

KLIL - 5/6/73

JJ: My children have been threatened. An animal was beaten to death; one cat was killed, another one was hunged that hapened to belong to a neighbor of mine, I'm going back over some time. This very week a call came through the San Francisco Temps....saying they were going to get my children at 12 o'clock, knowing that my children weren't home. We made the report to the San Francisco law enforcement people; our church has been ~~threatened~~ threatened to be dynamited. We are in a violent era. It disturbs me. I know it probably is no more than an article, it certainly is....but if we don't do something about this anarchistic tendency I think it will break the spirit of this great Republic.

C: You mentioned the violence to animals, were these demonstrations that were put on at your church or near your church?

JJ: Probably not having our church properly guarded which we now have it guarded night and day, 24 hours a day, they got into the animal shelter and did this brutality to our animals, senseless brutality. I'm overwhelmed, I'm speechless that people would take their vengeance out against me by hurting little animals or threatening my adopted children, the several adopted children I still have in my home. The threats are incredible. They don't seem to mind who they threaten. They called the rest home, where we're submanaging. We believe in a kind of innovative program in one of our senior citizen homes where the older people run their own affairs, do their own cooking and only call on ~~us~~ us for nursing personnel and other professional people as resources and then of course we do the heavy domestic work. We have a lady there by the name of Mrs. LeTourneau you probably have heard of the LeTourneau family, a very prominent caucasian family, they called up and threatened this woman by name, an 86-year-old woman, threatened her! Now this is absurd. If they have an issue with me, I am a fearless individual, I'll be glad to meet anyone and talk with them, whatever their opinion, however hostile, if they would sit down as the old prophet Isaiah said and let us reason together, but this is ridiculous and it is horrendous, they can threaten innocent people all around me, and all I am guilty of is presenting my views as I see them, and I think we're guaranteed that as last I remember by Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Assembly or Right to our Religious Convictions.

C: This is what I am trying to accomplish here. I'm hoping that through our conversation we can shed a little bit of light on the situation and perhaps help some people to understand. Maybe we can do some of that if you could give us a little bit of your background perhaps, how you happen to come to Redwood Valley, where you came from. I think people..well I'll speak for myself, I know little more than the news.

JJ: I see. Well, for instance we were supposed to have been run out of Indiana. We came to this area because as you have noticed in recent articles, the Los Angeles Times for instance, take quite a coverage of the rides of the Ku Klux Klan and that they have open cross burning meetings in our city. Having adopted minority children, children who were fathered by service men abroad, as well as caucasian children a multiracial family was under constant threat, but contrary to being run out the city of Indianapolis, a statement of the editorial of the Indianapolis Times...on the week of my departure was: Reverend James Jones will be sorely missed as Executive Secretary of the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights. He was hired after a long search. He was superb. He went about his job diplomatically and thoroughly and produced the greatest results possible. We received an editorial also in the other paper which is a much more conservative paper, THE STAR, WHICH Did pick up Mr. Kinsolving's, part of his articles, not of course knowing his sources again. His sources were totally unreliable and went to the degree of sending on his information there. But we ~~are~~ have the best relationship with the leadership, ecumenical leadership of Indiana and

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community leadership, and we came here with the hope that Californians having Indians here, all racial groups, a pretty cosmopolitan mixture, that we could have some peace. And I've lived in the inner city being a governmental employee as well as a pastor. We had a ghetto church that served 2,000 free meals to the poorest of people for 13 long years and you might say we were tired from the battle and my children, I've somewhat placed them on the altar of community service. So some of us...decided we would like to relocate and establish our church here, not proselytize, no one in this community can ever say that we rapped on a door or gone house to house trying to win anyone. People who have come to our church have come a desperate world of drugs and they have been rehabilitated, 140. Our people dont use drugs, even alcohol or tobacco. We've been told repeatedly from law enforcement up and down this state that once a person unites with our church they've never had any trouble with the law thereafter. We are law-abiding people. If this world were made up as good a people as we are, there would be peace. There would be no alienation. We are inclusive, we have Jewish, we have christians of all variety, we have blacks. Another fear I hear constantly, one of our local pastors who has been very supportive said, Jim, it all boils down to one thing, the fear of the unknown. Every black person they see they think is a member of your church, and indeed I see a lot of black people in the community I do not know. Actually the Redwood Valley church is 90 percent caucasian. We have very few blacks who have settled in this area. Our black people are in San Francisco who have jobs that far surpass anything they could get here, and there ~~is no intention~~ is no intention of moving blacks in, for the reason they dont want to move in, they certainly have the right to live here if they chose, but as this pastor says there is a great deal of racism and fear, ~~as he said~~ it all boils down to that race question. There is a fear that we are going to be blanketed with hundreds of black people. I think we have 12 black business people here and I think about 25 black residents. Not that's not hardly a threat to a community. It's the unknown we fear. I understood one person who is an executive in the lumber industry, he said they used to tell us in the lumber industry they were going to bring in 5,000 blacks and that rumor has passed through down the years, and I really believe in being objective, I dont think there is any subjective thing in this, much of this is this fear because we are inclusive that we are going to somehow bring in hundreds and hundreds of black people which we would not do to the black people in the first place, and we certainly wouldnt do an economic picture. We have enough of a depressed economic problem and our people are gainfully employed. It's been hard to get jobs. We dont have a person that's a shirker in our midst. They're good workers, had workers ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ so our employers tell us we do ~~xxxxxxx~~ a good job, but jobs are not that plentiful ~~and~~ we have no itention of moving people in here.

