she's an outsider, kind of...but Ida is the more extreme...48 years, I think it is, or 50 years in this community now, and still not considered a resident.

I: You mentioned that the other day Reuben Aho spoke to you in such a way that it surprised you...that you felt that you might not have earlier been spoken to in this way...he was telling you about, see that person going down the road...

R: Oh, yeah...I remember...there are a lot of people around here...personalities, characters, that you don't know...you never get really close to them...you don't just go up to them and ask them who are you and what are you doing here and how do you live...because they're residents...they are Pelkies...and you are an outsider...you don't ask them...they tell you.

I: If they want to.

R: If they want to...and you don't probe into any area that they don't want to tell you about...no way...if they don't want you to know, you're not going to find out...so there's this fellow who I meet in the Post Office every now and then...and he's a little bit...well, let's put it this way...he's less than communicative or quick...he's not real quick...but he's always been kind of a curious character or personality...so the other day I was up talking with Reuben Aho and...I've never been to Reuben's home and Reuben was telling me exactly where his house was...and I said, well, now, as I was driving here today this particular fellow was walking past here...one of the roads up here...the main road...and I've
always wondered where he lives and who he is and what he does...I see him a lot but I
don't know...and then he told me the whole story...about how there had been children who
had been illegitimate in the family...and how the sister had taken care of this child all
her life and never married...that there had been some disease in the family, and that the
family had kind of kept to itself...and some very intimate details of the family life of
this particular clan...and stuff that I would have never gotten 3 and 1/2 years ago...I
wouldn't have gotten a year ago...6 months ago I could never have gotten that informa-
tion...but at this point I had been meeting with Reuben about a funeral situation, and I
had shown him some very openness to letting him do his own thing...I didn't even do the
funeral...and so we had kind of established, apparently, a rapport at that point that he
accepted, and boy, it just...

I: Gave you a detailed biography of...

R: Of a whole family and it was beautiful...if I had that kind of information when I first
walked in here...I wouldn't have known what to do with it...new I know what to do with
it...it's good to have there to know what some of the dynamics of this community are
doing when something happens to that family, for instance...

I: Imagine...to some extent, or to a great extent, each person here of the older people have
that kind of knowledge about every one else.

R: Boy, when you walk in here you don't know that...and there's no way you're going to learn
it until you've been here for years...and that is the truth...the depth of knowledge of
the families is enough to scare you right to death.

I: And of the life histories of the individuals.

R: All the way back to grandmas and grandpas...way back...and they can tell you when a person
who is 50 or 60 years old today first put their car in the ditch...or when they broke their
arm out on a hunting accident, or something...or how they fell off a railroad trestle as
they were walking to school back in the teens...and they'll remember the day...you go to
the Waisanen boys and they can tell you some of the most gruesome stories in the world
about people...you want to read fairy tales about how people suffer...talk to the Waisanen
boys and they'll tell you about what happened back in the old logging and coal mining days...
or mining days around here...or talk to some of these other old-timers...Matt Tauriainen
up in Askel, he can tell you stories till you won't believe it...how he at 6 months old...
when he was coming down the river, you know...well, you've talked to Matt...

I: Just imagine, though, the stable life of the community...that is, people live here and
they don't move out...and die here...all that's necessary...this geographical stability...
is necessary in order for that detailed knowledge that one another has about each other's
biography.

R: And this is where guys like me are for many people seen as nothing but a speck on the
windshield of time...and he's going to be there and he's going to be gone...so what if he
does this, so what if he does that...they don't care...so I don't like him, I'll come back
after he leaves...that's the way some of...that particular clan looks at the church...but
now, see, when I leave...the Council has determined by the man they're calling in here...
to keep similar directions going that I have established...they may run into some problems
in that way...but it's a phenomenon to live in a community like this...I'm going to trea-
sure this experience in my heart, and be motivated by it the rest of my life...the people
in the urban setting and suburban settings can not appreciate people like this community
appreciates people...you have to appreciate people to even want to know when your neighbor
broke his arm in 1910...you have to care.

I: You have to care about that person.

R: That Elaine Chartier situation is the perfect example of something...life goes along...
but when a person stumbles and falls they care...and it's not organized...and the church just darn well better believe that you've got to give people the freedom to care about people...not necessarily just organized caring...but the freedom to care...to become involved...and to let yourself be known, see.

I: Yes, it's quite a community.

R: Oh, it's a beautiful community.

I: And also let's just take a shift that came up before...you were brought here for the youth...where are the youth of Pelkie at in their heads in 1973-74?

R: Wanting to get out of here...just get...out.

I: Why...what have they told you about this?

