

## **Oral History Interview: Pauli Löija**

Interviewee: Pauli Löija

Interviewer: Elina Mäkinen

Date: August 5, 2025

EM: Hello!

PL: Hello!

EM: Is it okay that I record you?

PL: Okay, absolutely.

EM: So today is 5th of August in 2025 and we are at the Oodi Main Library in Helsinki, Finland and my name is Elina Mäkinen. I am a 2025 LGBTQ Religious Archives Network summer intern. And here with me is Mr. Pauli Löija. And we have now signed the consent forms for LGBTQ, the consent to public oral history interview for our website. And before we start this, well we have started, but before we start the interview, I hope you please remember that you can answer my questions; whether it's very shortly or very longly, in a long fashion. But yes so and we can also, if you want, we can also take breaks during the interview. If that is okay with you.

PL: It is okay.

EM: So do you have any questions?

PL: I don't, I don't have any questions. I really have to mention that English language is not my mother language. It's, so I don't speak fluent English at all.

EM: Yes. That's the same with me as well. Yes, could you introduce yourself, please?

PL: Yes, my name is Pauli Löija and I'm now 60 years of age. I just had my 60th birthday in May this year, end of May this year. And my education is Master of Theology from University of Helsinki. And since that quite soon after that, I have been quite active working voluntarily as sexual minorities, for the sexual minorities in Finland. In Finland, Finnish society, and especially in Finnish Church, Finnish Lutheran Church.

EM: Thank you. Could you tell me about your childhood and your childhood family?

PL: Yes, I was born in a very, very small municipality in quite near western coast of Finland, about 450 kilometers up north from Helsinki, which is capital of Finland. And there was in that municipality when I was born, perhaps about 4,500 inhabitants only. And I have a three year older sister. And my mother and father, they are working class persons; both of them were working outside of the home. My childhood was, well, sometimes I don't want to remember that so much because there were so many persons to take care of me as a child. About five or six very very young, teenage relatives of my father. And then I have been in, I think, six different places, in daycare, before going to school at the age of seven. So there wasn't stable relationships for the adults in my childhood. And there was a time, couple of weeks, where I hadn't any

daycare at all. I was about four years of age and I had to be all the day, just alone at home. And that time was really horrible, really horrible. I don't want to remember that time.

EM: And I wonder you said that the place that you were born in was in the west coast of Finland. But I didn't catch which place it was.

PL: The name of the place is called Veteli, a very small place.

EM: Thank you. And was your like family back then, like religious? Or did you feel like the sort of religious sentiments, when you were young?

PL: Our family wasn't religious. Very rarely we went to the church, Lutheran Church, and I don't remember that our family would have been any religious. But my grandmother, my mother's mother, she was very, very conservative way religious. She belonged to the so-called old Laestadianism revival movement, and sometimes that was quite hard to our family. And about my childhood, childhood we weren't religious. But about my sexuality in my childhood...there were some things in very early age of me that there were signs that I wasn't heterosexual. Like that when my sister wanted to play with her friends home--and I was there too. And they were saying that you are the father. So now you are going out to the work. And I said them that. No, I don't accept that, because I want to play mother and I put my sister's doll under my t-shirt and I said that now I'm giving birth. So and I was about, I think, 3, 4 years of age then, so I don't know how I could. I knew that that thing, that how the children are coming. And on that age, that's a mystery for me. Yes, but at that age I want it to be. And play, I wanted to play role of mother.

EM And also I was wondering like, how were your formative school years? What were they like?

PL: It was like a hell! It was really, really, really like a hell when I went to the school I was being bullied 9 years, 9 years, and the grades from 7th to 9th the bullying was really horrible. And I really feel that those guys were bullying me then that wow! I would like to see them in hell. That's my feeling nowadays, even nowadays, when I'm 60 years of age. So those wounds are so deep inside of me. And the...but I was a very good student at school in those years. I had very, very high-level grades then. But, but when I went to high school all my grades went down, dropped down. Because I hadn't. I couldn't concentrate on school at all. Yes, but there were other reasons. Many reasons for that.

EM: Do you want to elaborate those reasons?

PL: Well, before that, I think. I have to tell you something about my confirmation camp. And I didn't want to go Confirmation camp at all, because I knew that people there, they would bully me there, too, which was really really horrible there, too. Because nobody cared that I was being bullied there in Confirmation camp, too, and... But there I was being I interest being I, I was being interested in Bible very much there and Bible history and that was the perhaps the main thing which I got from Confirmation camp and my Confirmation school and. After the Confirmation camp, just accidentally I

became part of our parishes—youth work. And how can I say say it? Youth work. Yes, and I was very active parish member then, from the age of 15.

