

Rick Cordell            Re: JJ

Questions in CAPS  
Comments in small type  
Tape 1    Side 1

INTERVIEW FOR BOOK REGARDING JIM JONES. WHAT WAS THE DATE RICK THAT YOU FIRST MET FATHER? It was in the spring of the year in 1955. I don't remember the exact date, my brother was a senior in high school at the time....YOUR BROTHER? Harold, Harold Cordell, he was a senior and he had been attending the church of Pastor Jim about a year or year and a half at that time, and he told me to come on over and see a man that was unlike any preacher we had ever known, and we were brought up in the religion together. WHAT RELIGION WERE YOU BROUGHT UP IN? Pentecostal. YOU SAID YOUR BROTHER HAD ATTENDED HIS SERVICES FOR A YEAR AND A HALF, WERE YOUR PARENTS ALSO ATTENDING THE SERVICES OF FATHER OR WAS HE GOING ALONE. I think maybe our parents had attended maybe once or twice, at that time, but Harold was mainly going by himself then. DID, HOW DID YOU, WHEN HE FIRST TOLD YOU ABOUT JIM, WHAT WAS IT ABOUT JIM'S MINISTRY THAT MADE YOU WANT TO ATTEND SERVICES? The feeling that I got from Harold was was that it was unusual service, unusual church and an unusual man. I got the feeling from Harold, for the first time he was really enthused about church we were brought up in a church, but we never really saw enough in church to really get one hundred per cent enthused about it, we were made to go to church, and played the quilt trip all of our lives and worried about being the good guys so we would go to heaven. The way Harold presented it to me at the time I felt that there was something

HH6A 2

special about the man, about that church, I needed to go find out. He was relating very closely to it, we were very close as brothers and I thought well it must be worth seeing. Harold had left the church for several years and was running around while he was in high school and for him to find a church that he really wanted to go to was unusual to me to hear about so I figured there was really something to it, so I decided to go take a look. WERE THE MEETING THE SAME AS THEY ARE TO DAY, REVELATIONS, ETC. At that time; Jim has always met people at their level. But I didn't realize back then that he was saying the same thing that he is now, he was just saying it in a different way because I just didn't understand it. He was preaching the Bible, healings in every service, mostly healing, a lot of healings, in Indianapolis a lot of healing, in Cincinnati and some of the other towns just almost all healing services. But his message was always very stark, since I knew him, its Brotherhood, all races together, and the very first time I met him he and Marceline, I felt a unusual warmth about them, they were the kind of people that you were over whelmed at the very first meeting, by the love that they projected, the warmth that they made you feel that you were welcome, that you were accepted just as you were, that you were not judged by the way you looked or how much education you had, or how much money you had, and that was the first time that I had ever knew anybody the very first time they knew me to show so much love, so much warmth so much feeling, the church itself was the same way, although it wasn't evolved to the point it is now, it was a church where people felt closer, more of a family than any other church I have ever been too, THE SAME PRESENTATION THE SAME VIBRATION LEVEL, THE SAME AURA SO TO SPEAK, THE SAME WARMTH, THE SAME FEELING. Yes. Jim has always been Jim Jones, I think he and the movement have evolved together but I feel that he from the very beginning