R: Let's say a kid has never said these exact words but it would come out something like this...they don't really believe that when we went to Chicago we learned anything, and that was the most profound experience of my life and I'll be damned if I'm going to let them tell me that that wasn't valuable...I enjoy having encountered Jesus Christ and He's allowed me to do a lot of things in my life...and if I want to celebrate the joy of loving Jesus in worship and sing with guitars and celebrate His grace, they're not going to tell me I can't do that...they can't stop me from celebrating in faith...what's wrong if I want to find out that there's something on the other side of the railroad tracks...or on the other side of the highway or down the road away...I may want to come back here but if you don't give me the freedom to find out what's there I'm never going to want to come back because I'm going to hate you for keeping me here.

I: Well, are you saying that the reason the youth are going is because they can't worship the way they want to worship...I think that might be one part of a larger thing.

R: Worship is just one facet...they want to react, interact, respond, be affected by and affect life in a much broader way...and they feel that they're limited in Pelkie...they don't realize how fortunate they are to live here yet, many of them...they also don't realize that there are many like boy-girl relationships...they don't realize that there are many fish in the sea, yet...either I get married at the end of high school or I'm never going to get married...'cause there's nobody else there who would love me.

I: Right...you can count the available boys or girls in Pelkie on one hand, right?

R: Oh, yeah, right, and if you don't get married you're in trouble...so some of them want to get out and find out if there's more.

I: Where are they going?

R: Oh, to Detroit, if they're going to work...to college at State or Northern or Tech...I'm trying to get some involved in Christian church colleges now...different things...and also they want to be able to look at their faith in more critical or more mature ways...sophisticated ways...they want to ask the questions because I've come along and told them that they can do that...and they're not allowed to do that 'cause we don't even have a high school education right now in the church, except what I give them...so what that's done, then, I've alienated a lot of people in my youth work because I have introduced our young people to possibilities, new opportunities for growth and development and life...and that's very difficult for our members to live with.

I: Do you think any of them feel ashamed for being from Pelkie?

R: The kids?

I: Yeah, as compared, for instance, to being from L'Anse or Detroit...do you think they feel
like people identify them as being backwards and they resent this and want to escape this definition of, actually, social inferiority.

R: Right, but in fact they come out on top of the heap... they feel they're backwards, yeah... they feel they haven't really lived with it.

I: That they're somehow outside of it or behind it and it is somehow good and they must go...

R: To be involved in it and experience it and be a part of it, you know, that stuff... but it's undefined, and of course they are so far superior in so many ways... moral and social responsibility... holy Toledo, city kids couldn't hold a candlestick to these kids... I've never once had to tell them to clean up after one of their get-togethers... it's done... never tell them to bring anything, it's there... never tell them to get... like when I say let's get together, they're there... I don't have to set up any big telephone network, the kids take care of it... themselves... when I say there's a chance to go to a Synod Conv... they write the letters and get the information and do it... see that they get there... as far as ability to think through an issue, they can do it... some of them... there's some brilliant kids here.

I: What's going to happen to Pelkie if its youth are leaving... and its youth are leaving.

R: Well, they'll come back disillusioned, many of them... Warren and Kristin, you know, Kristin Tepsa and her husband, Warren, living in the city, very cosmopolitan-minded people now... lived there for many years in Detroit, want to come back... life in the city is not life... that's putting in time, that's running, that's being busy, that's spending a lot of money, it's not life... life is here, life is people, life is walking in the wilderness, life is feeling, being sensitive to your surroundings.

I: But I think most of the youth of Pelkie aren't into that.

R: Not yet, but they will.

I: Do you think they will be?

R: Many of them... the more sophisticated ones will come back to that... some of them will get caught up in the money-making syndrome... gotta make a lot of money... that kind of thing... but many of them will come back... I think our experiences that we had on these trips... I was trying to expose them to a lot of things... alternatives... and then help them see what kind of life they have because they could feel a lot of that stuff... but when we talk about poverty they can look at themselves, they don't have much money... but they're rich people... I walk into a house here that's very poor and they never apologize... you go to a house in the city that's very nice and they'll apologize for it... now there's somebody screwed up and it's the guy in the city.

I: If you were to describe a typical Pelkie youth in comparison with a typical urban youth, how would you do it... who is a typical Pelkie youth?

R: A typical Pelkie youth is a youth who has friends, who feels like he belongs somewhere, who feels like he trusts people and that people trust him, and is well-known... if he has cheated on a test, everybody knows that... if he's done well in his classes or done very poorly, everybody knows that... it's no sweat, we're still good buddies, you're my friend, I'm your friend... that's the way you are and I'm somebody totally different than that... but that's just a facet, we're friends... and I trust you and you trust me... we belong to each other.

