The Pursuit of Love: An Emotional History of Peoples Temple and Jonestown, 1955-1978.

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Statement of Originality.

I, Connor Ashley Clayton, confirm that the research included within this thesis is my own work or that where it has been carried out in collaboration with, or supported by others, that this is duly acknowledged below, and my contribution indicated. Previously published material is also acknowledged below.

I attest that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original and does not to the best of my knowledge break any UK law, infringe any third party's copyright or other Intellectual Property Right, or contain any confidential material.

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Abstract.

This thesis presents an emotional history of Peoples Temple, an American new religious movement made infamous by the mass murders and suicides of more than nine hundred of its members in Jonestown, Guyana, on 18 November 1978. It offers a novel intervention into the field of modern religious history by introducing the methods and language of the history of emotions to the study of the alternative religious and social movements of the twentieth century. An original study both in method and scope, the thesis explores the way Peoples Temple functioned as a distinctive emotional community with a unique set of emotional standards, expectations, prescriptions, and proscriptions. Utilising an approach which understands emotions-as-practice, the thesis relies upon a careful qualitative analysis of hundreds of hours of audiotapes produced by the group which capture religious sermons, organisational meetings, and other aspects of collective and daily life within the community. By reviewing these sources, the thesis demonstrates the development of the community's emotional standards and the practices through which members were expected to navigate, curate, and refine their inner emotional worlds in tune with these standards.

The thesis demonstrates how an approach guided by the history of emotions can deepen our understanding of new religious movements in the twentieth century by looking for evidence of emotional standards and the practices which instantiate them within the archival record left by such groups. In doing so, the thesis offers an original concept discussed as "emotional frameworks" as a heuristic device for mapping and interpreting the ways in which institutions (in this case, an organised social movement) develop emotional norms and standards which often support, but can equally hinder, their overarching goals. By exploring the history of Peoples Temple and Jonestown as a case study in this effort, the thesis identifies a major historiographic opportunity for historians exploring new religious movements or "cults" in the modern world.

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Introduction.

> I've got people who see me on every kind of level, and whosoever loveth– if people are kind and gentle and they practice the great ethics of the Judeo-Christian tradition or the ethics of love general - they're welcome in here. These doors are open to everyone that loves. I should say these doors are welcome to everyone who are trying to love, because most of us are just getting to know a little bit about love.[1]

Speaking to a congregation gathered within a Los Angeles church in 1973, Pastor James Warren Jones (1931-1978) defined his Peoples Temple as a community predicated upon one fundamental emotion: love. Far from a nebulous ideal limited only the realm of rhetoric, however, the middle-aged minister from Indiana emphasised that love was not merely an ideal but a practice – a continuous, active effort to not only *feel* love but to *be* loving in deed as much as thought. His Peoples Temple, by extension, was a religious community whose membership was not formed on the basis of specific doctrine or belief; rather, the doors of the Temple remained open to those willing to learn about, and practice, love.

This emphasis on love as an emotional, ethical, and moral standard to be striven for, pursued, and realised in practice was central to the identity of Peoples Temple. It shaped the way members interacted with each other and with those outside of the movement; it informed the ways the community engaged in social and political activism; and it provided an emotional framework within which individuals were expected to navigate their personal feelings and experiences in light of the standards of the community. As Temple members laboured to meet the demands of love, they engaged in physical practices intended to refine, cultivate, express, and reinforce the love that was expected of them. This love, of course, was a dynamic feeling-idea which changed over time; and what began as a reflection of Christian love (*agape*) concluded as a very different kind of political sentiment in which love became a synonym to socialism.

The members of Peoples Temple pursued love across America, from Indiana to San Francisco before this pursuit culminated in the construction of an experimental, utopian settlement in the jungles of northwestern Guyana. The Peoples Temple Agricultural Project, more commonly known to its

[1] The Jonestown Institute, FBI Audiotape Q964 (18 December 1973). *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown and Peoples Temple* digital archive [jonestown.sdsu.edu].

architects and residents as Jonestown, represented an intentional community organised on affective principle: a society which, at least nominally, was structured around love as a guiding emotional and ethical ideal. However, Jonestown also came to represent the terminus of this pursuit when, struggling with internal pressures and external crises, the community began to unravel, and love lost its position of centrality. In an atmosphere of increasing paranoia, hysteria, anger, and fear, love failed to hold Jonestown together; and on 18 November 1978, more than nine hundred of the community's residents – including Jones – died in an act of mass murder and suicide which appeared to the world to be anything but loving.

This thesis explores the contentious history of Peoples Temple from an original perspective informed by recent work conducted in the History of Emotions. It approaches Peoples Temple as a discrete emotional community with its own values, norms, and standards of emotional expression and behaviour. It explores the way the Temple's love changed over time and the way this emotion influenced the practices and beliefs of the organisation, whilst also examining the traditions and sources from which this syncretic understanding of love was formed. In clarifying the importance of love redefined to the members of Peoples Temple, it seeks to illuminate an emotional environment that could be both deeply nurturing liberating whilst, at the same time, profoundly controlling and restrictive.

The following thesis presents an emotional history of Peoples Temple between the years of 1955 and 1978, offering a revised approach to traditional interpretations of the movement that died in Jonestown. The narrative device through which this analysis is structured and presented is described as the "pursuit of love." This narrative structure has been consciously selected for two distinct reasons. The first reason has been outlined already: love occupied an elevated and central position within the pantheon of feeling offered by Peoples Temple, the most important standard upon which membership within the community was predicated. Put differently, love was the raison d'etre which bound thousands of diverse individuals together into a coherent movement. As such, to explore the history of Peoples Temple as a pursuit of love reflects an attempt to read the history of this complicated movement "along the archival grain," that is, to attempt to reconstruct events as they

were experienced by those involved by prioritising the voices preserved in the archive.[2] In doing so, it seeks to deconstruct what has become a largely overdetermined popular narrative which begins, and ends, in the jungles of Guyana.

The second reason that this thesis' narrative device describes the history of Peoples Temple as a "pursuit of love" is that it also presents opportunities for critical, dialectical analysis. Whilst love was the central emotion around which Peoples Temple established a collective identity and organised religious, social, and economic practices, the archival record is replete with expressions of communal anger, hatred, fear, and paranoia which increase in frequency and expression as one moves towards November 1978. Each of these feelings, as with love, was uniquely defined, felt, and expressed within the community at different points in time and by different actors; undergoing shifts, changes, and both impacting and being impacted by the contextual environments in which Peoples Temple operated. As will be made clear, the Temple's pursuit of love created an affective environment which not only allowed for expressions of great anger, hate, and fear; but more importantly, *justified* such emotions. To describe the Temple's history as a collective pursuit of love is not to neglect the varieties of emotions and their expressions within the source record, but to contextualise them in light of the broader emotional framework which justified or restrained them.

It may therefore be clear, but is worth emphasising, that the following work in no way represents an *apologia* for the crimes of Peoples Temple. It seeks to understand, to analyse, but not to justify or condone the violence and abuses perpetuated by those within the movement, up to and including the murders of three hundred children and an unknowable number of adult victims. This thesis represents an attempt to synthesise a sympathetic, yet critical, history of a contentious alternative religious movement. As much as it provides a considered appraisal of the successes, accomplishments, and achievements of the community and those within it, it also departs from a purely relativist stance by condemning the emotional suffering which many within the community were subject to, the echoes of which reverberate throughout the archival record.

[2] I was introduced to the concept of reading "along the archival grain" through Kim Wagner's *Amritsar 1919: An Empire of Fear and the Making of a Massacre* (Yale University Press, 2019) p. xxiii; citing Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Thinking Through Colonial Ontologies* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

In doing so, this thesis offers a novel interpretation of Peoples Temple and Jonestown from the perspective of the History of Emotions. It explores the ways in which the community negotiated normative definitions of certain emotions, which feelings they deemed to be most important and why, and the practices through which these feelings were named, communicated, mobilised, and regulated. It examines the ways in which the members of Peoples Temple could navigate personal emotion as oriented by the normative standards of their community, and the ways in which these standards were prescribed and demonstrated in communal life. It demonstrates the centrality of feeling to Peoples Temple as a social movement, inherently enmeshed within the social, authoritative, and economic structures of the community.

The history of Peoples Temple and Jonestown is a story of both paradise found and paradise lost. It encapsulates the utopian longing that often lays at the heart of the dispossessed and disaffected, an experiment in achieving a *communitas perfecta* which eventually overwhelmed and consumed its participants in a dystopian conclusion. It is, at its core, a distinctively *emotional* history; one in which emotions were of fundamental concern to the historical actors on which this study focuses but, equally, one which can inspire strong emotions and feelings among observers today. This thesis hopes to offer a narrative which, whilst remaining analytically focused on the emotions of its subjects, also accounts for and encourages a range of emotional responses among its present-day readers. In doing so, this thesis aims to cultivate an empathetic, if not sympathetic approach to the history of Peoples Temple as a way of bridging the gap between past and present.[3]

Where is the Love? Emotions and Jonestown Scholarship.

Emotions have featured prominently in narratives and analyses of Peoples Temple and Jonestown ever since 18 November 1978, although the emotions, feelings, and sentiments highlighted often vary from perspective to perspective and person to person. Popular narratives formed in the wake of the tragedy at Jonestown have often highlighted the role of fear within Peoples Temple, particularly once the community had migrated to Guyana. On the one hand, the reality of fear dominates the personal

[3] Here, I take direction from Andrew J. Huebner, "Writing History with Emotion," *The American Historian,* Organisation of American Historians. www.oah.org/tah/august/writing-history-with-emotion accessed 10/05/24.

narratives of survivors, former members, and apostates for one simple reason: theirs are the voices who survived the events of 18 November. On the other hand, these narratives are often overrepresented for precisely the same reason: those who might have offered an alternative perspective died in Jonestown.

For survivors of the tragedy and apostates, fear is the most prominently recalled emotion in memoirs, autobiographies, and reflective writings. For example, Deborah Layton's *Seductive Poison* (1998) emphasised the role of fear in the author's personal experiences: "Old tapes are running in my head. Memories pole-vault me backward into fear and insanity," Layton recounts early in her memoir.[4] Similarly the late Jeannie Mills, in her book *Six Years with God* (1979), emphasised the role fear played in her decision to leave Peoples Temple alongside her husband long before the community migrated en masse to Guyana, describing herself and her partner as "prisoners of fear and depression."[5] Even in the days immediately following the massacre, media offerings coalesced around the narratives of fear described by survivors and former members, as one article in the *New York Times* exemplified with its title: "Anguished Mother Tells How Fear Controlled Cult."[6]

It is not that narratives of fear were incorrect in their characterisation of life in Jonestown – fear was a very real and increasingly prominent aspect of the Temple's emotional milieu – but that these narratives now form much of what the public knows about Peoples Temple and Jonestown to the exclusion of other facets of life. As cultural products in an age dominated by visual media, documentaries often act as prime agents in the shaping of collective memory.[7] Peoples Temple and Jonestown have been the subject of several documentaries in the years following 1978, yet recent titles demonstrate the limitations of such popular narratives. For example, a 2018 British Broadcasting Company production bears the title *Jonestown: Terror in the Jungle*, whilst an even more recent offering produced by Hulu is titled *Cult Massacre: One Day in Jonestown* (2024).[8] In both cases, fear

[4] Deborah Layton, *Seductive Poison: a Jonestown Survivor's Story of Life and Death in the Peoples Temple* (New York: Anchor Books, 1998) p. 2.
[5] Jeannie Mills, *Six Years with God: Life Inside Reverend Jim Jones's Peoples Temple* (A&W Publishers, 1979) p. 43.
[6] Les Ledbetter, "Anguished Mother Tells How Fear Controlled Cult," *The New York Times* (21 November 1978).
[7] Gary R. Edgerton and Peter C. Rollins, *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age* (University Press of Kentucky, 2001).
[8] Shan Nicholson (dir.), *Storyville, Jonestown: Terror in the Jungle*. *Sundance TV* (2018); Marian Mohamed (dir.), *Cult Massacre: One Day in Jonestown. National Geographic* (2024).