EM: Was that like an Evangelical? Yes, that was evangelical Lutheran parish, and in Veteli.

PL: Yes, that was evangelical Lutheran parish, and in Veteli,

EM: So a Protestant church”

PL: A Protestant church. Something I did, I think I didn't mention earlier about my Sunday schools when I was in my childhood. and I really loved to go to the Sunday school from the age of 4. And then I love to sing those songs there and it was like celebration when the Sunday School teacher put light to the candle and and opened big Bible and..She was reading there, and it was a really celebration moment. And I think that was one reason why I was so interested in Bible at the age of 15, because I had so good memories those Sunday school time years. And the confirmation camp teacher, he was very interested himself about the Bible, and he was Bible, studying theology and Bible studies were his main subject in the faculty of theology. And he gave so much interesting information for us, and I got so interested in. And I started to read the Bible eagerly after Confirmation camp. And just suddenly I got member of, a kind of member. active member in youth, parish youth work, But my mother, and especially my father, didn't like that at all that I went to the youth choir of the parish. I went to the Bible study evenings in the week. And Friday evenings and Saturday evenings there were, a program for from the parish to the youth. So I was always going every, everywhere where something happened.

EM: So this was when you were like a teenager?

PL: From the age of 15 until 19. That was my last year in high school, and no, no..My high school years and one year before that. What is that graduation school? I think, no, 9th grade?

EM: It's, I think it's Upper Secondary school.

PL: Yes, upper Secondary school. And then last year of that and my high school years. So about 4 years.

EM: And I was wondering, like you said you enjoyed reading the Bible after the Confirmation camp was. But was that the sort of a spark that guided your way to the later become a student of theology?

PL: It was that, and also there was I had so many friends who were studying in, studying theology in faculty of theology, in Helsinki, from that same parish youth work group. But they had gone to the faculty year or 2 or 3 year earlier, and that makes it so easy for me to choose theology as my studying subject. But there was also I had some other dreams to study, too. I was dreaming to study about architecture, but I noticed in high school that my mathematics is not good enough. But then, one teacher said to me that you have to go to study fine arts in Ateneum. But what is it? Fine Arts Academy. Okay. Now, I mean Ateneumin kuvataideakatemia, Fine Arts Academy and I knew that

there was very difficult to get a study place there. Several hundreds of people trying to get a studying place there and under 10 persons were taken there every year, perhaps 6, 7, 8 persons only. And my teacher said that, to me that you are going to study there. And it's very easy for you to get a studying place there.

EM: Okay.

PL: And then and and actually, she said that it's that you just go to the tests, and you are absolutely taken there. And but my parents said that no, nothing Arts studies, because the future is so...What is the word, economically. I don't know the word. Epävakaa?

EM: And epävakaa, is it unstable.

PL: Unstable? Yeah, economically unstable. So that so that and then I didn't have any courage to try to get studying place there. Even my teacher said that it's easy for me to get studying place there. And then I choose theology, which was easy to choose, because I knew that I can have a studying place there quite easily by reading all the, all the books for the tests, and I was reading them. And I went to the and I got studying place to the University of Helsinki faculty of Theology.

EM: And which year was that?

PL: That was 1984, immediately after high school. And then I moved from Veteli to Helsinki at the age of 19, and I was totally in a closet there. Because at school time, school years when I was bullied—one word, main word perhaps, in high upper secondary school was “homo/gay” and I didn't understand that word, the meaning of the word. So I decided that I have to check what that word means. And I went to the library and it was reading encyclopedias. Back then, there was no Google and no the Internet at all, beginning of 1980s, only encyclopedias in the library. And they said that homosexuality is a disease. And I was horrified. I noticed that when I was reading them, that oh, my God! I am homosexual and then I am sick. And then, when I was reading Bible there was text about men lying with men, and how they deserved death! So my feeling inside of me was that I'm sick and immortally, mortal sinner, a mortal sinner. And in that feeling. I went to the faculty of theology. That was the feeling inside of me and I had to close my identity totally inside of me. I couldn't tell about it to anybody. And that was also feeling in my school years and in high school years, And in second year in a high school, I tried twice suicide and that's very difficult part of my life. Because I thought that I'm so bad person that I can't even die. And and but when I came Helsinki, I thought that It would be easier to live here than in very small municipality like where they was and... But all of my studying years I was thinking to do, thinking of, to do suicide, to make a suicide and and...But well, sometimes it was very near to do, how I could have done it, but somehow I didn't have. I didn't had the last courage to do it. To jump from the 7th floor to the asphalt. Or jump from the bridge to the highway under the lorry, or something like that. And somehow the last courage was missed.

