

COUPLE TRYING TO GET BACK TO INDIANA

Woe-Beset Woman Says 'Prophet' And Aide Harassed Her And Mate

By CAROLYN PICKERING

(Second Of A Series)

For 17 years, Marion and Opal Freestone had "all the faith in the world in Jim Jones."

When the evangelistic pastor who calls himself a "Prophet of God" told them in 1965 that the world would end two years later and the only ones to be spared would be his flock, they believed him.

FREESTONE quit his job in a machine shop and the young family, with four daughters ranging in age from 1 to 16, left Indianapolis with the man they truly believed to be "God's Messenger."

People's Temple here was located at 975 North Delaware Street.

The Rev. Mr. Jones, the 41-year-old charismatic leader of the 4,000-member Peoples Temple at Redwood Valley, Calif., has been under attack in recent days by former church members and others who accuse him of "mass hypnosis," "charlatan faith-healing practices" and creating "terror" among those of his flock who dare to leave the church.

Mrs. Freestone, today, struggles to save enough money in order that her family, struck by tragedy and beset with financial woes, can return to Indiana.

IN A FIVE-YEAR period while members of the temple, the Freestones say they tithed \$3,000 to the church and

gave an additional \$1,200 from an insurance settlement which came after the family's car, during a collision, plunged down a mountainside, fatally injuring their youngest daughter and causing permanent disability to Freestone.

"When we left Indianapolis, everyone in the group turned over whatever they had money, property, furniture to Jim Jones," Mrs. Freestone said.

The Rev. Mr. Jones has failed to return numerous telephone calls made by The Indianapolis Star in an attempt to verify reports of the Freestones and others.

The Ukiah (Calif.) woman said she

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has canceled checks and receipts proving that she and her husband tithed 25 per cent of their earnings to the church, but were given receipts for "only 10 per cent in tithes."

While she and her husband still were active in the temple, she said:

"I had to do all the baking of cookies, cakes and pies for the church, which had the concessions stands at the ballpark, the county fair and other places.

"I bought my own ingredients—they cost me from \$15 to \$20 a week, I received no pay and had to turn over all the profits to the temple. I made them \$1,000 in one three-month period alone."

IN NOVEMBER, 1970, said Mrs. Freestone, four years after the crippling accident that left her husband an invalid, the temple issued an ultimatum.

"I was called to the temple at 1 o'clock in the morning," she said. "Archie Imes, an assistant pastor, did most of the talking. I was told we had to come up with our 25 per cent tithes by the following week or our lives would be in danger.

"I told them it was impossible financially and I left and we have never gone back.

"For two months after that, we received nagging telephone calls from Jim Jones, who told us to leave the community. He said my husband was going to be investigated for a crime.

"I had to go 20 miles away from Ukiah to find a job because the temple runs everything in Ukiah (population 10,000). I'm now working as a waitress in a restaurant. I don't get off work until 11 p.m. and, believe me, I'm mighty scared driving those 20 miles alone at that hour.

"I'll be glad when we can get back to Indiana."

TWO OF the Freestones' daughters have remained loyal to the temple and, according to their mother, the eldest daughter, now married, "has been ordered not to have any children, but to adopt Negro children."

The daughter, said Mrs. Freestone, became pregnant last year but "lost the baby after four months of pregnancy."



BUSES TRANSPORT PARISHIONERS TO VALLEY
Integrated Congregation Praises "Prophet" Jones.

She and her husband now are adopting two Negro babies, Mrs. Freestone said.

Mrs. Freestone added:

"Jim Jones is capable of mass hypnosis. He has no divine healing power, as he claims. I'm a diabetic and he never cured me and my husband has permanent brain damage from the accident and he's never restored him to health."

EVEN AS the Freestones told their story to The Star—"Prophet Jones," clad in a white turtleneck sweater, a pulpit gown and dark glasses, was warming up a crowd of 1,000 people who turned out in a San Francisco junior high school for services.

San Francisco Examiner reporter Lester Kinsolving, who has worked with The Star in a joint investigation, reported that an unidentified, but "ecstatic" woman in the congregation stood and shouted:

"I know that Pastor Jim Jones is God Almighty himself," and the darkly handsome, 41-year-old part-Cherokee Disciples of Christ minister responded, in gentle tones:

"If you say 'He is God,' some people will think you are nuts. They can't relate. I'm glad you were healed, but I'm really only a messenger of God... I have a paranormal ability in healing."

THE REV. Mr. Jones, reported Kinsolving, had just completed what were said to be two resuscitations of parishioners who had either fainted or gone into catatonic stiffenings in the excitement.

In each case, said Kinsolving:

"He stopped in the middle of a sentence, raced from the stage to the audience and laid hands upon the rigid congregant.

"After some 30 seconds, the audible tension of the multitude broke as the Prophet lifted up each prostrate figure — to thunderous applause."

the ward of a guardian who was an active church member.

Mrs. Johnson said her daughters are "hostile" since she traveled to California and brought them home.

"They've been brainwashed and are terrified there will be repercussions since they left," she said.

MRS. JOHNSON said her older daughter received a telephone call — at 6:15 a.m. California time — earlier this week when the Examiner first published reports about the temple.

Mrs. Johnson said the call was from Stoen's wife, Grace, whom she knows personally, and the caller told her daughter:

"The newspaper out here is harassing Jim. Your parents have signed something saying bad things about the temple. You find out what they did and call me back. Get them to stop it. It's for your own safety, you know."

Mrs. Stoen couldn't be reached for comment.

Mrs. Johnson said she heard the entire conversation on an extension telephone in her home and the call left her daughters "very upset."

MRS. JOHNSON said if there is "any more intimidation, I'm going to the authorities... there must be some kind of law covering telephoned threats."

The FBI has jurisdiction over interstate telephone calls in which threats, intimidation or extortion may be involved.

Investigation, however, must be conducted in such cases in the jurisdiction from which the call originates — in this case — California.

(NEXT: A look at "Prophet" Jones' local business dealings of a less celestial nature and why some local folks accuse him of "witchcraft.")

Mrs. Johnson declares that her oldest daughter was coerced into marriage with a Negro last June and that the temple's attorney and an "assistant pastor," Timothy O. Stoen, who doubles as assistant district attorney for the county, had performed the marriage.

Stoen, who has admitted to the San Francisco Examiner he is not an ordained minister, said he performed the wedding and added that his authority to do so was the "State Civil Code."

But, reported the Examiner, Stoen couldn't quote the statute that, he says, gives permission for an attorney to unite couples in matrimony.

THE JOHNSONS also said, in a notarized statement, that Stoen, in August, 1971, had written them for permission to have a legal guardian appointed for their other daughter, Gwen, 17.

The Johnsons declined to grant permission and, instead, began what turned into a 13-month effort to get their girls back home.

Stoen also admitted to the Examiner he had sought the legal permission of the Johnsons for Gwen to be named

The Rev. Mr. Jones, a self-styled evangelist in Indianapolis from 1949 to 1964 when he was ordained in the Disciples of Christ Church, conducts services in an atmosphere akin to a rock festival plus preaching, said Mrs. Freestone and an Indianapolis couple, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Johnson, whose two daughters were brought home last week after more than a year at Ukiah.

RHYTHMS of rock and roll, combined with endless preaching, singing, clapping and dancing produce effects of "happy hysteria" among Jones' flock, Mrs. Johnson said.

The local woman last week accused Jones of "charlatanism" in his faith healings and said her daughters are so frightened since leaving Ukiah that "they think Jones has our telephone bugged."