is highlighted as a dominant narrative emotion and, again in both cases, a communal history spanning more than two decades is reduced to a single day. In a recent media analysis, Susannah Crockford has convincingly argued that the Jonestown story – recast and retold on television – has shaped the way modern American society tends to view all experimental religious communities, including those who differ quite dramatically from Peoples Temple.[9]

The history of Peoples Temple is intimately linked with broader discussions of what are often called "cults," which are alternative or new religious movements often viewed with derision or suspicion by the media and public. Although Peoples Temple did not feature in the anti-cult literature prior to 1978, after Jonestown virtually no discussion of alternative religions can be found without some reference to Peoples Temple or Jonestown.[10] Beginning in the sixties and continuing well into the present day, societies around the world have increasingly enveloped themselves in a fierce cultural debate over the role and nature of alternative religious communities within their midst. Historian of Religion Eugene V. Gallagher has termed this period of cultural conflict the "Cult Wars," describing the period as one in which "Members and supporters of innovative groups eagerly promoted the new truths that they have discovered at the same time that parents of members, ex-members, and their allies have sounded alarms about the damage that such groups do to their participants."[11] In this regard, the historical example of Peoples Temple seemed to confirm the worst fears of anti-cult activists whom, from 1978 onwards, eagerly glimpsed echoes of Jonestown in groups as diverse as Scientology, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Moonies, and more.[12]

As much as Peoples Temple have been the subjects of dramatization and simplification, a growing body of work has emerged in the decades following November 1978 that has sought to deepen our understanding of the community. One popular work is deserving of special mention here. Tim Reiterman's journalistic history of Peoples Temple, *Raven* (1982), offers a far more empathetic

[9] Susannah Crockford, "How Do You Know When You're In a Cult?: The Continuing Influence of Peoples Temple and Jonestown in Contemporary Minority Religions and Popular Culture," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* Vol. 22 No. 2 (2018) pp. 93-114.
[10] Eileen Barker, "Religious Movements: Cult and Anticult Since Jonestown," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 12 (1986) pp. 329-346.
[11] Eugene V. Gallagher, '"Cult Wars" in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries,' in Gallagher (ed.) *'Cult Wars' In Historical Perspective: New and Minority Religions* (London: Routledge, 2017) pp. 1-6.
[12] Rebecca Moore, "Godwin's Law and Jones' Corollary: The Problem of Using Extremes to Make Predictions," *Nova Religio* Vol. 22 No. 2 (2018) pp. 145-154.

and humanising account of Temple history than any news media representation before it. From the outset of the work, Reiterman stated his desire to "express the humanity of the members – including Jones; to make them into real people for the first time." In the print-media, he continued, "they had been treated as insensitively as their bodies were handled after the holocaust; as worthlessly ignorant victims of a conniving minister-turned-madman."[13] Although not without fault, the work remains one of the most rigorously researched and sympathetic accounts of the history of Peoples Temple.[14]

Academics have increasingly acknowledged the importance of emotion to Peoples Temple as a community invested in sentiment and feeling. In the first monographic study of the Temple, Judith Weightman's *Making Sense of the Jonestown Suicides* (1983), Weightman pushed back against simplistic narratives that caricatured the victims of Jonestown as merely brainwashed cultists. She argued that it was not brainwashing, but a process of socialisation that enabled the outbreak of tragic violence that claimed more than nine hundred lives. "The mass suicide of the members of Peoples Temple was an act meaningful to them," Weightman suggested, before continuing "The problem is to discern in the practices of the Temple the ways in which such a belief could be inculcated."[15] Whilst Weightman's analysis did not centre around emotion as an independent factor, the author does mention emotion at several points. This includes within her discussion of healing, in which she distinguished emotional from physical healing as part of the Temple's main attraction to potential members and attendees.[16] In her discussion of coercion within the Temple, Weightman similarly distinguished physical from emotional coercion indicating the distinct importance of emotion within the Temple's social processes and the link between realised power dynamics and emotion.[17] Although Weightman's analysis bore problems, she was generally correct in her assumption that the collective suicide of the group held meaning to them – a meaning which was *felt* as much as *known*.

Weightman's initial and laudable first effort in analysing Peoples Temple in any real depth was followed by what remains the most important work in the genre. In 1987, Sociologist John R.

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[13] Tim Reiterman and John Jacobs, *Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People* (E.P. Dutton Publishers, 1982) p. 4.
[14] Rebecca Moore, *Peoples Temple and Jonestown in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2022) p. 4.
[15] Judith Weightman, *Making Sense of the Jonestown Suicides: A Sociological History of Peoples Temple* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1983) p. 10.
[16] Weightman, *Making Sense of the Jonestown Suicides*, pp. 75-76.
[17] Weightman, *Making Sense of the Jonestown Suicides*, pp. 148-9.

Hall published *Gone from the Promised Land: Jonestown in American Cultural History* which, in 2006, was described as "the most accurate, complete, and factual discussion of Peoples Temple of any account in print."[18] Just as with Weightman's work, *Gone from the Promised Land* was prefaced as a fierce rebuttal of any simplistic or sensational accounts which had found life from America's printing presses. Rejecting popular narratives which caricatured Jones as an evil madman capable of brainwashing a thousand souls, Hall instead suggested that academics should "explore the social processes by which Peoples Temple emerged. Perhaps what happened… can be better explained on the basis of wider social and cultural currents than by the particular personality of the group's leader."[19]

The most important contribution of *Gone from the Promised Land*, aside from situating Peoples Temple firmly within historical American cultural and religious traditions, was the argument made by Hall that "the carnage [at Jonestown] has to be understood as the product of the conflict that emerged between Peoples Temple and the people who came to call themselves the 'Concerned Relatives.'"[20] This bitter conflict had provided the stage for an apocalyptic showdown, and became fulfilled as the community in Jonestown and the Concerned Relatives each became increasingly hostile and suspicious of the other. For Hall, the outbreak of violence could not be understood outside of this interaction. This argument – that religious violence is the product of interactions between religious movements and their opponents – would be further developed in later essays and books penned by Hall, alongside Philip D. Schuyler and Sylvaine Trinh. In *Apocalypse Observed* (2000) these three authors cast a wide comparative net to illustrate the fact that violence in religious movements does not arise based on internal factors alone, such as the psychology or will of the leader; rather, religious violence is a product of interaction between these groups and their opponents – real and perceived – in the wider world.[21]

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[18] Moore, Rebecca, 'Review Essay: Peoples Temple Revisited,' Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions, Vol. 10 No. 1 (August 2006) pp. 111-118 [112].
[19]John R. Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*: *Jonestown in American Cultural History*, (Transaction Publishers: New Jersey, 1989, 2nd ed) p. xviii.
[20] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 210; esp. Chapter 10 "The Concerned Relatives, the 'Concentration Camp,' and the 'Conspiracy'," pp. 210-53.
[21] John R. Hall with Philip D. Schuyler and Sylvaine Trinh, *Apocalypse Observed: Religious Movements and Violence in North America, Europe, and Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

In *Salvation and Suicide* (1988) David Chidester offered academics a "religio-historical" interpretation of Peoples Temple and the events at Jonestown, which has aged slightly less well than Hall's contribution to the field.[22] By conducting a close reading of Jones' sermons, Chidester sought to reconstruct the religious worldview of Peoples Temple as a movement. Presuming a homogenous worldview and theology to dominate the group, Chidester erred by assuming that the members of Peoples Temple uncritically accepted the religious viewpoints espoused by Jones for their own. Recent scholarship has demonstrated that far from a monolithic theology, the religious landscape of Peoples Temple was more diverse than a reading of Jones' sermons alone suggests. Rank-and-file members often accepted some viewpoints and beliefs whilst dissenting from others. Members ranged from committed pentecostalists to atheistic left-wing intellectuals. Some believed in reincarnation whilst others believed in absolute mortality. The sheer diversity of theologies has been described by researcher Holly Folk as "experiential pluralism."[23] Such an approach emphasises the diversity of viewpoints that were accounted for and accepted within Peoples Temple.

Although Chidester falls short of reconstructing the religious beliefs of the community as a whole, his analysis of Jones' theology was the first to appropriately position love as a fundamental value and orienting motif. For example, Chidester noted that "What Jones called the 'Divinity of Socialism' was manifested when love became the central principle for the ordering of society."[24] Later in the work, Chidester describes Peoples Temple as "a space defined by the atmosphere of love, healing, and socialism," yet little is done to clarify *how* an atmosphere of love was made manifest during Temple services.[25] Despite these shortcomings, Chidester's work remains vital for its early acknowledgement of the importance of love within the Temple environment – if only determined through Jones' sermons and rhetoric.

More recent scholarship on Peoples Temple has continued to examine the deaths at Jonestown alongside reinvigorated approaches to the lives of Temple members, too. This focus on the people behind the Temple has been pushed along by research into the demographics of the organisation,

[22] David Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide: Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown* (Indiana University Press, 1988).
[23] Holly Folk, "Divine Materiality and Messianic Theologies of Incarnation and Reincarnation," *Nova Religio* Vol. 22 No. 2 (2018) pp. 15-39.
[24] Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, p. 57.
[25] Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, p. 89.

including age, race, gender, and sexuality. Of these investigations, two merit special consideration within this review for their important contributions to the literature, from which this thesis builds directly upon. The first is an edited volume which examines Peoples Temple through the prism of African American religion, owing to the fact that almost 90% of the Jonestown dead were black Americans. The second is a monograph which alternatively has examined the role of gender within Peoples Temple, particularly within the upper echelons of female leadership and management.

The first work, *Peoples Temple and Black Religion in America* (2004) represented a watershed moment for how scholars examine Peoples Temple. Edited by Religious Studies scholars Rebecca Moore, Anthony B. Pinn, and Mary R. Sawyer, the selection of essays contained within each offer a unique perspective toward understanding Peoples Temple as a demographically and culturally black movement. Although the demographics of the Jonestown dead were relatively well known, within the introduction the editors emphasised that few scholars of religion have gone further to examine "in a substantive way the implications of these demographics."[26] In emphasising the cultural and religious practices of Peoples Temple as rooted in a deep heritage of Black Religion, Moore, Pinn, and Sawyer reframed much of what we know about Peoples Temple as a diverse collection of individuals.

Milmon F. Harrison's essay in *Peoples Temple and Black Religion*, titled "Jim Jones and Black Worship Traditions" provides an early and fascinating examination of the emotions which underlay the Temple's religious culture. Harrison, a sociologist of African American and African Studies, found that "the worship services at Peoples Temple were constructed around the model of the emotionally expressive Pentecostal tradition. The black style of worship shaped this tradition from its origins…"[27] Highlighting the role of music, song, dance, and the call-and-response style of oratory built between speaker and congregation, Harrison suggested (in Durkheimian fashion) that the services were constructs designed to "carry the entire assembly along to the goal: a sense of collective emotional catharsis."[28] In his analysis, Harrison builds upon research conducted by sociologist

[26] Rebecca Moore, Anthony B. Pinn, Mary R. Sawyer, *Peoples Temple and Black Religion in America* (Indiana University Press, 2004), esp. pp. xiii-xiv.
[27] Milmon F. Harrison, "Jim Jones and Black Worship Traditions," in *Peoples Temple and Black Religion in America,* pp. 123-138 [p. 129].
[28] Harrison, "Jim Jones and Black Worship Traditions," p. 130.

Timothy J. Nelson to demonstrate Jim Jones' leadership role in "the worship setting and his defining and reinforcing the range of acceptable expressive norms," a role which mirrors that of other Pentecostal African American religions.[29] In exploring the structure of the distinct emotional atmosphere which often suffused Temple service, Harrison took the first step in exploring the emotions of Temple congregants as historically-dependent and socially learned causal variables. In doing so, Harrisons research provided a fantastic orienting study for the present work by emphasising the unique emotionality of Peoples Temple's predominantly black American demographics.