HNLA 3

have the same message, we would not have been able to accept it. No way at that time. HOW LONG AGO DID HE START REALLY CLEARING UP IN OUR MINDS WHAT WE REALLY ARE, WHAT WE ARE REALLY LIVING FOR, OR WHEN DID YOU REALLY REALIZE THAT WE ARE SOCIALISTS? IN HEART, WHEN DID HE COME ACROSS WITH THIS, OR WHEN DID YOU PICK IT UP? YOU SAID THAT ALL ALONG HE HAD BEEN SAYING THESE THINGS THAT AS YOU CAME TO THE POINT THAT YOU COULD ACCEPT IT, YOU BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT HE HAD BEEN SAYING THESE THINGS ALL long. Yes, I didn't get the message that it was socialism was our goal until about 7, 8, 9 years ago. When we came out the last time. I brought my family out in 1968, so that would be 7 years ago. WHEN YOU BROUGHT YOUR FAMILY OUT, DID YOU HAVE A PLACE TO STAY? did a LOT OF YOU COME AT THE SAME TIME, OR HOW WAS THAT DONE. Well there was myself, Barb and the children, just four children at that time, and my we came out, Harold was already out here at the time, we came and stayed with him, but it was very touching, the very night that we arrived Father sent a whole, boxes, and sacks of groceries over for us just because we were there, this really touched me. THEN FATHER WAS ALREADY OUT HERE WHEN YOU ARRIVED. Yes, this was the last time. I was out here, one of the first to move out here in the beginning in 1964, and left in the summer of that year and went back to michigan. WHAT WAS YOUR REASON FOR GOING BACK? I think it was not knowing our goal, not knowing what our family was all about. I still at that time was caught up in myself so much I didn't know what JIM Jones was really trying to do. TRUE, I AM CONSTANTLY AMAZED AT THIS LOVE, AT THE WAY HE CONSTANTLY GIVES, AND LOVES, AND TAKES. JUST REALLY AMAZES ME. YOU WERE A MEMBER OF PEOPLES TEMPLE IN INDIANAPOLIS? That's right. SINCE 1955. YES. We have KINDA COVERED WHAT PROJECT WAS BEING WORKED ON. We were in a small church, 15th and New Jersey at the time, that is

NH6 A 4

the very first church . 15th AVE. OR STREET? 15th St. and New Jersey in INDIANAPOLIS. Right. AND THE NAME OF THE CHURCH WAS? Peoples Temple. Something too, we thought about changing the name of our church when we first decided to come out to Calif, but we never did. We thought that maybe the influence of our work back in Klu Klux Klan Indianapolis would follow us out here, the racist and the enemies of freedom back there would follow us out here, and try to stop us from the very beginning. We did have opposition but Jim always was one step ahead of him. When I first started attending it was at 15th and New Jersey in 1955, and that's, one thing about that church that I remember was how crowded it was, small church, it was always full, I think something about Jim's meetings, I was always amazed at how many people would attend and always a full church, people used to stand out side the doors, stand and look through the windows see what was going on. WAS HE AS DIRECT THEN AS HE IS NOW. TELLING THINGS AS THEY REALLY ARE? He never played any games, he was dealing with a strictly religious crowd so he had to talk Bible, and he had to talk in the realm they could understand, but when he felt something he would say it. That was the church building I believe that Archie Ijames was sitting on the platform and a women wrote a note to Jim and said I will give you eight thousand dollars, and much more will I give , I will support you, if you will just get that black man off the platform . Jim in no uncertain terms told her what to do with the money . He spoke about it, that's one thing, he was never afraid to speak the truth , right straight forward, never being afraid a minute of the consequences of what anyone would try to do to him because he stood for truth. one time a women came in the service there, and said that, she was a black woman, and she came the first time, and stood up and

NH6A5

testified of how she appreciated the love , and being accepted in the service , that very morning was on a Sunday she had gone to another church there in Indianapolis, and she had been coldly, very rudely treated, and asked to leave, said she wasn't dressed in their tradition; it was clear it was a white church and she wasn't welcome, and she was black. So Jim took the whole church, dismissed the meeting and walked out and got in cars and drove over and walked into that church in middle of the service and sat down. HIS APPROACH HAS ALWAYS BEEN DIRECT AND THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT. WAS ANY TYPE OF MISSION WORK IN EFFECT AT THIS TIME? Not, in his early years, he went to Brazil. That wasn't until 1960-1962, I think, he was gone two years. THE CHURCH YOU JOINED BACK IN INDIANAPOLIS HOW LONG HAD IT BEEN IN EXISTANCE? HOW LONG HAD FATHER BEEN THE PASTOR THERE OF THAT CHURCH? He hadn't had that church too long, maybe a year and a half, maybe two years as I recall, I am not sure about that. they hadn't had that building very long, he was a young minister I think in a Methodist church, and they were very much against total intergration or equality as Jim has always been for, they were a passive sort of church and they didn't like his radical view, they considered him a radical, and they gave him a hard time and he told them , I don't remember the exact details but it had to do with brotherhood, that they were not fully intergrated and never would be and he walked out and left that church and started his own. YOUR NOT SURE HOW MANY YEARS BEFORE THIS, THAT THIS HAPPENED? No, I am not, he was a very young man at that time, he had just finished college, and had been working two jobs and had the rest homes at the time, he had the one rest home, I think when I first met him and got the other one later on, HE WAS INVOLVED AT THAT TIME WITH DOING, RATHER THAN JUST HEARING IT OVER THE PULPIT AND PREACHING IT. Very much, his house was full of animals all the time, took in stray