EM: I find it like you say it's courage. What do you think it's courage to do certain thing?

PL: The courage was missing, and I don't know what was the reason that I couldn't do it, and afterwards the only word which I can find it that I hadn't the final courage to do it. That's awful. Same time I was trying to study theology. My grades weren't so high as I wished. And especially language studies were very, very difficult for me and the old languages Hebrew, Latin, and.. Hebrew and Latin--they were the worst. and no, Greek and Latin they were the worst. But Hebrew was easy. Actually, I don't know why it was so easy for me, but it was easy. I finally found it easy for me.

EM: And how was your like experience as a theology student then? How did you like? How was it in the like in societal sense, to be among the other theology students?

PL: Now, it was...how can I tell? It's very difficult to tell or I haven't been thinking about those years so much on that way. But I was just part of the society. But not in any special group there, and there...lots of energy went for hiding. I was hiding behind all those high walls and thick walls because of my sexual identity. I was in totally closet then. Still, all those years when I was studying and that affected to my studies quite a lot. And at the end of my studied studies, I couldn't go anymore to tests at all. And I had to ask professors that could I do all those tests by writing essays. And well, they say that...well, if you want to do those things hardest way. you can do it. Easiest way, easier way would have been going to tests. But I couldn't go there anymore. I was totally horrified..going to tests with other students.

EM: Yeah.

PL: But then, I noticed that there was possibility for university students to study Finnish literature. And that was the so open subject to study. And I went to study that. And there that...What is it? There I could go tests, and there I really started first time to enjoy studying. And there I noticed that this is my subject, Finnish literature. And I studied their so-called Upper Part Studies. I don't know. What is it in English the perusopinnot? Very difficult to translate, but the first part of the exam, and I got highest grades in every test there, and I really enjoyed to be those tests there. And I remember I read in one autumn time 64 classic books of Finnish literature, and went to the test to make tests from their them. 64 books in one autumn time. That's a lot and highest grades from all those tests. And one professor said about one test that was so good that I could give even plus at the highest grade for that. But then she said she said that, unfortunately she couldn't do that. But she told me that it was so good. And I enjoyed studying literature, and perhaps it was the really...The reason for that, perhaps, was that I have been reading a lot really a lot, from my early childhood since I was about 5 years of age. And from at the age of 7 I was, I had been dreaming of becoming an author.

EM: Okay?

PL: And that was one of my biggest dreams in my life since 7 years of age.

EM: And now you have published some books, haven't you?

PL: I have published now two books which first one has also translated in English, and published last year in English. But I had to wait quite many years, *[laughs]* quite many years for that. But before going there, we have plenty of questions here.

EM: For the listener. I have some questions here. So yeah, so I was wondering, like about my graduation from a faculty of theology.

PL: After two last years of my studies I was already working full time. I was the secretary in faculty of theology, and I was studying beside that work. And that's why my studies lasted seven years. But I was graduated in May, end of May 1991. And just the same time, a very deep economical depression came to Finland. And that affected very harsh way also into the Lutheran Church of Finland. And there wasn't any possibility to get ordination for the Lutheran minister in many, many years. And well, I had to work in a faculty of theology as a secretary. I was continuing that. And then I was asked to change my main subject after making my pro gradu, or my, what is this? My final?

EM: I think it's the final masters.

PL: Masters exam. I was asked to change my main subject and from church history to practical theology. Professors asked me and then I changed it and started to make doctoral thesis. Which I couldn't get ready because there wasn't any person in Finland who could guide me to do that there. There wasn't any professor or any other person in the university who had enough competence to do that. And that's why I couldn't finish it.

EM: And what was your focus on this?

PL: My focus was symbolic of the altar in Finnish parish churches in medieval times, medieval Catholic times. And it's very interesting subject. And I hope that I can write that book ready someday. But I'm not going to make it, make a doctoral thesis of that anymore. But I would like to write that book ready, because I have made so much work for that already and written that so much, so so many pages, so many pages.

EM: And I wonder like..how was that if I may return to the your graduation time in 1991 with the economic hardship like. How was that visible there in your life? Back then? And what did you, was it an easy choice not to be ordained as a priest?