Complementing studies from the perspective of race and ethnicity are studies which have examined the role of gender within the Temple. In Mary M. Maaga's *Hearing the Voices of Jonestown* (1998) the author examined the important and disproportionately large role of white women within the Temple's upper leadership circle; a role which had, Maaga argued, suffered three levels of erasure in previous analyses.[30] In her analysis of Peoples Temple, Maaga developed Ernst Troelstch's discrete definitions of *church* and *sect* as different kinds of religious organisation, suggesting that within the Temple three distinctive groups coexisted: a sect, a New Religious Movement or cult, and a church.[31]

One of Maaga's most important arguments is that following the move to Jonestown, Jones lost a degree of authority with his position becoming increasingly fragile – thus, power diffused and devolved among the upper cadre of white, female lieutenants. In Maaga's words, "the move to Jonestown actually constituted a move *away* from Jim Jones's control rather than toward greater dependence on him. Jones's power unravelled within his own movement and authority shifted … from a combination of Jones and his leadership circle to the leadership circle alone, specifically the women."[32] If Maaga is referring strictly to organisational authority, then to a degree she is correct in finding that Jim Jones became a liability rather than an asset to the movement"; however, in examining the emotional structures pervading daily life within Jonestown, this thesis suggests an amendment to Maaga's assertion. Whilst Jones may have lost some degree of authority in Guyana

[29] Harrison, "Jim Jones and Black Worship Traditions," p. 124.
[30] Mary McCormick Maaga, *Hearing the Voices of Jonestown*, (Syracuse University Press, 2018). Chapter 3, "The Triple Erasure of Women in the Leadership of Peoples Temple," pp. 32-54;
[31] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices*, Chapter 5 "Three Groups in One" pp. 74-86.
[32] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices*, p. 87.

owing to the devolution necessitated by such an expansive, utopian community, he gained an unparalleled amount of emotional authority, or the ability to elicit and channel idealised communal emotions and affective responses, a hypothesis which will be argued within the penultimate chapter of this work.

Maaga is among the closest authors within the Jonestown oeuvre in ascertaining the importance of emotion to social life within Peoples Temple: "My research into Peoples Temple demonstrates that emotions, sex, and love were elements in the involvement of many women..."[33] In her own review of the literature and commentary on the source material, she states "Multiple interviews with Grace Stoen and Stephan Gandhi Jones helped clarify a number of specific issues and revealed the emotional intensity of life in Peoples Temple, an aspect missing in most of what has been writing about Jonestown and an important factor in understanding the decision to commit suicide."[34] Chapter Four of *Hearing the Voices* deals with emotion more regularly than many other Temple works, with some exclusions. Maaga highlighted the emotion of *love* as an important force mediating the relationship between Jones and his female aides, as well as between those female aides and the recipients of their social works.[35] The practice and feeling of love, according to Maaga, offered women in Peoples Temple an opportunity which "enhanced both their power and that of Jim Jones," and that "sexuality and love in the Peoples Temple were expressions of loyalty and commitment between the women in leadership and Jones."[36] Although Maaga's analysis illuminates more about the relationships within the Temple's upper leadership than most other works, it falls short in expanding these emotional formulations in a broader sense to congregants and members in the rank-and-file, including women but particularly men.

Scholars generally tend to agree that life in Peoples Temple was an intensely emotional affair, yet to date no cohesive study on the development of emotional standards between 1955 and 1978 has been produced. In part, this is because the History of Emotions itself is a relatively young field, rising to prominence in the 1980s but with far older roots within the historical tradition. The following

[33] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices*, p. 19.
[34] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices*, p. 30.
[35] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices*, Chapter 4, "A Restoration of Women's Power in Peoples Temple," pp. 55-73.
[36] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices*, p. 73.

section explores a selection of literature from the History of Emotions to demonstrate the value of these recent trends in the study of Peoples Temple and other alternative religious groups.

Emotions, Religion, and History.

Beginning around the 1980s, the various disciplines which comprise the Humanities have undergone what has been varyingly referred to as an "emotional" or "affective" turn: a shift towards the considered study of human emotion as an independent variable across both the past and the present.[37] No longer contained to the nebulous and inaccessible realm of internal, personal experience, scholars in the humanities now more readily appreciate that emotions, feelings, sentiments, and moods – however each of those terms are defined – are fundamentally social in nature. They are learned, taught, and curated expressions which conform to explicit and implicit rules regarding their nature, quality, and appropriateness.

Jan Plamper's *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (2015) provides a more complete investigation of the historiography of emotions history than can be provided within this thesis.[38] Instead, the starting point of this review is the work of historians Peter N. and Carol Z. Stearns whose seminal article "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards" (1985) represented a landmark effort in the field.[39] Seeking to better understand the standards of emotional behaviour acceptable to any given society, the Stearnses articulated the concept of "emotionology," which they defined as:

> The attitudes or standards that a society, or a definable group within a society, maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression; ways that institutions reflect and encourage these attitudes in human conduct.[40]

To uncover these emotional standards, the emotionology approach would focus on prescriptive sources such as self-help literature and parenting manuals. Whilst emotionology served to illuminate

[37] D. Lemmings and A. Brooks, "The Emotional Turn in the Humanities and Social Sciences," in D. Lemmings, A. Brooks (eds.) *Emotions and Social Change: Historical and Sociological Perspectives* (Routledge: New York, 2014); Rob Boddice, "The Affective Turn: Historicizing the Emotions," in Cristian Tilegă and Jovan Byford (eds.) *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[38] Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2015).
[39] Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, p. 57.
[40] Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 90 No. 4 (1985) pp. 813-36 [813].

specific social standards regarding emotions, issues of representation also arise from the source-base owing to the fact that the vast multitude of historical actors were illiterate. Historian of Emotion and Medievalist Barbara Rosenwein argued such a critique of emotionology, suggesting that it had limited application outside of the modern period and the advent of advice manuals owing to the Stearns' strict rules for prescriptive emotionological sources.[41]

Alongside her critique of "emotionology" as a concept, Rosenwein proffered her own analytical device: "emotional communities." In Rosenwein's words, emotional communities are

> precisely the same as social communities – families, neighborhoods, parliaments, guilds, monasteries, parish church memberships – but the researcher looking at them seeks above all to uncover systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognise; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.[42]

Rosenwein emphasised that individuals could belong to, and move between, several emotional communities at any given time: religious congregations, workplaces, homes, unions - so on, so forth. Rather than being under the strict regulation of one overarching structure, individuals adjusted their behaviour and expressions of feeling according to the community, group, or location they were in at any given moment; thus, within the same society or community there may exist contradictory emotional norms and systems of feeling which individuals navigate and adjust to as a matter of daily living.[43]

Historian of the French Revolution William M. Reddy pursued a different approach in his impressive emotional study of eighteenth-century France. In *The Navigation of Feeling* (2001), Reddy developed a theory of emotions in order to provide a framework for research from which subsequent historians could shine new light on varying historical periods and communities. In particular, the innovative concepts of "emotives," "emotional regimes," "emotional refuges," and "emotional suffering" will be explored for their value as analytical tools.[44]

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[41] Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 107 No. 3 (2002) pp. 821-45.
[42] Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," p. 842.
[43] Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," pp. 842-3.
[44] These four terms are defined in Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling,* pp. 128-30.

Reddy's most prominent methodological offering is that of the emotive. Drawing from the work of J. L. Austin's Speech-Act Theory, which proposed that two types of utterance exist (performative and constative), Reddy proposed that a third kind of verbal utterance must be accounted for: the emotive. Where performative statements such as "I do" change the world, and constative statements describe something, emotive claims are statements about the speaker's emotions which can be descriptive and relational but have an important third characteristic, in that they can be "self-exploring" or "self-altering" in their intent.[45] Reddy describes emotives as fugitive, stressing that "it is never certain what effect they shall have," and "unexpected effects are sometimes costly."[46] It is for this reason that, in the process of saying "I love you", an individual may realise that their personal feelings do not, in fact, match their utterance – or, conversely, the emotive may fit the emotion, confirming and intensifying it. For Reddy, emotions are intrinsically linked to wider social, economic, and – importantly - political structures. Alongside the theory of emotives, Reddy offers the concept of "emotional regimes" for historians to better understand the relationship between emotional norms and political / cultural authority. In Reddy's words, emotional regimes are defined as:

> The set of normative emotions and the rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them; a necessary underpinning of any stable political regime.[47]

This concept is similar to Rosenwein's notion of emotional communities, albeit much more focused on the top-down, somewhat hegemonic institutionalisation of emotional norms by a political regime.[48] Where Reddy sought homogeneity, Rosenwein looks for heterogeneity; but the gulf between these two notions is not so vast. Jan Plamper has criticised the demarcation between these two concepts, arguing that the terminological vocabulary of the history of emotions is too new to begin making such distinctions, and that creatively combining these theoretical building blocks looks like a more promising course of action.[49]

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[45] William M. Reddy, "Sentimentalism and Its Erasure: The Role of Emotions in the Era of the French Revolution," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (March 2000), pp. 109-152 [p. 113].
[46] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, p. 122.
[47] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, p. 129.
[48] Rosenwein acknowledges the similarities shared between the two concepts in Barbara H. Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions', *Passions in Context*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (2010) pp. 2-32 [p. 22].
[49] Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, p. 70.

Reddy has also provided other conceptual advances for understanding the relationship between emotions and power. If or when an emotional regime becomes too restrictive, Reddy suggests that historical actors may seek out what he terms "emotional refuge." An emotional refuge may be "a relationship, ritual, or organisation (whether informal or formal) that provides safe release from prevailing emotional norms and allows relaxation of emotional effort, with or without an ideological justification, which may shore up or threaten the existing emotional regime."[50] For Reddy, institutions like salons and Masonic lodges offered emotional refuge from the "increasingly elaborate" honour code of 18th century France.[51]

Reddy's emphasis on emotives as a methodological tool has drawn some criticism from observant historians of emotion. For example, Rosenwein has argued that Reddy's focus on language was to the exclusion of other emotional expressions such as physical gestures, which may be more highly valued than words in some cultures.[52] In a similar vein, Plamper poses a unique thought experiment in questioning Reddy's logocentrism by inquiring as to whether the unspoken thought "I am happy", or a deliberate smile, would have the same emotive effect as a first-person emotion statement.[53] In short Plamper and Rosenwein have both questioning the primacy of language in analyses of emotion, suggesting that paying attention to the bodies of historical actors – in gestures, movements, actions, affects – might prove equally rewarding.