HH696

Animals , wounded sick animals, never turned them away, always, he always had a monkey in his house. DID HE ENCOURAGE COMMUNAL LIVING BACK IN THOSE DAYS? Yes, he did his house was always full, he encouraged other people to take in others and live together and to conserve their resources and so they could put more into the church and we could go more and help people out , that was always the theme and the message but nobody seemed to get it.at the time. DID SERVICES, DID HE ADMINISTER AS LONG AS HE DOES NOW? WERE THE SERVICES AS LONG? They were long services but not like today, they were, people wouldn't have been receptive as much as they are today, people didn't realize the hard times we were in back then. SO A GREAT CHANGE REALLY CAME ABOUT WHEN YOU CAME TO THE WEST COAST, TO REDWOOD VALLEY. I think, yes. WAS THERE A BIG PUSH for GROWTH IN THE LITTLE CHURCH IN INDIANAPOLIS? Well there wasn't proselytization as such there wasn't a big outreach to get members, just to get numbers, it was, and yet again it was, it was.... THE SAME AS IT IS NOW? More or less, he was trying to reach out to all people. But he has always been for the poor the blacks, always. Stood for blackfreedom, liberation. Equality, he would never walk past a situation where he saw blacks being mistreated. Whether his life could be in danger or not, he would stop and speak his piece "peace" , correct the situation do whatever he could to help that person, to let him know that somebody cares, that they were not second class citizens and they were not supposed to be treated that way and he was doing something about it. HIS MINISTRY BACK THEN, HIS OUTREACH THE SAME TOWARD ANY WALK OF LIFE, ANIMALS, TOWARD EVERYTHING. Yes. I remember a pigeon on time standing out and he was walking around in a circle, downtown circle monument in Indianapolis, and he saw a man pick up a pigeon that was evidently sick and started hitting the pigeon with his fist, and he stopped and he very strongly approached that man and told him never, ever to do that again, and he took the pigeon and he set it down

NN6A7

on the sidewalk again and he didn't have at that time to take the pigeon home, he didn't have a minute to take the pigeon home to care for it, so he, if I remember right he was going to come back and get the pigeon he walked away and looked back and that man had came back to that pigeon and had stomped it to death. Before he could back to him..He told us that that at that time, when he saw that man do that, he had a flash, a vision before his eyes, he saw that man coming back as a worm and being eaten by a bird. By a pigeon. He was so torn up, so hurt by what had happened , he was always sensitive to animals and people . HOW MANY CHILDREN DID THEY HAVE AT THIS TIME, DID THEY , HAD THEY ADOPTED ANY? Yes, they had Agnes, Susan, Steven of course the natural born, and Jimmy, and Lou. They had those children at that time. That was not right when I met him, that was later on when they got those children , but they had them when they lived on Broadway, 2327 N. Broadway in the big house. That's where they opened up their home, they had people coming in all the time , GRest big ole brown house, always full of people. WHO TO YOUR BEST KNOWLEDGE HAS BEEN WITH FATHER THE LONGEST THAT WE COULD GO BACK AND SEE WHO.....Edith Cordell, Edith Cordell knew him first and the when he was speaking in a church in the South side of Indianapolis. I am trying to remember the name of it, but she can tell you and so can Loretta, Loretta met Jim back then too, when he was speaking in that church. HOW HAS YOUR LIFE BEEN CHANGED? HOW HAS IT REALLY BEEN CHANGED. Well, that is so dramatic it's hard to describe. Been such a long slow process, that's what has always amazed me, about Jim, is that he has had patience , he has known truth and reality, he has known what life is all about, he has known how people play games, he has known people's weakness, all this time and yet he has had the