I: What does a Pelkie youth do for fun... what do kids do for fun here?

R: Well, of course the big thing is dances when they're available... there aren't very many but there are a few and they go to all of them, if they can... they may do a lot of read-
ing...a lot of television watching, possibly...a lot of driving around...and as they get
a little older, above 14 or so, they'll go to beer parties in the summer, not in the win-
ter...skate in the winter, spend a lot of time at the skating rink...and when they have
every Saturday night their community skating party, everybody's at the skating rink and
I mean everybody...and if you're a kid you belong at the skating party and everybody's
there and you belong, you're not an outsider...I have yet to meet an outsider, a kid who
goes to school here, who lives here, that's an outsider...you belong...now the urban youth
lacks almost every one of those things I just mentioned...the sense of belonging...they
feel out of sorts, many of them...who do I belong to...maybe a little clique someplace,
but they don't have a sense of belonging...who am I...they don't know...where am I going...
they don't know...

SIDE TWO

R: I used some new confirmation material that was established by the church that's very good
material...I read it and I really liked it...I used it with my kids here and they just
couldn't stand it...and it didn't do anything for them, they didn't learn anything, it was
a waste of their time...it was experiential learning...things on trust...things on feel-
ings...things on belonging...things on togetherness...things on caring...things on loving..
couldn't adapt to it at all, it was a waste of their time...what's this...that's the way
life is...I took them on a trust walk, and usually in the city kids are so hesitant, you
know, to trust anybody else to take them someplace, they really don't know if they'll do
it...here they would go for 20 minutes...and they'd never even miss a beat or step...

I: I don't follow what you mean.

R: O. K., if I was going to take you...let's say you stood up right now and I said, "Close
your eyes" and I took your hand and I said, "I'm going to take you to downtown Peikie in
the middle of this blizzard right now, and you can't see, you cannot open your eyes, I'll
blindfold you, you cannot see, just trust me".

I: Oh, you did this experimentally?

R: Yeah...these kids close their eyes, you could blindfold them, you could tape their eyes
shut, and they'd walk to downtown Peikie here holding your hand without even missing a
step.

I: You actually did this?

R: Yeah...doesn't phase them in the least...the city...if I tried to walk you around.

I: O. K., how have urban children, youth, worked out on this trust walk experiment?

R: Well, they have a very difficult time with it, you know...they're opening their eyes and
wanting to...they hesitate to take a step especially if they know there are going to be
obstacles in the way...they have a much less...they have a much lower level of trust...
and have had a much lower...they have a much harder time believing that their neighbor is
trustworthy with themselves...they can't trust themselves to their neighbor...here they do,
it absolutely flabbergasts me how these kids really know each other...and what they're do-
ing...I've got kids here who would not drink or smoke or try drugs or get near that stuff
for all the tea in China, and the kids that they hang around with are doing that...I mean
their friends that they hang around with are doing those kinds of things...and they know
it...and they're not going to squeal on them, but they have a concern for them...and yet
they accept them and the kids don't hide it...if they went out on Saturday night and got
smashed they're not going to hide that.

I: That's amazing...you know, it's ironic that in the course of our discussion so far this
comes up at the end because I think that's just about where it's at here...that people
do not lock their doors...I imagine where you go next you'll probably...

R: Bolt the doors.
I: Have you had any visitors from Chicago, or so, who the first thing they did...

R: Lock the car doors is a riot...they lock their car doors...I never take the keys out of my car when I'm here...they lock their car doors, it's a riot.

I: I think that might be one of the basic things here is this trust...you mentioned possibly a slight romanticization of the Pelkie youth now at this point you're leaving of...I don't know how much...but do you recognize any difference between them and their parents...is there a generation gap...is there a change between what they refer to as the backward, old-fashioned people and the sort of youth...is there a generation gap here...is there a difference?

R: Oh, yeah...between the parents and the kids?

I: Yeah...can you discuss this in terms of what you regard as both positive and negative.

R: Well, the kids are much more open to new ideas and possibilities, and they don't see the world as something to be afraid of...out there is not something to be afraid of...they travel more than their parents do and want to travel...their parents are more homebodies, just as soon stay home...the kids go to movies, the parents never go to movies, never have, never will...the kids read books of all kinds, the parents do very little reading...the parents...the kids have taken their Christian education in English, the parents took it in Finn...they don't even speak the same language theologically or in terms of their faith...their experience in the demands of mobility, going places and doing things...these kids travel to Baraga and back and get involved in plays and doing different things that their parents would just never dream of doing, never did, never would.