The most promising development in historical emotions method has come from German historian and anthropologist Monique Scheer, who has conceptualised an approach which accounts for and incorporates speech and physical acts in equal measure and is rooted in Practice Theory.[54] Echoing the logocentric critique of Reddy presented above, Scheer criticises the impact of language-based models of emotional analysis. The effect of such scholarship, Scheer argues, was that "thinking of emotion in this way made it like language, subject to conventions, learned from other members of a

[50] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, p. 129.
[51] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, p. 145.
[52] Rosenwein, Barbara H., 'Review of William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge University Press, 2001)', *American Historical Review,* Vol. 104 No. 4 (2002) pp. 1181-2. [1182].
[53] Plamper, *History of Emotions*, p. 261
[54] Monique Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion," *History and Theory* Vol. 51 No. 2 (May 2012), pp. 193-220; Plamper describes Scheer's approach as the "most promising development" of Reddy's theory in Plamper, *History of Emotions*, p. 265.

group, and deployed creatively." The problem here, as Scheer identified it, was that historians generally did not "interrogate the contribution of the body to emotional experience," thus making this experience seem "more or less determined by language."[55] Scheer's approach instead emphasises the "mutual embeddedness of minds, bodies, and social relations in order to historicise the body and its contributions to the learned experience of emotion."[56]

The practice-theory approach offered by Scheer is supported by an understanding of emotions as "embodied thoughts." In Scheer's words,

> Just as thoughts arise in connection with a perception or the processing of information, so do emotions arise as thoughts of the body, as elements of the body's knowledge and memory, as its appraisal of a situation. And like thoughts, emotions are active and passive in that they can be a more or less voluntary sentiment, but they can also emerge from the receptiveness that dispositions create.[57]

For Scheer, emotions are not passive features of human existence but instead are things that we practice with our bodies. Adopting the sociological definition of practice as "a nexus of doings and sayings," ranging from deliberate action to habituated behaviour, Scheer proposes that we view emotions as a kind of practice as well.[58]

In Scheer's method, emotions are inextricably linked to practice. Without some form of bodily expression – conscious or unconscious, internal or external – an emotion cannot be, by definition, described as an emotion. An emotional practice, such as the gritting one one's teeth in anger or the shedding of a tear, are "manipulations of body and mind to evoke emotions where there are none, to focus diffuse arousals and give them an intelligible shape, or to change or remove emotions already there."[59] Emotional practices include emotive speech acts but are far more expansive. They can include a wide range of gestures, habits, and actions ranging from listening to music to pensive thought. Scheer traces four kinds of "overlapping" categories of emotional practice

[55] Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?" p. 195.
[56] Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?" p. 199.
[57] Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?" p. 206.
[58] Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?" p. 200. Here, Scheer is cities Theodore R. Schatzki, *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 89.
[59] Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?" p. 209.

for historical consideration: mobilising practices, naming practices, regulating practices, and communicating practices.[60]

The History of Emotions is now entering a period of methodological sophistication and fluidity, with innovations in method and analysis being applied to different historical periods and cultures. With specific reference to the History of Religions, John Corrigan has recently commented on the diversity of method and application that has arisen, noting that "there is no simple way to categorize the current state of the field. Studies intersect in many ways, and it is good that we see, at this relatively early stage of a new phase of research on religion and emotion, where those intersections are and how they affect the overall project."[61]

Corrigan's own research has explored the intersection of emotions and religious community in American history. For Corrigan, a key observation has been that in certain religious contexts, "emotions performed collectively can be overwhelming in their power to shape belief and action."[62] Of equal importance, Corrigan has found that membership within certain religious communities has been predicated upon the expression of affection for one's fellow worshippers, as with the Shakers and Mormons, for example.[63] Perhaps more interestingly, yet with uncertain implications, Corrigan has also highlighted the importance of fear, anger, and hatred, as mixed emotions which might be considered as "the very essence of religious emotionality."[64]

Outside of the traditional focuses of Religious History, scholars of New Religious Movements, too, have begun to more readily appreciate the role of emotion within these groups and their relationships with their parent societies. Douglas E. Cowan's chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion* directly addresses this emergent trend. Cowan argues that "there is no universal pattern of emotional experience, response, or performance in NRMs. Rather, within each group a different 'emotionology' emerges, a different affective logic to which NRM members both express

[60] Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?" pp. 209-217.
[61] John Corrigan, "Religion and Emotions" in Peter N. Stearns and Susan J. Matt (eds.) *Doing Emotions History* (University of Illinois Press, 2014) pp. 143-163 [p. 144].
[62] John Corrigan, "Emotion and Religious Community in America," *Religion Compass*, Vol. 4 No. 7 (2010) pp. 451-61.
[63] Corrigan, "Emotion and Religious Community in America," p. 455.
[64] Corrigan, "Emotion and Religious Community in America," p. 455; citing Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: the Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture*, *13th—18th Centuries*, trans. Eric Nicholson (St. Martin's Press, 1990).

their feelings and understand the feelings they express, or, in some cases, seek to suppress."[65] Cowan suggests that scholars examining such movements should turn their attention to the role of emotions throughout the processes of affiliation-disaffiliation which individuals undergo throughout the course of their participation within these groups. The case of Peoples Temple offers a fantastic opportunity for such a study, along all of the axes which Cowan suggests merit further consideration: the role of emotion in recruitment, membership, and detachment; as well as the role of emotion and affect in the practices, discourses, and beliefs of such groups.[66]

Moving away from religion and toward society more generally, other important work in the field has addressed the development of emotional standards with an eye to large-scale change. Peter Stearn's monograph *American Cool* (1994), for example, historicises the emotions of twentieth century America. In the work, Stearns examines "a major change in American middle-class emotional culture, a change that took place between approximately the end of World War I and mid-century… *American Cool* exposes a major break in what have been called 'feeling rules.'"[67] The narrow field selected by Stearns, that of the American middle class, is representative of "a class culture that had a demonstrable influence on national culture," although this restrictive selection reminds us of Rosenwein's concerns about emotionology and class histories, as well as broader concerns about generalisation.[68] Stearns' central thesis is that in the twentieth century, a shift in the American national style occurred which saw the increasing regulation of intense emotional expressions as its defining feature: "it is the very un-Victorian suspicion of intense emotional experience, far more than a simple renunciation of Victorian repression, that forms the essence of the transition in American emotional culture."[69] Suspicion and derision of intense emotion became the defining features of America's emotional style from the 1920s onwards, argues Stearns. This "systematic constraint on intensity" represented the "bedrock of the new emotional regime."[70]

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[65] Douglas E. Cowan, "New Religious Movements," in John Corrigan (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion* (Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 125-140 [p. 126].
[66] Cowan, "New Religious Movements," pp. 130-133.
[67] Peter N. Stearns, *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth Century Emotional Style* (New York University Press, 1994) p. 2.
[68] Stearns, *American Cool*, pp. 2-4.
[69] Stearns, *American Cool,* p. 11.
[70] Stearns, *American Cool,* pp. 191-2.

Whilst Stearns' work represented an innovative application of emotionology and the beginnings of a modern American emotional history, the narrowness of his approach leaves more questions than answers. Although he confines his analysis largely to the American middle-class, the result is an investigation which is predominantly white in focus; African Americans do not feature prominently in *American Cool*. Despite being America's largest non-white demographic, they are mentioned only a handful of times throughout the piece. One comment by Stearns suggests the plausibility of enlightening future research in this area: "Public displays of intense emotion, and particularly negative emotion, were now signs of vulnerability, not desirable fervour. Subcultural styles that retained a higher degree of emotionality, as in African American politics, remained interesting but also somewhat foreign, outside the middle-class mainstream."[71] Although Stearns' analysis ends there, he does intone the possibility of an history of the American twentieth century which accounts fully for the place of emotion in its most tumultuous moments, from Jim Crow through to Civil Rights. How did this difference in emotionality between middle-class national and African American emotionologies influence the domestic issues of the twentieth century, particularly the Long Civil Rights Movement?[72] Did one kind of emotionology give some shape to the reception of the other? Stearns does not explore these issues further in *American Cool.*

The process of reconstructing an image of twentieth-century black American "emotionology" does take shape in a later volume edited by Stearns entitled *An Emotional History of the United States* (1998).[73] Chapter twelve consists of an essay written by Professor of History and American Studies Kimberly L. Phillips which traces the emotionology of African Americans churchgoers as it developed between 1900 and 1930.[74] Highlighting the emotionality of Gospel music, Phillips argues that this style of song allowed black working class men and women to articulate "through song and performance style some of their most deeply held beliefs and desires."[75] Although recent scholarship suggests a trend of quieting emotionality in mainstream or middle-class black congregations, Philips

[71] Stearns, *American Cool,* p. 260.
[72] Jaqueline Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History,* Vol. 91 No. 4 (March 2005) pp. 1233-1263.
[73] Peter N. Stearns and Jan Lewis (eds.) *An Emotional History of the United States* (New York University Press, 1998).
[74] Kimberly L. Phillips, "Stand by Me: Sacred Quartet Music and the Emotionology of African American Audiences, 1900-1930," in Stearns and Lewis (eds.) *An Emotional History of the United States*, pp. 241-258.
[75] Phillips, "Stand by Me," pp. 242.

suggests that "the separate and highly expressive religiosity that gospel reflected and incited reveals an emotional culture and a set of values that African American workers crafted for themselves."[76] The persistence of this emotionality survived in the working classes, who "instead of cleaving to models of middle-class decorum that discouraged emotion as central to worship, African American working-class men and women advanced their own conceptions of what was permissible to express and where such religious emotions could be expressed," and this could be found particularly in the Pentecostal churches.[77]

Considering the clear Pentecostal and Holiness heritage of Peoples Temple, as well as their reliance on song – religious, popular, and home-spun – the emotionality of the Temple's worship gains increasing cultural significance and will be examined in light of these broader cultural findings. Although later developments of emotionology are not traced – either in this chapter, or in the remainder of the volume – it does set the stage for understanding the historical importance of religion and song to working class African American emotional styles. Perhaps the most useful book in this regard is Lisa M. Corrigan's *Black Feelings* (2020) which explores African American affect throughout the 1960s onwards, addressing the broad gap left by Peter Stearns.[78]

Methodology and Sources.

Emotives and emotional practices; emotionology, emotional standards, emotional styles, emotional regimes, and emotional communities: there is no shortage of terms and concepts in the arsenal available to historians of emotion. Even at the most basic level of terminology – the use and distinction between "emotions," "affects," "sentiments," "passions," or "feelings" - historians can rarely seem to agree on the terminology of the trade.[79]

Whilst hesitant to contribute to further terminological confusion, this thesis does offer a heuristic device which aims to incorporate many of the above concepts under one rubric. Rather than emotional styles, regimes, or communities, this thesis instead discusses the ways in which Peoples

[76] Phillips, "Stand by Me," pp. 243.
[77] Phillips, "Stand by Me," pp. 254.
[78] Lisa M. Corrigan, *Black Feelings: Race and Affect in the Long Sixties* (University of Mississippi Press, 2020).
[79] Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Temple as an organization created a specific *emotional framework* that characterized affective life within the community. An emotional framework refers to the ways in which emotional standards are constructed, presented, and navigated by individuals who comprise different institutions.

An emotional framework is present in any given emotional community. The concept is synchronous with the Stearns' notion of *emotionology* and encompasses both Reddy's *regimes* and Rosenwein's *communities*. Emotional frameworks, however, better reflect the role played by such affective structures in supporting the other structures around which communities are built. A framework is something which is *built upon*, providing "a basic conceptual structure" which supports the smaller structures that comprise a building, say, or an institution as a whole.[80] Quite literally, emotions provide the framework around which many social movements are built, as the Sociologist James M. Jasper concluded in his thorough review of two decades of research into emotions and social protest movements.[81]

The role of a communities matrix of emotional standards and practices in supporting the broader conceptual structures of any given movement is a central aspect of the concept of emotional frameworks. This is to say that an emotional framework is intimately related to the economic, authoritative, and social structures of any given group. A group's emotional framework may interact with specific spaces and physical structures from which movements and groups operate. Spaces – churches, meeting halls, parliaments, homes, offices, etc. – both prime individuals and groups toward certain emotional orientations and have the capacity to evoke specific feelings or groups of feelings. Certain spaces may be emotionally significant to a group which inhabits or uses them; furthermore, in their layout, design, and aesthetic qualities they may amplify or evoke emotional motifs (or atmospheres) when used.[82]

As suggested by Cowan, all alternative religious movements have distinctive, unique emotional frameworks. Such movements and organisations naturally develop emotional standards and practices that reflect and support their structures and goals (although sometimes such norms and

[80] Mirriam Webster, "Framework," *Mirriam-Webster.com Dictionary*. merriam-webster.com/dictionary/framework
[81] James M Jasper, "Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 37 (April 2011), pp. 285-303.
[82] Benno Gammerl, "Emotional Styles – Concepts and Challenges," *Rethinking History* Vol. 16 No. 2 (2012) pp. 161-175.

practices may have adverse effects). An alternative religious movement can position itself as an emotional *refuge* in relation to its parent society, whilst developing a strict emotional *regime* of its own; this framework can consist of one or several competing emotional *styles*, some of which may have more institutional purchase or relevance than the others. Importantly, however, an emotional framework also guides the way its constituent *styles* interact with one another, with some frameworks more inclusive than others.

