

August 6, 1977

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Having been the wife of Jim Jones for 28 years, I think I have a perspective of his life in which you might be interested.

I met Jim in 1947 when I was a student nurse at Reid Memorial Hospital in Richmond Indiana. He worked full time at night as an orderly while attending Richmond High School. We were married June 12, 1949. We moved to Bloomington, Indiana where we both attended Indiana where we both attended Indiana University full time. To pay for his education, Jim worked full time at odd jobs. He was an excellent student, and faced a bright future in any career he chose.

In the 30 years I have known Jim, his primary concern has always been for those fellow human beings who are relentlessly oppressed. I have never known him to make a decision that would benefit him or our family at the expense of anyone else. There has never been an issue involving human rights that Jim thought "too insignificant" to deal with. For example, during his freshman year at college he walked out of a barbershop with one half a hair cut, because the barber stated he would not cut a Black person's hair. On another occasion he was hitchhiking home from Indiana University when the man with whom he was riding made a racist remark. He immediately demanded to be let out of the car, and walked. Another time the police were called because he was supposedly disturbing the peace. The peace was "disturbed" because Jim refused to eat lunch quietly in a restaurant when a Black man was forced to take his lunch out in a paper bag.

In the mid- 1950's, Jim was the associate pastor of a large church in Indianapolis, Indiana. The pastor was near retirement and Jim was to succeed him. However, one day he discovered that Black people were being seated in the back row of the church. He asked that I escort them to the platform. Right after that meeting, a church Board meeting was called. The Board offered him, as an alternative, to build a church that he could pastor-- for Blacks only. He walked away from this position, saying "any church where I pastor will be open to all people." It was then that he established Peoples Temple.

In the early 1960's, Jim was very ill and was to be admitted as a patient to the Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana. At that time he was Director of the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights. His physician was Black, and, when it came time to assign Jim a room, the admitting clerk asked him if he was "colored or white." Jim, who was badly in need of medical attention, was

EE-1-I&J-73

incensed and refused to go to bed until the hospital was integrated. Black friends who were patients at that time told of being moved in order to integrate the wards. It took several hours, but Jim did not lay down till it was done, although he was in much pain. Jim's concern has always been results, not publicity, and although he was Director of the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights, Jim did not call the press to get "coverage".

I recall vividly the May of 1959 when one of our children was killed in a car accident. The cemeteries were segregated and our daughter was Korean. Blacks and other Third World people were buried in the low lands where water often stood, inches deep. Jim was told that he and I could have our child buried in the "white section". He replied, "I cannot bury our child anyplace where any member of my church cannot be buried." And so, I can picture, these many years later, our five year old being lowered into a grave, half filled with water, in a swamp land. It is a painful memory, but one which I would not erase, nor do I regret it for one moment.

Jim has always had a special tenderness for seniors. I remember visiting one of our members in a convalescent hospital in Indiana. She was dying of cancer, and had been neglected. She whispered to us, "get me out of here, please." Jim looked at me, and then turned to her and nodded. He got on one side of her and I on the other, and we carried her out of the hospital, over the protests of the administrator. She stayed in our home, and we cared for her until she died some months later. Yes, I know that technically we did wrong—but it was unjust to let her suffer, and I don't regret what we did. Not one iota.

As a result of his strong stands for justice (and I have given just a very few examples of the kind of personal stands he took, almost daily) our family has been greatly harassed. Jim's life has been threatened so much that I feared greatly that our children would be deprived of their father at a young age. However, we both knew that the only way to teach our children worthwhile values was to live our convictions despite the risk. So, despite the risk, Jim has always been very open, and forthright about his belief in economic and social equality.

In 1965 we decided to move to Northern California. We had small children of different racial backgrounds and we thought that California was the most progressive state. The harassment continued. Our children were taunted, animals killed, Jim's life threatened. A bomb was placed under the bus where he and I were sleeping on one occasion. Our San Francisco church was destroyed by an arson fire, and rebuilt by our people.

Jim has always lived his life under the close scrutiny of his members. We have always lived modestly. Indeed, if we had not worn used clothing, and bought second hand furniture, we would not have been able to adopt our children.

Since coming to California, my  
gruelling schedule. Contrary to my wishes and urging I will not go to  
Los Angeles, I ride one of the church owned busses. It was over his  
protest that a compartment was built in the rear of one of the busses so  
he could get some rest. He has never planned a vacation without planning for  
all the people. You will not find him basking on some beach, or in a  
lavish hotel. At Christmas all the children of the church had the same  
amount spent on them, so that no child would feel ashamed. When families  
couldn't afford to buy presents, Jim saw that they got the amount needed  
to see that all children had an equal Christmas.

This is just a very very brief sketch. I could write a volume of examples  
of his concern for individuals, animals, and plants. I would like to close  
by saying that if I were not married to Jim I would still be a member  
of his congregation. His totally selfless life has been an inspiration  
to me, and I believe wholeheartedly in what he stands for— socialism.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Marceline Jones

EE-1-18J-75