I: We've spoken before about how the world begins and ends in Pelkie for the older people here...do you think there's a different definition of the world?

R: For the kids?

I: Yeah.

R: Yeah, sure...the kids see the world as being endless...they don't understand how complex it is yet...they have no concept of complexity...life is still very simple for them...they see things oftentimes in black and white, too...they're much like their parents in that way...black and white...because they've not encountered anything very complex yet...even their schedules are very simple...you take this course and you can't take that course...where in a larger school system you would have alternatives, see, and you would have to work the schedule out...there's no such thing like that here...it's either one way or it's not at all...that's all there is to it...but they see the world as being the big out there to be looked into and experienced...they see it as exciting, the world as exciting...their parents see life as something to be endured, many of them...it's a very morose kind of understanding.

I: Different qualities of existence...they had to endure life here to settle this place.

R: You know it and they worked darn hard to do it...and they did good work...they used to have to provide all their own entertainment, make their own toys, and make their own recreational equipment...kids have that now, it's just part of their life...but a lot of kids around here...like 4-H still is a very powerful force here, so like a lot of these kids still sew all their own clothes, have their dairy cattle...they're doing very well...they've got some very wholesome attitudes and respect for life that I have high regard for.

I: Have you ever had some sort of a fear thought that perhaps they're losing some of the qualities that their parents have that are in fact good?

R: Some, yeah, sure, definitely.
I: You've noticed this?

R: How could I describe it...they're getting more thing-oriented, too...you know, cars, clothes, equipment...things...they want more things...they're starting to see the world through make-up, like the girls' make-up has become all the modern kind of make-up thing, colors and stuff...not that I'm opposed to that...but it's just a total change...you make yourself up with an eye-liner and the shade and the lipstick and wild fingernail colors and the high platform shoes, and that kind of stuff...and they're reading Seventeen and Glamour and those kinds of magazines, and they're starting to be affected by them...money, they want to make a good income...their parents didn't have a big interest in that...they want to make it, but not...

I: Wanted to feed their families, yeah.

R: So they are losing some of the simpler, what we would have considered simpler or more basic, understandings of life...emphases in life.

I: I've thought this before...I see Fakke somehow as being isolated from all the corruption, or from a great part of the corruption, of urbanized, modern life...but somehow now I get the feeling that it's creeping slowly toward it...I can just see it.

R: The church got wrecked last week...some kids sat in the parking lot drinking beer and spinning those circles...two of them must have been doing kind of like a...those spinning circles around each other or something...and in the enthusiasm of the moment one of them must have backed up rather quickly and banged into the church and smashed the sign on the church...that's symptomatic of...that they would even go to the church parking lot and sit there and drink beer...it's creeping in.

I: There was also a vandalism thing, a light shot out earlier.

R: Yeah, in front of our house...there have been lots of those shot out...sitting out there drinking beer and then taking their shotgun out and shooting the lights out.

I: Vandalism was unheard of...never happened.

R: No...and a lot of our people are just totally illequipped to deal with that, they just don't understand it...they just want to come down with the heavy hand of the law...punish them...stronger discipline in the home, parents need more control...just now are these parents starting to get intimidated by their children like the urban parents have been for the last number of years...kids scare their parents half to death so they get away with murder...just now is that happening to a few of our homes...so it's coming...they're going to be in for some rough times around here...and I personally couldn't deal with it with three churches...if I had one church...that I saw the churches working together in ministry, then I'd be willing to take on those problems...but if they split me three ways for ministry in terms of just church polity and services and stuff, I'd go out of my mind trying to deal with that...that's one major problem that's going to take a lot of work...and I could not cope with it in this area and have to run three churches at the same time as I'm doing it because they would say, "Well, they have that problem over at Faith but they don't have that in Misula"...I can't tolerate that kind of thinking, I just won't tolerate it.

I: You definitely, then, notice that the youth are starting to change...what sort of expectations have the parents had...like a girl had to do what...a highschool girl...what were the rules that she had to follow.

R: The rules?

I: Yeah...I'm sure a lot of your family counseling is dispute over rules...I want to do this, but...where do the conflicts seem to...
R: Oh, I suppose the conflicts come in the age of dating... when should they date... the parents around here say no girl shall date before the age of sixteen... no boy shall drive a car until he's sixteen or seventeen, except for farm purposes and then they start driving at eight... when they're driving... you see these little kids you can't even see over the steering wheel and they're driving their hay pickups... so the age of dating, driving, drinking... my kid shall not drink, period... they all do...

I: Oh, I know.

R: ... but my child will not drink.