As a concept, *emotional frameworks* might be considered synonymous with another concurrent development within the history of emotions: the notion of *emotional templates*, proposed by Ute Frevert and Kerstin Maria Pahl. In their co-edited volume *Feeling Political: Emotions and Institutions since 1789* (2022) Frevert and Pahl trace the growth of political feeling (or political emotions) from the French Revolution through to the modern day; in doing so, they cover a broad swathe of territory with a focus on Europe and the United States. The authors advance the concept of *emotional templates* to underline how political institutions "provide guidelines for their members on how to feel and navigate emotions and taught them which to express and which to eschew, at what intensity and through which kinds of behaviour."[83] Emotional frameworks operate in much the same manner, providing a framework for feeling which guide participants in line with the standards of the community.

In looking for evidence of emotions and emotional norms, the present study approaches emotions as a kind of practice. It looks for evidence of emotional practice in the archival record, as well as looking for implicit and explicit pre-and-proscriptions relating to emotional behaviour and standards. It asks not only what the members of Peoples Temple understood about basic emotions and their normative expressions, but how they used their bodies in manifesting such emotional standards. To achieve this aim, this thesis presents a qualitative analysis of remarkable primary source base that has survived Peoples Temple and Jonestown.

This thesis represents the culmination of an analysis of hundreds of hours of audiotapes and thousands of pages of documents in an effort to reconstruct the emotional framework of Peoples

[83] Ute Frevert and Kerstin Maria Pahl (eds.), *Feeling Political: Emotions and Institutions since 1789*, (Springer International Publishing, 2022) p. 4.

Temple. These audiotapes and documents, produced between 1955 and 1978, capture the audial atmosphere of services, communal meetings, disciplinary occasions, and other aspects of communal life within Peoples Temple. These audiotapes were recovered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation from Jonestown following the events of 18 November 1978.Each of these tapes has received an FBI designation (Q followed by a number, i.e. Q900), which do not correspond to the content of the tapes nor the dates of their production, but rather the order in which they were collected and filed by FBI investigators in November 1978.

The vast majority of the sources used throughout this thesis are accessible from the largest digital archive of Peoples Temple material, the *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple* site, run by The Jonestown Institute and hosted by San Diego State University.[84] The site's managers, Rebecca Moore and Fielding McGehee III, have digitised thousands of Temple documents which were originally collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as they conducted their inquiries into the assassination of Congressman Ryan and the subsequent deaths within the commune itself. The archive is the result of Freedom of Information Access requests filed by Moore and McGehee, and digitised versions of almost every audiotape collected by the FBI are available for researchers to access. Many have already been transcribed, including several of which have been transcribed by myself in pursuit of answers. Alongside almost a thousand digitised audiotapes are thousands more scanned documents, some of which are also available within the California Historical Society's Peoples Temple Collection. Where applicable, the relevant reference to both archival locations is provided.

I also utilise numerous textual documents produced by members of Peoples Temple throughout this period: pamphlets, magazines, advertisements, and leaflets; as well as letters, memos, minutes, and other written materials. Many of these documents were similarly recovered by the FBI and compiled in what is referred to as the RYMUR collection, the Bureau's investigative repository. Where these sources are cited, the RYMUR identification will be listed alongside author, title, description, and date. Other primary materials of the same kind – primarily textual objects – were not

[84] The Jonestown Institute, *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown and Peoples Temple,* Digital Archive, accessible from: https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/

recovered by the FBI but are instead archived at the California Historical Society's *Peoples Temple Archive*. Where sources from the CHS are utilised, the appropriate collection and location has similarly been listed.

Throughout the piece, my analysis is supplemented by reference to the many autobiographies, memoirs, and reflective pieces written by Temple survivors over the last four decades. Many of these take the form of books, whilst others consist of shorter-form reflective articles uploaded and archived on the *Alternative Considerations* site. Although these sources are used liberally throughout the thesis, they do not form the main body of primary sources to be analysed owing to issues of historical distance and memory. Some works, for example, have been written over three decades after the events at Jonestown, and thus they tell us more about the historical memory of the participant than they do about the historical experience at hand.

Organization of the Study.

The following thesis is divided into three overarching sections, each of which corresponds to a different environment within which Peoples Temple existed. Section One, composed of two chapters, explores the formative history of Peoples Temple during its emergence in Indianapolis, Indiana. Section Two explores the history of the movement following the community's first major migration from Indianapolis to Redwood Valley, a suburb of Uriah, California, and the Temple's major expansions into the metropolis of San Francisco and Los Angeles. Section Three covers the movement's migration to, and conclusion in, Jonestown, Guyana: from the initial building of the community by a select group of self-styled 'pioneers' through to terminus and tragedy of 18 November 1978. In doing so the thesis aligns with the methodological orientation of recent works in the genre by exploring the history of Peoples Temple across the "three transformative environments in which the Temple operated: Indiana, California, and Guyana."[85]

Within Section One, Chapters One and Two explore the early formation of Peoples Temple as a Christian church in the Pentecostal tradition within Indianapolis' religious marketplace. Chapter

[85] Moore, *Peoples Temple and Jonestown in the Twenty First Century* p. 8.

One explores the importance of love to the early Peoples Temple with a primary focus on theology, underlining the centrality of love as a feeling-idea to the moral, ethical, and religious practices of the Temple. The work explores and analyses the theological underpinnings of love as presented in the New Testament and in Pentecostal practice, as well as the importance of Christian love to African American religious thinkers during the Civil Rights Movement. Chapter Two explores the development of Jones' charismatic authority throughout the Indianapolis period, offering a comparative perspective on the respective emotional frameworks of Peoples Temple and the International Peace Mission Movement, a contemporary influence on Jones' ministry and congregation. It highlights the nature and role of emotion within the charismatic relationship and clarifies the authority implicit in such a position to define and adjust the emotional standards maintained within the Temple's framework of feeling.

In Section Two, Chapter Three explores the development of love within Peoples Temple from a specifically religious equation (love as a tangible feeling and as a divine ideal) toward syncretic religious and political concept. It links this changing definition of love to shifting emotional practices intended to name, mobilise, and communicate this feeling, exploring how the practice of love was intimately related to the economic structures of Peoples Temple. In doing so, it demonstrates how the Temple's pursuit of love adapted in the new environments provided by California. Chapter Four examines the role of emotions within the Temple's public worship setting and emphasises the role of love, joy, and excitement in maintaining an atmosphere of collective emotional energy. Chapter Five concludes the California period by analysing the different emotional practices which characterised the Temple's private services which were restricted to committed members only. In this chapter the role of emotional catharsis, discipline, and punishment are contrasted against the public worship setting, illuminating the divergence of practice which occurred in public and private spaces.

Section Three explores the Temple's utopian experiment in Guyana from the initial construction of Jonestown between 1974 and 1977 to its tragic self-destruction in 1978. Chapter Six explores the process of building utopia, beginning with the symbolic construction of Jonestown as a Promised Land drawn from black American religious and cultural traditions. It provides a careful reading of an underexplored period of Temple history when, between 1974 and 1977, a small group of

Temple "pioneers" were sent to Guyana ahead of the main congregation with the specific intent of building utopia. It ultimately concludes that, in a voluntary project which relied upon motivations outside of material rewards, emotional fulfilment and satisfaction were fundamental motivations accounting for the initial success of the project. Chapter Seven addresses the period of Temple history following the mass migration of Jones and a thousand members of the congregation to Jonestown from Summer 1977 onwards, analysing the ways in which internal dynamics and external pressures coalesced into regular, recurring crises predicated upon the communal practice of specific emotions including fear, anger, and hate. Here, the Temple's abandonment of love as a guiding principle is analysed as a divergence and adjustment in the broader emotional framework which had important consequences for life, and death, in Jonestown.

Chapter Eight is the final chapter of this thesis which explores the role of emotions in the events of 18 November 1978. It analyses the emotional foundations of the concept of "Revolutionary Suicide," first proposed by Black Panther Huey P. Newton before tracing the way this concept's emotional meaning shifted and changed in Jonestown. It examines the ways in which emotional practices were utilised to guide Jonestown's residents toward new standards of feeling in which death was no longer feared but welcomed. The limitations of this process are also explored, before a considered examination of the Temple's final audiotape – known informally as the Death Tape – is analysed. The thesis concludes by highlighting the influence of such emotional practices as well as their limitations.

Part One: Indianapolis, 1955-1965.

Chapter One: The Pursuit of Love.

Race and Religion in Indianapolis.

Described by one historian as the "Silver Buckle on the Rust Belt," Indianapolis at mid-century had grown to be a flourishing economic and industrial hub located at the crossroads of north, south, east, and west.[86] The Second World War had left its mark on Indianapolis like it had many other urban centres across America, spurring wartime growth and generating a post-war economic boom that, by all accounts, was remarkable. Between 1939 and 1954 industrial production ballooned from $140M to $940M, employment in factories more than doubled, and almost ten thousand new homes were built to accommodate this swelling labour market.[87] Economically speaking, Indianapolis appeared to have entered a golden age as the fifties progressed.

To describe Indianapolis as a silver buckle on an otherwise rusty belt, however, is to obscure a very real and simple historical fact: not all Hoosiers reaped the rewards of this economic growth equally.[88] African Americans – both native-born black Hoosiers and newly settled migrants from southern states – played an important but unequal role both in Indianapolis' wartime industry and its post-war civilian economy. Initially supported by President Roosevelt's 1941 Executive Order (which prohibited racial discrimination in wartime industry) black Hoosiers had readily filled gaps in the labour market and had contributed to the war effort on the industrial domestic front. In doing so they accessed positions which had previously been unattainable to them in Indianapolis' de-facto state of segregation.[89] Whilst offering a brief respite from absolute labour segregation, World War Two did not provide a long-term solution to racist hiring practices. Once the conflict had drawn to a close and

[86] Robert G. Barrows, "Indianapolis: Silver Buckle on the Rust Belt," in Richard M. Bernard (ed.) *Snowbelt Cities: Metropolitan Politics in the Northeast and Midwest since World War II* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1990) pp. 137-157.
[87] Edward Leary, *Indianapolis: The Story of a City* (Indianapolis, the Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1971) pp. 215-16.
[88] Hoosiers is a given term for natives of Indiana.
[89] United States Government, "Executive Order 8802: Prohibition of Discrimination in the Defense Industry" (25 June 1941). *National Archives*. www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-8802

the protections afforded by Roosevelt's Executive Order had evaporated, black Hoosiers found themselves the first the be fired from jobs in which they had been the last to be hired.[90]

The de-facto state of segregation which permeated Indianapolis was not limited only to the labour market. Crispus Attucks High School, for example, opened its doors in 1927 to provide segregated educational facilities for Indianapolis' black children. Despite a 1949 state law prohibiting racial student placements, and the passage of federal legislation thereafter, Crispus Attucks would remain a segregated school until 1968 when the first white student became enrolled.[91] In the 1950s, Crispus Attucks became the centre of Indianapolis' local, and discrete, Civil Rights Movement when the schools basketball team, the Attucks Tigers, became the first all-black team to win an integrated state championship. Doing so in 1955, the Tigers carried this momentum and repeated this achievement once more in 1956.[92] The importance of this success to Indianapolis' black communities cannot be understated, as one historian emphasised: "[The Attucks Tigers] mobilized the black community, furnished role models for black youths, and provided an arena where African Americans could witness their representatives legitimately confronting and vanquishing teams composed primarily of whites."[93] Despite the Tigers' victory, their celebration parade continued to highlight the simmering racial tensions in the city: traditionally teams would march "to the downtown circle through the heart of the city," whilst the Attucks Tigers were instead routed through a predominantly black neighbourhood.[94]

If Crispus Attucks stood as "the most visible form of segregation in the city," according to one historian, the tendrils of Indianapolis' midwestern blend of Jim Crow were even more apparent in the realm of religion.[95] In 1960, Martin Luther King, Jr., had observed a fact that applied to the whole nation, and which was particularly evident within Indianapolis. In an interview given as part of the NBC program *Meet the Press,* King noted:

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[90] Richard Pierce, *Polite Protest: The Political Economy of Race in Indianapolis, 1920-1970* (Indiana University Press, 2005) p. 98
[91] Pierce, *Polite Protest*, p. 48.
[92] Pierce, *Polite Protest,* p. 49.
[93] Aram Goudsouzian, "'Ba-ad, Ba-a-ad Tigers': Crispus Attucks Basketball and Black Indianapolis in the 1950s," *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 96 No. 1 (March 2000) pp. 5-43.
[94] Pierce, *Polite Protest*, p. 126.
[95] Pierce, *Polite Protest*, p. 12.