44648

Patience to deal with us, and to work with us, and that's what amazes me. I don't know, I, of course, being brought up in a pentecostal church, I was religious minded, Bible minded, the whole trip and he started speaking up about the errors in the bible and I think it was 1963, that's when he had the vision, he came in the house and started up the stairway and saw a big flash of light, he turned it was coming from the North, Chicago, it was so bright that it almost blinded him, and it was a picture of a nuclear holocaust, the bomb blasted so bright that he saw it all the way in Indianapolis, the bomb had exploded in Chicago and it burned clear down within miles of Indianapolis. Eventually Indianapolis would also come under the attack of nuclear bombs. He saw that vision and the same time saw the only way that he was going to wake people up to either ( ) to what really was happening around the world was to tear up the bible. Tear up their bible, God was their bible. Their idol. CAN WE GO BACK AND KINDA PINPOINT THE TIME THAT HE HAD THAT VISION? you SAID THE BIG BROWN HOUSE, CAN YOU BE SURE OF WHAT YEAR THAT WAS. I think in 1963 or 64, almost sure. WHEN DID THIS MUST BE, WHEN WAS THE CAVE PURCHASED. That was after they were out here. That was a prophecy then. the vision that he saw at the very same time, that he received the message in a vision form, that the only way he could get people to wake up to hear the truth would be to tear up their idol which was the bible, and at the same time he received a vision of a place he could take us, the church family, to escape that holocaust, and it led him right to here, he had never been here before, but his vision led him right to Ukiah, Calif. After we had moved out there it was pointed out very clearly that is was the only safe area in the US with the natural up draft over the valley, with the winds coming in very strongly from the West all the time so there would be no

HH6A9



fallout and it was far enough from San Francisco or any large city where the fires would not reach from a nuclear holocaust, would come within a few miles, I think Hopland, would come that close, but they wouldn't come any farther. In case there was any chance of all there was even further protection because he received a revelation about the cave and followed his instinct and went right to the cave and found it to be just what we needed, there was no end to it, there was plenty of room in there for storage of food, and just got endless, endless cave. AND WE HAVE GUARDS POSTED AT THE ENTRANCE? Right. Thinking back in those years of the vision that the had, it was a, it was not long after that that I moved, I was impulsive, my parents were impulsive and I was impulsive, wanted to get about it, right away. He spoke of the vision and the need to go where his gift the revelation of showed him to go, he described the place and we sold everything we had and were ready to go within just a short period of time, and he, I hadn't talked with him, I hadn't cleared it to go, I just decided to get ready and do it. He spoke about his concern about me going at that time, he felt it was too soon that their wouldn't be housing enough there for my family, there was concern that we would need a place to stay, there would be plenty for us to eat there would be a job for me to find, even though the revelation spoke there would be he was so concerned for me in particular for some very strong reason about going so soon. Of course that was evident later that the feeling he had were true and because I wasn't strong enough at that time in my rootings and the cause and knowing what he was really about, to get out away from the family like that, the church family and continued to be dedicated towards ( ) and brotherhood and thus I got alienated from the church when I moved out. LETS GET SOME HISTORY OF THE CHURCH. THE SERVICES WERE HELD IN UKIAH IN THE LITTLE CHURCH THAT WAS RENTED AND THIS IS WHEN YOU WENT BACK THE SECOND TIME, WHILE THEY WERE STILL HAVING SERVICES IN THAT LITTLE CHURCH. Yes, that's right. AND THEN WHEN YOU