I: And all the children know it, but I don't think the parents...

R: All know it?

I: ... know it yet to the extent to which it goes on.

R: Maybe not, but it's just because they have chosen not to know it... it's there... and it's visible to them but they've just chosen not to acknowledge its reality.

I: There was an episode, a conflict, that I heard of a while back... you may have been involved in which there was an alleged case where someone living out toward the Sturgeon area had presumably let two Pelkie boys have some beer and they got drunk and that was just horrible when the person really didn't do it... and so that that was considered...

R: A breach of the trust... that would be a breach of trust... see, your neighbors don't let that happen... the community is... like the storekeepers... they assume the storekeepers around here will not sell the boozes to the kids, when of course they will.

I: Oh, there's this trust thing... if I am a parent here I trust that the parent down there...

R: Is going to maintain my standards.

I: ... will help me raise my child... help maintain the standards that we believe in, and the storekeeper over there will also be on my side and help us all together raise our children.

R: Right.

I: So in an urban area sometimes if you have a child that's doing something wrong and if a neighbor says don't do that and maybe smacks the kids... what are you doing telling my child what to do.

R: Right... here they assume that the neighbor will do that... so if the kids go over to the neighbor's house and have a party and they do something that they shouldn't be doing there, or at least one parent thinks that they're doing something that they shouldn't be doing, they'll call the parents the next day and blame the parents for what the kids did... not the kids for what they did.

I: They assume accountability, right, for socializing children throughout the community... in fact, what...

R: So like now Tepa's for Christmas gave their kids games so that the neighborhood kids could come and do something at their home that is of a positive nature.

I: Of course that family is a little more enlightened than...

R: Very much... they're very enlightened.

I: They're not typical.
R: No, they are atypical.
I: Would a family here get mad if another adult saw their children doing something and did not call them and did not stop them?
R: Yes, they get mad if they don't call, right.
I: You have had cases?
R:
I: Can you describe a case without mentioning names or anything.
R: Well, like teenagers doing things at the Fair Building and other parents finding out about it...and rather than calling the parents, calling the police or calling some authority, they got mad at the person who called the authority or the police rather than calling the parent...you were to call us and tell us what our child was doing and you were to have disciplined them and called us so that we could also discipline them.
I: Oh, they were to have disciplined them right there?
R: Yeah, told them that they were not to be doing that...you should have stopped them from doing that.
I: What if the person simply did nothing...did not go to an external authority but just did nothing.
R: Let them get away with it?
I:
R: Well, then the parents would probably not find out anything about it.
I: If they did find out, would they be...
R: Well, then they would be angry...well, if they let it drop, you mean...then it's going to be dependent upon the parent...those who are very strong on developing very high standards of moral behaviour amongst the children, they would get angry...but others would be less than...
I: I know...this tightly knit feature of the community makes it possible for one parent to let another know...if you don't know each other's parents you won't do...
R: The networks of knowingness are amazing...they find out in no time flat, no time flat.
I: What do you think Pelkie is going to be like ten years from now when you stop to visit again...if you were to shut your eyes right now and to imagine.
R: Well, ten years from now a lot of our older people will be dead...lot of the character who have...Evert and Alfred and some of these older...the Turpeinen boys and the Waisanen boys, some of the living legends will have died and there won't be many...Ralph will remain trying to hang on to the Old Guard, trying to call people back to remembrance of the good old days...and there'll be kind of a...he'll be expressing kind of a tragic kind of less...he won't know what's happened...and there'll be many more houses and there'll be many more retired people living either right in this community or very close to it...woods...and they will be bringing lots of money...and they will be hesitant to get to know their neighbors because in the city you didn't do that...and then the kids will be moving back from the city after having gotten married and started to have their children and not being able to stand the city...and they'll come back and they'll want to recapture what Ralph was talk-
ing about but not quite that strong...he'll be kind of like a strong cup of tea and
they'll want the romantic part but not that strong...they'll want the convenience of the
city but yet some of that romanticism, and he'll want them still winding their own base-
balls and they won't buy that...and the church will be...the people who are in the church
today and are thirty-five years or younger will be in the church then and active...but the
people who are over thirty-five today will have either left the church or died...

I: And school will be larger.

R: School may stay about the same size...may get a little bit larger but they'll be doing a
totally different kind of education...there will be aides...they will have improved the
building so it's not so noisy...the kids...they'll put more blacktop around it.

I: Horoscope Road will be paved.

R: Probably...the two-lane bridges are going to be improved...it's going to lose a lot of
its flavor.

I: There'll be a stop light at Pappen in the Pelkie...

R: Could happen.