> I think it is one of the tragedies of our nation, one of the shameful tragedies, that eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is one of the most segregated hours, if not the most segregated hours, in Christian America.[96]

Like their brothers and sisters across the nation, black Hoosiers continued to attend religious services set apart from their white counterparts. A small number of denominations offered segregated services, where black congregants would be seated in separate and roped-off pews often at the back of the church, but the vast majority of Hoosiers worshipped in black or white churches respectively. Whilst some religious institutions had directed pursued integrationist efforts, such as the ecumenical and biracial Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis, the results of a 1951 survey procured by this group suggested that half of white churches remained staunchly opposed to the notion of integration.[97]

The de-facto segregation of white and black Hoosiers across all areas of public life was compounded by a dominant white conservativism and a system of black resistance described by Richard B. Pierce as one of "polite protest." According to Pierce, "Indianapolis's African Americans appeared to be a model community. In addition to their eschewal of violent protest, the community demonstrated educational advancement, encouraged home ownership, and practiced hard work and thrift... Blessed with model African American citizens, Indianapolis chose to marginalize and demean African Americans through policy measures that restrained African American liberty."[98] Compared to the urban riots and protests that had dominated the Civil Rights Movement in Northern and Southern states, Indianapolis' black communities wrestled with their problems in a different, yet equal, manner. Whilst Indianapolis' historical context had produced a unique racial economy when compared to Northern and Southern states, the city still represented a microcosm of national racial tensions that, by 1955, did not seem to be improving.

It was amidst this contradictory atmosphere of racial potentiality and lethargy that Peoples Temple first emerged as an openly integrated church committed to challenging discrimination in Indianapolis' religious marketplace. In 1954, a small storefront church named Community Unity

[96]Martin Luther King Jr., Interview on "Meet the Press", 17 April 1960 in Clayborne Carson, Tenisha Armstrong, Susan Carson, Adrienne Clay, and Kieran Taylor (eds.) *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Volume V: Threshold of a New Decade, January 1959—December 1960* (University of California Press, 2005) pp. 428-435; Martin Luther King Jr., "Meet the Press Interview," *King Institute* website. kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/interview-meet-press
[97] Pierce, *Polite Protest,* p. 37.
[98] Pierce, *Polite Protest*, p. 6.

opened its doors to black and white congregants alike. Founded by Jim and Marceline Jones, this church was the first iteration of Peoples Temple in all but name.[99] According to one historical journalist from Indianapolis, Community Unity was the city's first integrated congregation that did not separate worshippers by rope or pew.[100] Such a fact has gone largely ignored by historians of religion who have examined the Midwest. In his thoroughly researched and lengthy monograph *Hoosier Faiths*, L.C. Rudolph dedicates over seven hundred double-columned pages to an intricate outline of Indiana's diverse religious traditions. Nestled amongst a discussion of Indianapolis' Jewish communities, which should be noted for their active participation in the city's local civil rights movement, Rudolph notes that the "Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation sold its old building at 10th and Delaware to the Reverend James Jones in 1957," which – somewhat unsurprisingly – is the only reference to Jim Jones or Peoples Temple in the entire volume.[101]

On one hand, Rudolph's brief coverage appears to be justified because Jones became an ordained minister within two denominations which *Hooser Faiths* does cover: first, the Independent Assemblies of God in 1957, and later the Disciples of Christ in 1965. On the other hand, the uniqueness of Peoples Temple (first reflected in Community Unity's non-denominational association, and later consolidated by its affiliation with the Disciples of Christ and their policy of congregational autonomy) suggests that this emergent religious group should be considered as a discrete and important entity in Indiana's religious history. More importantly, however, the explicit focus on integrated worship seems to distinguish Peoples Temple from virtually any other religious community in Indiana at the time. Perhaps unintentional, Rudolph's hesitance in including Peoples Temple in his survey reflects the broader gingerly attitude of academics to take seriously Peoples Temple as a normative expression of American religious history and neglecting the life of the community because of their manner of death.

[99] "Storefront churches" are churches which operate from buildings formerly used for commercial purposes; Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 17.
[100] Ryan Hamlett, "The Devil in Old Northside", *HistoricIndianapolis*.com (24 February 2014) web article historicindianapolis.com/the-devil-in-the-old-northside-2/
[101] L. C. Rudolph, *Hoosier Faiths: A History of Indiana's Churches and Religious Groups* (Indiana University Press, 1995) p. 352.

The following chapter explores the emergence of Peoples Temple in Indianapolis, with particular attention paid to the emotional standards and practices of the congregation in this formative period. It argues that from the outset Peoples Temple was characterised by a theology of love, on the basis of which Temple congregants positively defined themselves and negatively defined certain others. This theology of love was drawn from a variety of sources, not least of all the Bible, and it was constructed and delivered through sermons, texts, and practices which placed an emphasis on love as a curatable moral feeling which was vital to the social gospel. In reappraising the importance of love within the Temple's early history, the chapter also demonstrates that love – as a feeling-idea – served to link the religious orientation of Peoples Temple with their praxis as a local civil rights organisation.

The Theology of Love.

In the late 1970s, Marceline Jones would reflect on her husband's early ministry as it formed in Indianapolis. "Although Jim knew the Bible from beginning to end," she claimed, "he emphasized the human service ministry of Jesus and said there must be no creed but the helping ministry of Christ *and no law but love* [emphasis added]."[102] Although a retrospective comment made more than a decade after the Temple had left Indiana, it is clear from the primary sources which have survived the period that the "law" of "love" was a foundational aspect of Jones' theology and his early ministry as evidenced in the earliest sources available. In a transcribed sermon published in the 1956 issue of *Herald of Faith*, a Pentecostal Latter-Rain newsletter, Jones appealed to his fellow ministers in the midwestern revival to forego doctrinal arguments and unite in pursuit of a broader Christian message: "We must find the one central theme," argued Jones, "and that is God is love."[103]

Historians and theologians generally agree that Christianity bears a special emphasis on love compared to Jewish traditions. Frederick Simmons and Brian Sorrels argue, for example, that throughout the history of Christian thought love has always occupied a fundamental position as the

[102] "Transcription of Marceline Jones," (n.d.) *Alternative Considerations.*
[103] Jim Jones, "Faith Without Works is Dead," *The Herald of Faith* (Dec. 1956). *Alternative Considerations*.

"source, substance, standard, and goal of Christian ethics."[104] Equally, Jay T. Rock has suggested that the ethical imperative issued in John 15:12 to "Love one another as I have loved you" reflects a "principle of active love" which "lies at the heart of Christian living."[105] In his seminal study on Christian love, Anders Nygren defined love as the "fundamental motif" of Christian thought or, in other words, "the basic idea or the driving power of the religion concerned, or what it is that gives it its character as a whole and communicates to all its parts their special content and colour."[106]

But what is love? And what does it mean *to* love? Scholars of Christian ethics have long been concerned with such questions and their answers. Drawing a sharp distinction between Christian love (*agape*) and romantic or sensual love (*eros*), Nygren argued that Christian love is a unique historical construct which is best defined by four features: first, that it is "spontaneous and unmotivated"; second, that agape is "indifferent to value"; third, that "agape is creative"; and finally, that agape "is the initiator of fellowship with God."[107] Christian love, as distinct from other kinds of love, is universal and unconditional; with a specific and unique character drawn from its "theological source and reference."[108]

The importance of love in Christianity is often evidenced through what are varyingly called "The Double Commandments" or the "Love Commandments."[109] In the Gospel of Matthew, for example, Jesus is asked which of God's commandments are greatest:

> Master, which is the great commandment in the law?
>
> Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
>
> This is the first and great commandment.
>
> And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

[104] Frederick V. Simmons and Brian C. Sorrells (eds.) *Love and Christian Ethics: Tradition, Theory, and Society* (Georgetown University Press, 2016) p. 1.
[105] Jay T. Rock, "The Ongoing Creation of Loving Community: Christian Ritual and Ethics," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* Vol. 20 (2000) pp. 90-92.
[106] Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip S. Watson (The Westminster Press, 1953), pp. 35-41.
[107] Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, pp. 75-80.
[108] Colin Grant, "For the Love of God: Agape," *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 24 No. 1 (Spring 1996) pp. 3-21.
[109] Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, p. 61; Qingping Liu, "On a Paradox of Christian Love", *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 35 No. 4 (December 2007) pp. 681-694; Walter Harrelson, "The Idea of Agape in the New Testament", *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 31 No. 3 (July 1951) pp. 169-182.

> On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.[110]

Similarly, many explorations of the centrality of love in Christian thought have emphasised Paul's "Hymn to Love" in Corinthians, which is best quoted at length:

> Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging symbol. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.
>
> Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself; love is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth…
>
> And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.[111]

From these perspectives, *agape* is understood in the Christian tradition as a universal, selfless, charitable kind of love formed from the Covenant between God and his creation, the love of God for man and the reciprocal love for God by man. It is the greatest of God's divine values in the Christian tradition.

Whilst offering this definition of love rooted in divinity, the Bible also commands Christians – living, breathing humans - to meet the emotional standards of divine love. Take, for example, Jesus' injunction to love one's enemies as recorded in the Book of Matthew:

> Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.
>
> But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.
>
> That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.[112]

This particular quote serves as an epigraph within Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1963 book *Strength to Love,* a collection of sermons addressing racial segregation. At the beginning of chapter five, "Loving your Enemies," King suggests that "probably no admonition of Jesus has been more difficult to follow

[110] Matthew 22:36-40.
[111] 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13.
[112] Matthew 5:43-45.

than the command to 'love your enemies.'"[113] In attempting to answer *how* one should love their enemies, King articulated a kind of Biblical emotionology in which *agape* offered the most important Christian emotional standard: "An overflowing love which seeks nothing in return, *agape* is the love of God operating in the human heart… We love every man because God loves him."[114]

As for *why* Christians, particularly black Christians in the United States, should meet this emotional standard, King offers three reasons. "The first reason is fairly obvious," King writes, "Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars." The second reason, King argues, is that "hate scars the soul and distorts the personality."[115] The final reason King offers is that love "is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend."[116] Among all these reasons for pursuing Christian love as the most important emotional standard of black America, King argues, is a reason even more basic: Christians are called to the "difficult task" of loving one's enemies "in order to realize a unique relationship with God. We are potential sons of God. Through love that potentiality becomes actuality."[117] For King, writing from the perspective of a Southern Baptist clergyman, love was the fundament of Christian thought which offered the only solution to America's history of racial problems and the primary path toward fellowship with the divine.