NH6AK

CAME BACK OUT, YOU WERE STILL HAVING SERVICES IN THE GARAGE? APPROXIMATELY THERE WERE 2 or 3 hundred members AT THIS TIME STILL. Right, when we first moved out, we were not only having meetings at , this was the second time we moved out, they were having meetings at the Golden Rule Church. They had been ever since we were gone they were trying to build a relationship with those people, because those people had somewhat of a Socialist structure, and their leader had died and the church was dying out and we started our relationship with them when we first moved out, and the very first time, and found them to be very friendly people but found them to be kinda, well they were all seniors and the children were leaving so the church its self was dying out. They were in the very bad need of a leader. We were having meetings up there with them. as well as our own little church in Ukiah. When I came out the second time, I heard they had gone around to different churches throughout Ukiah, and having service with each church separately trying to build a sometype of union of minds, that we were all serving the same God, and in every case they were received coldly and indifferently , they were given a false smile and sort of a warm reception but then when they left, we would have certain people stay back who were not recognized and would give us reports, that when we left they would talk about us and didn't like the blacks, that they would smell, had a certain smell, bad manners and different kinds , anything they could do to run us down, same thing happened in Indianapolis when we moved out , Jim was always trying to get people of one mind and he tried desperately to bring the church to the realization that it had the first responsibility to bring about change in society and it was because of his aggressive position on this and his leadership and courage that the mayor even made him commissioner director of the mayor's human rights commission. Human rights commission. He was even back then doing the very same thing reaching out to people, people in need, and standing for equality and freedom, especially for the black man. He opened up many restaurants and public service facilities,

HACAN

Toilets, restaurants, and motels and you name it he opened them up, and before they had never been open before to blacks in Indianapolis. The churches there got together and tried to stop him they got the press, the reporters they got him on TV one time I remember and they thought they were really going to stamp him up, and they threw all kinds of weird questions at him to try to trip him, they had a well planned attack but he came through just beautifully, so much, so fantastic is his brilliance, and his mind to deal with, I think there was somewhere around either six or eight, reporters there who were well trained in interrogating people and it was obvious that they had a plan of attack, to try to make him bad, to discredit what he was doing, he came through just shining he turned it around like he always does, turn it around and he looks good, and the publicity he received helped his cause even more, and even though that the were racist and hateful people there tried to put a stop to it to what he was doing, he kept on doing it, it was during a time that he was doing this, that they were shooting his house putting glass in his food and spitting on the black baby, Jimmy Jones that they had at that time, Marceline would carry him down the street and they would spit on him, then when she started taking the child to school they would threaten her and give her a hard time, the very first people who ever took a black child into a intergrated home like that and really stood for what they were doing, really showed that they were fully intergrated. There was no, you no like some people take a black child back in those day's to just prove to somebody else to a " Look, I have a black child, I'm liberal , I believe in a, or I'm not racist." But they never treated the child as an equal. There was always an obvious treatment of that child, like the so called Rev. Cayce

MM6712

in Ukiah, who knew Jim back in Indianapolis. He adopted a black girl, but he used that black girl to get ahead himself, to make himself look good, and even worse than that abused the child sexually, as to my recollection, and he and his wife both because his wife was an active lesbian, but Jim and Marcy did so much to show that there was no special treatment shown or given any child that they had, that they took all people into the family as one, and both of them very courageously continued their stand regardless of what people tried to do to them. They would poison their dog's their animals, set fire to their home, just any kind of dirt they could do, throwing rocks at the house and the car, just anything, they were right in the middle of a ghetto, an old house they lived in, right in the neighborhood where the poor were congregating, WAS HE TEACHING SCHOOL AT THIS TIME? Not back then he was working, he had worked for a while at jobs, and then he took a job for Mayor Human Rights Commission which was a terribly taxing job that took a lot of his time as well as pastoring a church in Indianapolis and the mid week meetings, and weekend meetings, and Ohio. He was always been one that would spend special time with children with animals, and the young people every year would take a trip up to Chicago or to New York City, he would take them himself and the church would pay for everything you know, all the children give them a good time and make sure they would all enjoy themselves, give them equal time, give them a chance to do the things they had never done before. WHEN DID HE TEACH SCHOOL? WAS THAT DIRECTLY AFTER COLLEGE OR DID .... He taught school out here in Ukiah. DID, HE IS ALSO A LAWYER? WAS ALL OF THIS TRAINING, DID HE RECEIVE ALL THIS TRAINING BEFORE YOU KNEW HIM? To my knowledge he is not a licensed lawyer but he was always our only attorney. WELL HIS MIND IS THE ULTIMATE. Right, our poor people could not afford an attorney so Jim would take the responsibility to see that they got a fair trial, to see that they got treated right, and would make many and many a decision regarding