PL: It wasn't possible at all to be get ordained to be ordained as a Lutheran minister at all in the first time I think, if I remember right, it became possible late nineties. And then there was huge amount of new theologians wanting to get ordination, and on that time I was already out from the closet. I was publicly known as a gay and bishops in Finland didn't accept gays openly gays as Lutheran ministers at all. Only those persons who were living in a closet could have, could had ordination. But because I was openly gay, well known from the media, so it wasn't possible for me anymore. I tried to get ordination to get a working place from the parish. But they didn't accept me. And I think the reason was just that I was openly gay. And all that started, well, I came out from the closet in 1992, at end of 1992 about one and a half years after my master's thesis of theology. And that happened, so that I was reading a magazine where was an article from the very well-known doctor called Jorma Palo. And his article title was "Incurable, Healthy", and it was handling homosexuality. And when I was reading that beginning of December or end of November 1992, I just went to the mirror. I was looking myself from the mirror. And then I said to myself--okay, I am gay. And the feeling, the relieved feeling...it was amazing. really amazing. I could really hear how all

those stone walls were collapsing around me. I had so light feeling after that. And just two weeks after that I told my best friend that I am gay.

EM: And how was that like?

PL: Well, that happened in, how you know, parties. I was quite drunken, surprise, quite drunken. And I think he was, too. And I knew, I had known him as gay about half a year, and he was also theologian, couple of years younger than me. And at first he couldn't, how can I say, he couldn't understand or accept the information that I am gay. He said that no, are you really gay? No, no, no, no. I haven't ever, never, ever thought that you could be. And on that same evening we went to his place, which was quite near. I was living quite much further that place. And I had been in his place staying overnight few times, on his couch. But on that time he didn't went to his own bed, but he jumped to that couch, together with me and that one, that's history. After that it's history. We had a relationship. Well, almost one year. But then he, when he went to the army, he cut our relationship somehow just suddenly. And he was living quite much then in a closet. and I became to be quite openly gay very soon after coming out.

EM: And you are like that was in 1992, when you were 27 years old. Can you tell me how was that like to be openly gay back then?

PL: Openly gay. Well, I found all the gay bars and gay discos, and so on, and I went there. And it was very easy for me to go there. And I find, I found that world. And that was amazing to see and get to know other gays. First time in my life, actually, really that in those places I felt that I'm not in minority. I'm not in a minority. I'm majority member of majority, and that was amazing feeling. And that gave me some kind of courage. And when there was a huge media discussion about homosexuality in 1996, in Finnish newspapers and all around Finland. And then I was so angry about that discussion that I wrote to the Finnish main newspaper, Helsingin Sanomat, my opinion. And they were publishing that; they published my writing. And it's very difficult there to have texts there to be being published in that newspaper. And after that media discussion, one documentarist started to make film about that discussion. And he read all those hundreds of texts from newspapers from all around Finland. And he just choose I think it was about 60 writings. And he interviewed all of them first. And after that he filmed about 30 persons to his documentary. And then he cut some of them away. But somehow I was there in the final documentary. And it was sent in Finnish Broadcasting Company to whole Finland.

EM: What was the name of the documentary?

PL: It was in Finnish name is Ristiriita. I don't know the English word. Can you?

EM: I think I can like, try and find it in the

PL: Yeah. OK, Thank you.

EM: But maybe it's sounds like a bit of a like conflict or...

PL: Conflict, conflict. Yes. Exactly. Exactly. And after that documentary I don't remember how it happened, but there wasn't. I noticed that there wasn't any other

homosexual person in Finland who dared to be ahead of television cameras with own faces, own name to be interviewed about this subject. And I was in many, many television programs interview to late 1990s and then begin some also in beginning of 2000s. And also couple of magazines made interviews from me. The last one was 2011, and that was very large article of my story.

EM: And can you describe what was that like for you when you were actively partaking in this? In this media discussion with your own face your own name during the time of like, when it was like not so open to discuss sexual minority matters in Finnish public media.

PL: Somehow I find it for myself easier to open my mouth. and be there than shut my mouth. Because I was so angry about the situation, how it was in Finland then. And homosexuality was decriminalized 1971 and it was put away from the sickness classifications 1981. And so it was so near all those things. And there was also one kind of part in sickness classifications until 1995. And so it was so near all that time. And I couldn't stand that situation at all. We have time?

EM: Yes, we have time. And also please remember that we can take breaks, too.

PL: Let's continue. Yes, that sounds good.