The influence of King's mentor and fellow civil rights activist, Howard Washington Thurman, seeps through the pages of King's *Strength to Love*. In his work *Jesus and the Disinherited* (1947) Thurman discussed the potential for the Christian religion as a vehicle of social change in the hands of an oppressed community. Thurman began his fifth chapter, titled "Love," by emphasising that the "religion of Jesus makes the love-ethic central," suggesting the importance of love as a standard of Christian behaviour which orients ones behaviour and actions.[118] This love-ethic, for Thurman, was an emotional standard which demanded to be met. It was not a fleeting emotion but an "act of inner authority," a conscious choice made by an individual to pursue an *agapeic* attitude which

[113] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love* (Harper & Row, 1963) p. 41.
[114] King Jr., *Strength to Love*, p. 44.
[115] King Jr., *Strength to Love*, p. 45.
[116] King Jr., *Strength to Love*, p. 46.
[117] King Jr., *Strength to Love*, p. 47.
[118] Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949) p. 89.

could only produce positive social change. "Obviously," wrote Thurman, "then, merely preaching love of one's enemies or exhortations – however high and holy – cannot, in the last analysis, accomplish this result. At the centre of the attitude is a core of painstaking discipline, made possible only by personal triumph."[119]

Of course, King and Thurman were not the only civil rights activists to appeal to love as the driving force of social change during the latter phase of the Civil Rights movement. In his book *The Fire Next Time* (1963), black writer and activist James Arthur Baldwin wrestled with Christian love as the basis for spiritual redemption and socio-political equality.[120] Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* has rightly been considered as a "philosophical contemplation on love," with Grant Farrad emphasising the importance of the concept of asymmetricity for Baldwin's philosophy of love.[121]

In the first of two essays, "My Dungeon Shook: Letter to my Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation," Baldwin warns his nephew that loving those who would hate him is no easy task, yet it remains vital: "The really terrible thing, old buddy, is that *you* must accept *them*. And I mean that very seriously. You must accept them and accept them with love. For these innocent people have no other hope."[122] In the second essay, "Down at the Cross: Letter From a Region in my Mind," Baldwin discussed a prolonged religious crisis he experienced at fourteen in the face of racial hatred: "Neither civilized reason nor Christian love would cause any of those people to treat you as they presumably wanted to be treated; only the fear of your power would cause them to do that, or to seem to do it, which was (and is) good enough."[123]Ultimately Baldwin's reflections on love point toward the ultimate value, but immediate difficulty, in living up to this Christian emotional standard as a black American facing segregation and racism.

For Thurman, King, and Baldwin, Christian love was the only weapon with which the non-violent civil rights movement could be fought. Each emphasising the importance of practicing love in the face of hate, they rearticulated a Biblical emotional standard in the context of black America and

[119] Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, p. 106.
[120] In the words of Baldwin's chief biographer, "Love is at the heart of the Baldwin philosophy." David Leeming, *James Baldwin: a Biography* (Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1994) p. 123.
[121] Grant Farrad, "Love is Asymmetrical: James Baldwin's *The First Next Time*
[122] James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (London: Michael Joseph, 1963) p. 20.
[123] Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*, p. 32.

race relations in the United States. Drawing from the New Testament in particular Thurman, King, and Baldwin represent a cross section of black Christian thinkers who sought to answer the socio-political issues of segregation and inequality with Jesus' injunction to love thy neighbour as thyself. Each articulated an emotional framework that, whilst rooted in Biblical emotional standards, was contextualised by the realities of racism and oppression that their fellow black Americans faced.

Of course, the Bible does not only discuss love. As a religious text it plays a fundamental role not only in the communication of doctrine or belief but also in the communication of broader emotional standards providing a textual guide to the curation of correct Christian feelings.[124] For Michal Beth Dinkler, religious texts "shape the emotional repertoires of their intended audiences, partly by representing emotional experiences like joy within the story itself and partly by engendering experiences of emotion like joy in their implied audiences."[125] Yet for each of these thinkers, and – as will be demonstrated – for Jim Jones, love was the most important emotional standard in the Christian pantheon of feeling; an emotion, disposition, and attitude to be worked at, striven for, pursued, and refined.

One need only look at the seven deadly sins in Christian tradition for examples of emotional standards which seek to regulate or curtail improper emotions and their expressions: pride, anger, lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, and envy. The majority of these deadly sins map neatly onto what we call emotions or feelings, and our historical predecessors called passions. At various points in the Bible these emotional standards are articulated quite clearly, as in Timothy: "Flee also youthful lusts but follow righteousness, faith, charity [*agape*, or love], peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."[126] Or, as discussed in Proverbs, "A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones."[127]As injunctions to avoid "deadly sins" or "deadly passions," the Bible expresses clear standards of emotional expression intended to orient a Christian's life.

[124] See, for example, F. Scott Spencer (ed.) *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions: Exploring Emotions in Biblical Literature* (Atlanta, SBL Press, 2017); Fiona C. Black and Jennifer L. Koosed (eds.) *Reading with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible* (Atlanta, SBL Press, 2019); Matthew A. Elliott, *Faithful Feelings: Rethinking Emotion in the New Testament* (Kregel, 2006).
[125] Michal Beth Dinkler, "Reflexivity and Emotion in Narratological Perspective: Reading Joy in the Lukan Narrative", in Spencer (ed.) *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions*, pp. 265-66 [265-286].
[126] 2 Timothy 2:22.
[127] Proverbs 14:30.

In Indianapolis Peoples Temple was a Pentecostal church rooted deeply in scripture and the Temple's initial emotional framework drew upon both Biblical standards and Pentecostal traditions. As Hall notes in *Gone From the Promised Land*, Peoples Temple was established firmly within the Pentecostal-Holiness tradition: "Doctrinally," writes Hall, "it is fair to say that Jones was a radicalized Pentecostal preacher, conversant with fundamentalist theological debates, proficient in Pentecostal practice."[128] As Joel D. Daniels reminds us, "Pentecostals are Biblicists, and they require individuals and communities to examine their words and deeds in light of Scripture to ensure that their faithfully align."[129] The same may be said of Peoples Temple in Indianapolis, wherein collective emotions and feelings were guided by Biblical pro-and-prescriptions, definitions, and standards.

A kind of Biblical emotionology emerges in the very earliest primary sources surviving Peoples Temple. Take, for example, the Temple's first periodical newsletter, *The Open Door.* As a marketing material inviting its reader to attend services, it played an important role in communicating the theological character of the community as well as the emotional atmosphere a new attendee could expect to find in worship. Only one issue remains in the archive, Vol. 1 No. 4, published in April 1956.[130] The publication's title, "The Open Door" directly references Jesus' message to the church of the ancient city of Philadelphia in Revelation 3:8: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."[131] As the editorial contained within explains,

> The church of the open door is that of Philadelphia, which is the church of brotherly love. The door is open so wide that all races, creeds and colors find a hearty welcome to come in relax, meditate, and worship God.[132]

In Revelation, the church in Philadelphia was the sixth of seven Asian churches that John addresses. Philadelphia, now known as Alaşehir, was given its name by King Eumenes II of Pergamon in 189 BC in appreciation for the love of his younger brother and successor, Attalus II. The Greek roots of the name are composed of two parts: *philia*, one of four Greek words for love, and *adelphos*, meaning brother.

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[128] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, pp. 16-19.
[129] Joel D. Daniels, "The Wind Blows Fiercely and Gently: A Pentecostal Perspective on Love and Anger," *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 39 (2019) p. 39 [37-51].
[130] Peoples Temple, *The Open Door*, Vol. 1 No. 4 (Apr. 1956). CHS, *Peoples Temple Miscellany,* MS416 Box 2 Folder 4. *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/theopendoor.pdf
[131] Revelation 3:8.
[132] Peoples Temple, *The Open Door*, p. 3.

Thus, Peoples Temple first characterised themselves as the "church of the open door" and the "church of brotherly love." By emphasising the motif of the open door and framing the church as one rooted in brotherly love, the author of *The Open Door* was appealing across racial and denominational divides. Emphasising this point, the editorial continues:

> Our Lord in his highpriestly prayer, prayed for his people to be ONE; not a multitude of denominations and organizations, each one claiming to be The Body and at the same time manifesting that Pharisee spirit of competition, strife, envy and carnality.[133]

In this sense, the Temple's early emphasis on love (*philia,* in this case) was both an appeal to denominational unity as well as racial unity. Christian love was reinterpreted for the present moment, and it was found in an open door to those of all races, creeds, and colours.

Returning to Jones' abridged sermon in the *Herald of Faith* magazine, a similar motif is evident. Titled "Faith Without Works is Dead," Jones' abridged sermon emphasises the importance of Christian love as a practical guide to moral action whilst decrying the imbalance found in other Pentecostal churches that focus more on miracles than good works:

> We appreciate the marvelous, miraculous presence of God. We have had the lame to walk in our meetings and as Brother Boze has said, cancers have been spued up, but the conscientious Christians in my congregation have not been won by the loaves and fishes… I still contend the only way to reach humanity is to go out to them. It does not matter how many super sensational things you have, or dramatics, but there is only one thing that will cover a multitude of sins and that is the *love of God* [emphasis added].[134]

In appealing for an emphasis on good works over the performance of miracles, Jones was attempting to appeal across theological divides with a message that sought to restore balance to the gift-filled ministries of his fellow revivalists. If love has, in the words of Nygren, always been the "foundational motif" of Christian thought, then the centrality of this Christian feeling to Peoples Temple reflects the importance of thought becoming deed or action. In Jones' abridged sermon, the presence of love superseded the presence of miracles, revelations, and gifts; it lay at the heart of the Temple's identity as an integrated Christian church. Although borne of the Pentecostal tradition, Peoples Temple from its very emergence held this tradition in tension with a commitment to the law of love.

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[133] Peoples Temple, *The Open Door*, p. 3.
[134] Jim Jones, "Faith Without Works is Dead", *The Herald of Faith* (Dec. 1956)

The importance of love as the theological bedrock of Peoples Temple was emphasised across several newspaper advertisements found in the *Indianapolis Recorder* throughout the period. In an advertisement posted in the 30 November 1957 issue of the *Recorder*, a "statement of doctrine and belief" is presented beneath the service schedule. The first point of which reads "We believe and preach the truth in love."[135] In an earlier advertisement posted in the 15 December 1956 issue of the *Recorder*, Peoples Temple is described as a "Community Church With No Creed But Christ and No Law But Love," which suggests that Marceline Jones' later retrospective comment about the centrality of Christ and love within her husband's ministry was not an anachronism.[136] Drawing a clear link between the social gospel of Peoples Temple and the Law of Love, an earlier posting in the *Indianapolis Star* answers the question of "Many Delivered Sunday – Why?" with the claim that:

> Because in the temple there is no respect[e]r of persons and we feed and clothe the needy as the Bible requires. Thus our love of one another generates faith in God [emphasis added].[137]

In a sermon given between 1956 and 1958, Jones emphasised the importance of love within his ministry as based upon an emotionology drawn from the Bible. Whilst praying with the congregation for the healing of an unidentified female attendee, Jones proclaims his hope that "we'll respond to the New Law."[138] In using the term "The New Law," Jones was directly referring to the New Commandment as recorded in the Book of John, which read as follows:

> A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.[139]

This New Law, also referred to as the Law of Christ, is not only expressed in John but finds expression throughout the entirety of the New Testament. As Thomas Barrosse, a Catholic theologian writing in 1958 expressed, John's teaching "completes that of his predecessors," and thus is a refinement of the New Law as it was expressed in the Synoptic Gospels and the Pauline epistles

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[135] "Peoples Temple Interracial Interdenominational Apostolic Church," *The Indianapolis Recorder* (30 November 1957) p. 6.
[136] "Peoples Temple For All Races and Denominations Full Pospel [Gospel]," *The Indianapolis Recorder* (15 December 1956) p. 6.
[137] "Peoples Temple," *The Indianapolis Star* (4 June 1955).
[138] FBI Audiotape Q1017. *Alternative Considerations.*
[139] John 13:34-35.

before him.[140] In requesting that his nascent congregation "respond to the New Law," Jones was here identifying an emotional standard drawn from the Bible which emphasised Christian love as the orienting motif of the community. In drawing from the example of the early Church, Peoples Temple offered its congregants both a restorationist theology and, perhaps, a complementary restorationist emotionology which sought a renewal of social relations as guided by a reaffirmation of Christian love in the modern American context.