C: From what you are saying, however, it seems quite clear that ^{at} the root of your controversy the difficulty seems to be the racial issue:

J: I'm afraid so. I'd hoped America had grown up in these years of violence where we have seen a number of civil rights leaders killed and it has been questioned that maybe even President Kennedy was killed because he was a man of peace. I would hope that this had gotten through, and indeed to pastors of churches here. It has. I could name names but I dont want any more trouble I've mentioned to you. Some of the individuals we have been supporting. But leadership in this community is not lacking as far as trying to bring understanding. But somehow it doesn't get to the grass roots... because we have many supportive friends who make their feelings known, I dont mean supportive in any material way, we get absolutely no outside help for our program and we with some of our funds help the cancer society, other kinds of groups that administer to the physical handicap, handicapped individuals. The Chronicle just wrote a very good article saying that we were widely known

and respected for our social services and we reach out to community projects of other denominations even. We are very generous and charitable people, not to mention we educate 109 of our own people, two of them now under total scholarship by our church and medical science. And then to think of the vast number of we take care of who are senior citizens and children whom we have guardianship for who have not a penny of support who are sent from troubled areas. I think an unknown factor too is that magnify is that every black they see belongs to our church, which is not true, and then the one person called me from a phone station said a black person

was very uncouth there, and I said that black person doesn't fit any kind of description. Another one called me very hatefully two weeks ago and said a black person was beating a horse, I said none of our black people own a horse and no black person that you described in my parish lives in the vicinity so whoever this black person may or may not have not been it was not a member of Peoples Temple Christian Church, and so I think we are afraid of that; every time a black person does something, and black people are just humans like Methodists, Catholics, Irish they're going to be bad and good. So when they see someone do something that is abnoxious and anti-social they immediately conclude that they are members of Peoples Temple, and not once yet have we had a report of an anti-social act that that person was a member of our Temple.

C: Can you give some indication of the size of the membership of your church?

JJ: To be accurate I couldn't, it's a growing church particularly in the metropolitan area. We have a vast membership in Los Angeles, about 2,000 here I suppose, 3,000 in San Francisco, 4,000 in Los Angeles. We are an active church. We take care of our own people in the tradition of the scripture that says ~~take~~ take care first the household of the faith and we believe that the church if it would do this more there would be less danger of the increasing tentacles of big government bureaucracy. This frightens us. Some people think of us, again I think conspiratorial communistic group. We have had people call me a commie lover, we're going to kill you, this and the other. If there were any more anti-bureaucratic or big government or imperialistic or communistic fascist group than ours I don't know how it could be. Now indeed we are utopianists in the terms of the Acts of the Apostles. When they received their Baptism ~~of~~ of the Holy Spirit or their ineffable union with Christ, they shared and shared in that way, but again we don't have people transferring property to us, they're not willing us anything. We take offerings in routine ways. We have projects like every other church, just taking from our people--we give far more than we take, but being that we are united and very supportive of each other sets up the traps in this day of alienation.

C: I think Reverend Jones one of the criticisms, accurately or not, that many people seem to discuss and that is the belief that you're getting rich, and then if not you personally then your church somehow from your methods.

JJ: Well if we're getting rich, you see a church that is underwriting we have one case where we have someone on dialysis who have no funds, we have paid the hospital bill locally of one member who wasn't in...he's not very friendly to the church but his wife is a good member. He was generous enough to let her come to church. They've not given much money really, but we've paid a \$300 hospital bill. We've paid veterinarian bills, we've paid back rents of people who were some way even indirectly related to this church. We buy locally, we are a tremendous boost to the economy of this community, and generous--\$5,000 went for ecumenical charities through Southern California last month, \$5,000 to Dr. Irwin and the Christian Churches of Northern California of last month, a thousand dollars to Jewish welfare agencies and when I said we've had retarded children

we helped a local couple I didn't even know, it was on the front page of the newspaper, who was fighting for custody of a little child that had become like their own and they didn't have legal fees. We didn't even bother, we just asked the local news media if they would channel it very quietly or find out first if they would receive it, and we gave seven hundred dollars to help them in their legal battle. You would be amazed at what we do locally. If we were to pull out of this community there would be an economic depression and a lot of people would be in hardship. We're not trying to accumulate wealth, we are service minded people, indeed we have to have a backlog of resources in order to maintain 109 students. You don't educate 109 students in college on a shoestring, neither can you take care of senior citizens who don't have any funds. We don't impose people to remain that way, if they choose to go on welfare that's fine, but we have very few of our people in proportion, I would imagine we have less on welfare than any church of this size by far.

C: ~~Anybody~~ When you begin to talk about the effect on the ~~local~~ local economy, how many people did you say you have locally?

JJ: In the total region here, I would say around 2,000 people, that would include some from Lake Port. Good job of supporting and they by locally. We run an ad in the paper a couple of Christmases to buy, support local businesses, and we do that and we do it conscientiously. So I think if people woke up, if we were pulled out of this community there would be a terrible, terrible loss to a lot of businesses and a hurt to the economy.

C: Are you having any thoughts in that direction? Yes I have anticipated it in the past, but I'm not a person to run under fire. The worst way to get me...our church's centers are outside, they're bigger in Los Angeles and San Francisco. I have contemplated it, my people do not wish to, I would not dream of trying to move 2,000 people. No. ~~That's my headquarters~~ But my headquarters may become increasingly...pointing toward a metropolitan area, but I would never move under fire because that represents a trend. Other good people then would suffer accordingly. If people... if biggots, or even poorly informed people who are frenzied from their own fear and paranoia, if they can achieve running people out that way, no good person is safe so I don't work that way, I'd rather die than run under fire.

C: Reverend Jones our time has run out, perhaps we can explore our Peoples Temple Church a little further next week when we continue our discussions.