EM: I wonder like, how was you...how did your family and friends react to you being so like part of this media discussion?

PL: Well, When I came out actually, I didn't tell my parents at all about my homosexuality, but my mother guessed it when she was visiting to me. And she told to my father and they accepted my homosexuality immediately. It wasn't any kind of problem for them at all. But when I told to my older sister, my own only sister, about my homosexuality, she cut all the relations to me. She said to me that I don't have brother anymore. And well, then, I thought that I have to understand her, because she's judge, working as a judge in a court. And we had same very rare family name, and she didn't want that other people will connect us anyway. But sometimes, there have been sometimes in her working place that her boss was asked my sister--does she know me. Even though my sister lives in Rovaniemi, in Lapland, about 800 kilometres up north from Helsinki. And I live in Helsinki. So but the boss was asked that question to my sister, and that was very difficult question for my sister to accept. that we have relationship together; family relationship.

EM: Yeah, yeah, indeed. And also I was wondering. I was wondering, like you mentioned earlier that, like you had studied theology and that you weren't then ordained as a priest. But have you worked kind of like a priest after that still?

PL: No, I haven't been working as a Lutheran minister at all, never. And but when the study the doctoral project, when I was working with my doctoral thesis.,that was a project in faculty of theology. When that ended I didn't had any kind of job. But after two weeks I was working in one parish as a caretaker, which was mainly cleaning the church. And there weren't any other Lutheran minister who had as high level in theological education than I had, and still I was the lowest level in that parish workers.

EM: And how was that experience like for you back then?

PL: Kind of controversial. And when I asked the possibility to help, to assist in a service, in the communion, the clergyman gave the permission for that after asking it from the bishop. But when I was first time assist there a Lutheran minister was leading the mass on that time. He was talking in the office one week before that Sunday that how is it possible that that kind of person could assist in a communion in our church? That kind of person? And I heard that, gladly only afterwards, and when I heard that it was the same day in the evening. And when I closed the church I went to the gay bar immediately, and I was very angry. And I thought that no I'm going away from the church and I leave church behind me. And there was four, my friends, and they asked me to come to their table. And I told my thoughts there, them, and they said that no, you are not going to do that. We have done it, all of us. We have done it. We have left church behind of us. We have, divorced from the church many years ago. But you can't do that. You shouldn't do that because we need you in a church. We need you as our minister. And I feel that that is my ordination. That is my ordination.

EM: Beautiful.

PL: It's very beautiful. And that happened in a in a gay bar, ahead of a glass of beer.

EM: Also what time was that? Approximately

PL: I don't remember exact year. It was end of nineties, perhaps '98, perhaps '97 or '8, '97, I think. Yes, '97.

EM: And I understand also that during this time you started to become active in the European Forum?

PL: Yes, 1998. I was first time in in European Forum in Frankfurt, Germany.

EM: And how was that experience like for you?

PL: Actually, I didn't know anything about European Forum when I went there. I was asked to go there and I went there without any expectations and It was amazing. I noticed that all of these people they are Christians, all of these people. They are LGBTQ people and I belong to this group. And feeling was there so open and welcoming for me, the newcomer. And I don't remember any workshop there. Some spiritual things. For example, last service I remember quite well, because I was crying really a lot there. Because the feeling was so strong...very, very strong, And because I noticed that I have to leave this group now after the very soon after this last service. An but After that it took several years when I went next time to the European Forum it was in Oslo, I think, 2003, I guess. I guess. I'm not sure 2002 or 2003. But since that I have participated almost every time, almost every time. A couple of times I have missed the European Forum. And 2009 it was first time in Finland, in Järvenpää, near Helsinki. And I was the secretary of the committee who was planning that for then. And now it was this year, 2025, in Turku, Finland, again. And now the main responsibility for all the arrangements were in my shoulders.

EM: And how was it like to be the main responsible shoulders?

PL: Quite much. I knew that what to do. Because I had so much experience while I had been participated more than, more often than anybody else in Finland to the Forum. And I had plenty of contacts in Europe. And I noticed that it's easy for me to take this responsibility, And I wanted to arrange as good for as possible to all of my very good friends and all newcomers. And I really enjoyed that work even that, though it was really hard, especially this springtime was really hard. Hard time to work. But there were weeks than I could sleep only about two or three hours per night this spring. Because I had to work almost well, about 19-20 hours per day for the Forum. And but it was so interesting I learned a lot, really a lot. And now are really wait next year Forum in Bergen, Norway, where I can just go and enjoy.