MM6A13

legal matters and he would always come up making the correct decisions, always He would give advice against, over and above what a lawyer would say and even give guidance to the attorney we would hire and the attorney would take the advice and find out that it would come out right everytime. HOW MANY YEARS OF COLLEGE DID JIM HAVE? He graduated from four years of college, from North Indianapolis State University and also a next to Chicago up there, clear up in Northern Indiana, he went to school there then he went to school in Indiana State, and he took some schooling in Indianapolis also. SINCE HE ARRIVED IN THE VALLEY ITS JUST BEEN THE MINISTRY BASICALLY? NO, YOU SAID HE TAUGHT SCHOOL OUT HERE TOO. WHEN DID HE QUIT TEACHING SCHOOL? Its been about five years ago I think. WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED IN THE VALLEY, THE OUTREACH TO THE NEIGHBORING TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES, TO THE NEIGHBORS COVER SOME OF THAT. THE LETTER WRITING, THE.... Ok, one way he used to reach people to make it easier for our black people to walk down the street to be accepted among jobs, see he had a revelation we would all find jobs, we would all find housing, we would have plenty to eat, and we would prosper., That we have. But he has brought it about. He has made it possible. His strategy in dealing with people and opening up peoples minds in the community, sending people out , dozens, we had a committee of several people, dozens of people, in fact, to take cakes, send cards and letters, do special humanitarian things to help people in the community, like for instance there was a person , everytime there was a baby born there would be gifts, cards and cakes sent to those who had the newborn child, everytime there was a death there would be cards and letters sent in condolence and if there was a family left we would move in to help the family. Whenever there was a fire or a tragic loss by anything in the community we would send cards and help in the way of clothing and food many time when the people were burned out we would provide them with a place to stay with food and clothing everything they needed, till they were able to get situated. This was one way

H H 6 9 1 4

he had of reaching people. Churches themselves as institutions refused us, when we attended the services they treated us coldly, and I think we covered that, that if we attended a service they would treat us warily and in the service and then they would talk about us when we were gone. HE HAS ALWAYS HAD THIS UNTIRING DRIVE, UNTIRING FUSE, Just unending, very little rest. He was always tired, but never stopped going. He seemed to have one thing just one goal and that was reaching people. Getting the people to intergrate there mind, to accept people of other colors to bring about a unity of man. Mankind. IS THERE A PARTICULAR MIRACLE THAT YOU REMEMBER THAT HAS A PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO YOU? There is a lot of them. When we first moved out, I was sitting in a service and, this is the second time we came out, 1968, and after a while after we had moved back we had been living in Michigan and he called my name out and described the place where I worked and the address, <sup>exact</sup> address, and said you used to walk yourself right across the street and do your banking and another address, I can't even remember myself now what they were, I was on 105 E Main, was my business and across the street to 103 W. Main was where I did my banking, and I said yes that's true. And he also said I will tell you something else you did you moved out here and you left your record in Leonard's Garage and Leonard Brenner was an oil company that I did business with that sponsored the garage that I had as a business. I had purchased a record that I had left there in his garage when I moved and he had no way of knowing, I hadn't told anyone, not a soul that I had done that. He had no way of knowing. When he did that something struck me that I never felt before and he said, "Now you have been having trouble with Coalitis, he said YOU SAID SOMETHING STRUCK YOU THAT YOU HAD NEVER FELT BEFORE? Yes, I felt <sup>had</sup> a wara feeling come over me all of a sudden. He said, "You have coalitis, stomach problems, now surround you with warmth, healing power." I felt it, I felt the warmth all over my body. I had never felt that before, it

HNCR15

3

was especially centered in my stomach. They, he said I will tell you now that you won't have anymore problem with that if I was not able to heal you, if you ever had to go to the hospital, we would pay your doctor bill, we would pay your hospital bill. It touched me, not only that I received a healing but I never had the problem again that I had been having. I was touched that he would say that, that if I ever had to have an operation and go to the hospital he would pay the bill, I am sure that that was taken care of. I think that was one of the

HMCA16