



# PRISONERS UNION

August 2, 1977

Reply To:

MAIN OFFICE  
1315 18th Street  
S.F., CA 94107  
(415) 648-2880

LAW OFFICE  
539 Clayton St.  
S.F., CA 94117  
(415) 626-9730

Honorable Forbes Burnham  
Prime Minister  
Government Building  
Brickdam  
Georgetown, Guyana

Dear Sir:

I have been asked by the People's Temple to convey my impression of them and their work to you. I am happy to do so.

I believe their church is one of the most important organizations in California. It combines strongly progressive social policies with a spirituality that makes our common humanity felt rather than simply known as an abstraction. The shortcomings of pure politics is precisely that it does not have content. The limits of pure spirituality are that it removes people from the world rather than connecting them with it. It seems to me that their efforts to combine the material and the spiritual into real existence, to effectively recognize the humanity of all races and ages, to realize the capabilities of everybody, to take care of each other and to take responsibility for the world in which they live, follows the grain of what must be done to build a fully human world.

I have attended three of their services, the first over ten years ago in a remote rural section of California where I worked as a researcher and therapist in a large mental hospital. Their services are a unique blend of joyous music, intensely focused concern for suffering individuals, and attacks on the injustice that is part and parcel of our social order. I have known members of the church and one who left the church; he was a former drug addict who felt that he had gained immeasurably by his association with the People's Temple. I have also followed their work on behalf of people who were being unjustly treated and seen their efforts to unify the poor and dispossessed of this country into an effective force. They are a warm, energetic, and progressive group of people.

In my judgement, the Agricultural Mission in your country established by the People's Temple is a fortunate blend of healthy development and a frontier for many people who were locked into destructive lives of passivity and despair in the land of their birth. You have my respect and best wishes.

Very truly yours,

Michael R. Snedeker  
Attorney at Law

cc: Deputy Prime Minister  
cc: Parliament

1315 EIGHTEENTH STREET • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94107 • PHONE (415) 648-2880

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