EM: That's all so beautiful, beautiful for the next year. Also, I was wondering--you have written now books, like the book that was first published in Finnish, *Huonoja uutisia, hyviä hetkiä*. And this was in 2022, which also came out in English language with *Bad News, Good Moments* title in 2024.

PL: Yes.

EM: And your other book in 2023 [title of book in Finnish] in 2023. Could you tell me about how these books came to be?

PL: Well, in 2019, was diagnosed incurable plasma cell cancer. And I had quite hard. Treatment for that. And for about one year I think the treatments were very hard. And one and a half years about. And after that I started to think that, because I noticed that people who had the same quite rare cancer, they were asking all the time, same questions about this cancer and the treatments in Internet and in our closed Facebook groups. And I thought that if I'm going to write, if I would write a book about my story and my treatments that might help other people who are having the same rare cancer. And I started to write the book. It became very easily and very quickly. Actually, in just a couple of months. And I send it to one publishing company, but they didn't accept it. And then I thought that. Well, I don't want to send it to any other publishing company and wait again several months. They're negative answer. So I published it myself. But in the way that it's all the time available to from Internet bookstore. And then plenty of my friends from European Forum, for example, they started to ask that book in English. And well, then I translated it into English. And worked with a proofreader about the language and that was published last year 2024 in English. And one Dutch Publishing Company took it to their program...And then the other book became quite suddenly 2023, beginning of that year. I collected some of my writings about local newspaper of the Veteli, the place where I was born. And I collected those writings, religious writings. And there was little more than ten writings and a couple of sermons which I had had given in rainbow masses here in Helsinki. And there was more than 10 writings. And then I started to think that if I'm writing more these kind of writings that could be kind of small sermon collection, called in Finnish old word is, *postilla*, sermon collection. And there are now 94 small sermons about two pages, very short writings. Small, tiny sermons to all Sundays and of the church year.

EM: Yeah.

PL: And it was those writings came actually in about two months, And then I sent those texts to one publishing company. It was Saturday night after 10 o'clock. And next morning Sunday was Palm Sunday, 5 past 7:00 in the morning I had got email from that publishing company, less than 9 hours later, that I had to send my texts there. There was answer. And they said that they had accepted my writings to be published as a book. And it was kind of miracle for me I was. I couldn't believe that it is true at first. But in October 2023 the book was published.

EM: Yes.

PL: And just this summer, after midsummer, I send one text, 770 pages to about ten publishing companies, because one of my friends said that you have to send that. There is nothing that you can lose if you send. But there is plenty you can win if you send that text. And then well, I send it. It was Monday. Next Monday one publishing company contacted me and then wanted to meet me. And then two days later, beginning of July this year, I was signed a contract. And there will be noble trilogy, so that huge amount of text will be put in three parts. And I'm very, very, very eager. Right now I'm waiting to work with the Publishing company to do that. I have seen already first sketches of the cover of the first part of the book of the Trilogy. It's interesting life. Life is full of miracles nowadays. And without the cancer I got, incurable cancer, this couldn't have happened to me. And I think that this cancer has been given to me as a gift from God. Even if incurable cancer, but it's a gift from God for me. And now all those dreams which I had had since I was seven years of age have gone, are coming through.

EM: Yeah, yeah, indeed. Thank you. Thank you so much. Now I think it's time for the last question.

PL: Yeah.

EM: Would you do you have anything else that you want to share in this interview? Or some question to return to? Or just like the last thoughts, if I may?

PL: Last thought, I think, is to all people, LGBTQ people, who are struggling with their sexual identity or gender identity. I really hope to give courage to be just yourself, openly yourself. Because it helps for you to live your life as God has, has meant you to live. It's a meaning of God that you are as you are, belonging, sexual or gender minority. And because we are a creation of God. We are built of God, picture of God. And that's why we shouldn't try to be anything else that we are. If we are trying to be something else, we are struggling against God.

EM: I want to thank you immensely for that very powerful and very reverent and hopeful ending note to this interview...and thank you so much for this interview.

PL: Thank you for the possibility to give this interview. And I'm very sorry about my English, I'm very sorry, because I'm not speaking fluent English. I don't know any, all the words. And the situation is little bit, so that little bit strange for me, that giving interview in English.

EM: Yeah, I think you succeeded marvellously.

PL: I'm not so sure about that, but I have tried my best.

EM: So thank you and I'll...

PL: Thank you for in for your interest about my story.

EM: Yes, thank you. I'll quit the audio now.

[1:36:13 *end of interview*]