The importance of love in the religious doctrine of Peoples Temple, however, was not entirely unique in Indiana's religious marketplace. As noted above, Jones' abridged sermon was published in Joseph Mattsson-Boze's *Herald of Faith*, which was the primary forum for the ministry of another Hoosier minister: William Branham (1909-1965). Described by Christian Historian Michael G. Moriarity as one of the "principal architects of [mid-century] restorationist thought," Branham's influence on Jones' early ministry has been noted by several authors, although far more work remains to be completed in this important area.[141]

Introduced to Branham through Mattsson-Boze, Jones entered into an initially mutually beneficial relationship with his fellow Hoosier faith healer and the two engaged in ministerial exchange throughout the late 1950s. For example in January 1956, Branham appeared as a visiting minister at a Peoples Temple service.[142] A few months later the Temple advertised a revival convention at Indianapolis' Cadle Tabernacle to be held between June 11-15 with Branham as the headlining preacher.[143] The benefit to Jones was clear: as a "giant of the post-war healing revival," Branham's popularity assisted Jones' fledgling ministerial career but, equally, provided Branham with an associate minister who was making a substantial amount of money in the midwestern revival circuit.[144]

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[140] Thomas Barrosse, "Christianity: Mystery of Love: An Essay in Biblical Theology," *The Catholic Bible Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (April 1958) pp. 137-172 [137].
[141] For example, Hall briefly notes Branham's influence on Jones' miracle ministry in *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 111; 292. See also Reiterman with Jacobs, *Raven*, pp. 50-51 and John Collins, "The 'Full Gospel' Origins of Peoples Temple," *Alternative Considerations* (2019). https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=92702
[142] "Peoples Temple Full Gospel" Advertisement, *The Indianapolis Star*, 21 January 1956.
[143] "People's [sic] Temple" Advertisement, *The Indianapolis News*, 26 May 1965.
[144] David Edwin Harrell, *All Things are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Indiana University Press, 1978) p. 27.

John Collins, one of the leading researchers of William Branham's movement, and webmaster of the *William Branham: Historical Research* website, has recently identified several links between Jones' and Branham's ministries, including their reference to "The Message," the role of faith healing, the deification of the prophet, and other theological similarities.[145] A brief reading of a selection of Branham's sermons, however, suggests further important similarities and differences. Whilst both Branham and Jones preached a theology of love, their application of love to America's racial problems diverged in important ways.

A sermon delivered by Branham in 1957 at the Edmonton Arena in Alberta, Canada, reveals a similar kind of emotional framework constructed around the central emotion of Christian love. Titled "God Projecting His Love," Branham's sermon explicitly discussed and framed love in a way almost identical to Jones' ministry in the Indianapolis period. "I think if one thing is needed in the great universal church of God tonight," Branham orated, "[it] is love." Continuing, Branham stated that

> Love should govern the home. Love is the greatest force that was ever put into the power of man. A home that's not disciplined by love is not much of a home… That's why I think that instead of resting our faith upon some emotion (which is all right) or some gift (which is all right) ... Those things are all right. But if we could come back to the principle: love, first, and then those things. I think our church would progress a lot faster, if we would get God first, and God is love.[146]

As a theme, Branham spoke regularly on the importance of love within the Bible. An earlier sermon dated July 26, 1956, simply titled "Love", discussed the same concept. "I think love is the greatest force in the world," Branham ministered to his audience in Shreveport, Louisiana.[147] A further sermon, titled "Divine Love and Sovereign Grace", delivered in August 1956, also discussed the role and importance of *agape* to Branham's theology. When "Divine love has been projected and comes to its end, its destination, sovereign grace will then take over," Branham told his audience. "For no

[145] John Collins and Peter M. Duyzer, "The Message Connection of Jim Jones and William Branham," *Alternative Considerations* (2015). jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=65112; see also Collins and Duyzer, "The Intersection of William Branham and Jim Jones," *Alternative Considerations* (2014). jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=61481
[146] William Branham, "God projecting His Love 57-0806" delivered 6 August 1957 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. *Voice of God Recordings*.
[147] William Branham, "Love 56-0726" delivered 26 July 1956 in Shreveport, Louisiana. *Voice of God Recordings.*

matter how many gifts we got," he continued, "they will never do us any good, except the love of God is the motive behind the gift. We must have love."[148]

Despite these initial similarities, Jones' and Branham's conception of love diverged in important ways when applied to the context of American segregation. Whilst both ministers discussed love as an antidote to increasing denominationalism and Christian infighting, the theology of love in Peoples Temple was specifically directed as a curative sentiment intended to break down racial barriers in Indianapolis. On the other hand, Branham's conceptualisation of "Divine Love" was far more restrictive. In a sermon delivered in 1960 at the Branham Tabernacle in Jeffersonville, Indiana, Branham discussed the concept of race-mixing with his congregation. "Hybreeding. Hybreeding. Oh, how terrible! Hybreeding. They hybreed the people [sic]," Branham lamented, before asking his audience, "Tell me what fine cultured, fine Christian colored woman would want her baby to be a mulatto by a white man? No, sir! It's not right! What white woman would want her baby to be a mulatto by a colored man? God made us what we are; let's stay what God made us!"[149] Famously, Branham would later declare that a Christian could not be in support of integration. Quoting Branham's diatribe at length,

> I am a segregationalist. Because I don't care how much they argue, you cannot be a Christian and be an integrationist. That's exactly right. God even separates His nations. He separates His people…. He pulled Israel, that Jewish race, out of every, all the races in the world. He is a segregationalist [sic].[150]

Although both Jones and Branham built their ministries on an emotional theology of Christian love, they diverged in their applications of this philosophy to the material circumstances found across the nation in the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement. For Jones and the members of Peoples Temple, love bore no racial fine print, whereas Branham considered love and integration to be, at best, unrelated, and, at worst, incompatible.

The brief comparison presented above of the affective dimension of Jones' and Branham's theologies points towards a deeper relationship between the two ministers than many authors (with the

[148] William Branham, "Divine Love and Sovereign Grace 56-0814" delivered 14 August in Saskatchewan, Canada. *Voice of God Recordings.*
[149] William Branham, "Condemnation by Representation 60-1113" delivered 13 November 1960 in Jeffersonville, Indiana. *Voice of God Recordings.*
[150] William Branham, "Doors in Door 65-0206" delivered 6 February 1965 in Flagstaff, Arizona. *Voice of God Recordings.*

exclusion of John Collins) have acknowledged. The opportunity for a comparative analysis between the emotional frameworks of Jones and Branham's ministry now presents itself as a valuable prospective study and may prove illuminating to understanding Jones as an active participant in the Post-War Healing Revival, deepening our understanding of the man and his ministry far beyond the enigma that is currently presented in popular literature.

Such findings promise to refine our perspectives of the broader Post-War Revival, which itself is severely understudied in American religious history. One of the definitive works on the modern American Revivals, David Edwin Harrell's *All Things are Possible*, states that the evangelist A. A. Allen was "the first minister to emphasise that his ministry was interracial," following an integrated revival held at Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1958.[151] The existence of Peoples Temple – interracial and interdenominational – and the proximity of Jones to Branham and the Revival Circuit suggests that Harrell's description of A. A. Allen as a trendsetter of revivalist integration is, in fact, in error. As historians more readily appreciate Jones' debt to and involvement within the Post-War Healing Revival, it becomes clear that Jones' emphasis on integration predates Allen's interracial revival by at least three years. Whilst a small amendment to the historical record, the fact remains that Jones and Peoples Temple offered Christian Hoosiers an original solution to the issues of racism and segregation across Indiana.

More work remains to be done comparing the emotional frameworks and theologies of Jim Jones with Branham – a task that falls outside the purview of this thesis. With the importance of love in Jones' theology established, however, and its heritage in both traditional Christian thought and the restorationism of Branham's ministry briefly covered, this thesis now turns to a discussion of how the members of Peoples Temple were encouraged to practice, feel, and demonstrate their Christian love.

Love in Practice.

Compared to the Californian period, few audiotapes produced by Peoples Temple in Indianapolis have survived the passage of time with only three identified in the archival record: FBI Audiotapes

[151] Harrell, *All Things are Possible*, p. 99.

Q1058-2 (1957/8), 1058-4 (1959), and Q1017 (n.d.). It is likely that a small number more tapes from Indianapolis have survived, yet to be transcribed or unable to be due to audio degradation. The following analysis explores the role of love in the setting of collective worship found within Peoples Temple throughout the Indianapolis years. As such, this section explores Jones' sermons not only as texts but as practices: as locations of oratory, active participation, and communication wherein the message was heard, seen, and felt in specific contexts.[152] By first exploring the standards of emotional life laid out by Jones in these sermons, the practices which developed can also illuminate the ways in which "recipients and preachers put preaching to 'use' in their emotional life," outside of the specific worship setting.[153]

As the foundational component of the Temple's theology, love was regarded as an ideal to be striven for, or pursued, in action and deed as much as word and thought. It was a feeling which was not only religious but also situated, embodied, and tangible. It required expression, and emotion work in pursuit of that expression as a fundamental requirement of membership. A number of physical practices within Peoples Temple worked to communicate, mobilise, and name love within the worship setting. From one perspective, integrated worship itself was a visible and profound manifestation of the Temple's *agape*, which through the mobilisation of black and white bodies alike constituted a protest against Indianapolis' (and, more broadly, the nation's) racial stratification. At a more personal level, congregants would be encouraged to kiss, embrace, and approach one another as well as outsiders with warmth and compassion. The practice of love was also deeply intertwined with the economic and authority structures of the early Temple, providing an avenue for expressions of love which neatly mapped onto a system of donations, tithes, and offerings which equated charitable donation with Christian agape.

As noted by Hall in *Gone From the Promised Land*, Peoples Temple grew to be more than just a church: it developed into a "close-knit community" not unlike a large, extended family unit.[154] Hall cites the transcribed words of Richard "Rick" Cordell (1938-1983) who was interviewed by in-

[152] Stephen Cummins and Max Stille, "Religious Emotions and Emotions in Religion: The Case of Sermons," *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 45 No. 1 pp. 3-24.
[153] Cummins and Stille, "The Case of Sermons," p. 18.
[154] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 48.

house Temple historian Richard Tropp as part of a communal history which never materialised. Likely given in 1975, the interviewer transcribed Cordell's description of his early relationship with the Jones' and the Temple more broadly as follows:

> They were the kind of people that you were overwhelmed [by] 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… 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… it was a church where people felt closer, more of a family, than any other church I have ever been to [emphasis added].[155]

In Cordell's recollection, love was a prominent and definitive feeling which characterised his relationship with both the Jones family and the congregants of Peoples Temple. Similarly, Catherine "Hyacinth" Thrash (1902-1995) reflected on her participation in the Indianapolis Temple, summarising Jones' message as wanting "folks to respect and love one another." Explaining further, Thrash clarified "That's why we visited other churches on Sunday mornings. We'd have our own service, then go to other people's services to witness to integration."[156]

In a very real sense, the practice of integrated worship represented an emotional practice of its own kind. In the racially stratified environment of Indianapolis, participation within an integrated congregation was a demonstration of Christian love itself. To adopt Thrash's verbiage, to "witness to integration" was to witness to love and respect across the lines of racial stratification so present in Indianapolis' culture. This was clearly an attractive draw for white and black congregants alike. Returning to Rick Cordell's reflections, the interrelatedness of love and integrated worship is made clear as a response to, and a rejection of, religious segregation:

> One time a woman came in the service there, and said that – she was a black woman, and she came the first time, and stood up and testified of how she appreciated the love, and being accepted in the service. That very morning, 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.[157]

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[155] "Rick Cordell RE: JJ" RYMUR 89-4286-HH-6-A. *Alternative Considerations*. jonestown.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/07-rick-cordell-interview-tape.pdf
[156] Hyacinth Thrash, *The Onliest One Alive: Surviving Jonestown, Guyana* (Marian K. Towne, 1995) p. 51.
[157] "Rick Cordell RE: JJ," *Alternative Considerations.*

Similarly, Thrash recounted the excitement expressed by her sister, Zipporah "Zippy" Edwards (1905-1978), who first encountered Peoples Temple in a televised program. "I hadn't been going to church for about ten years when I saw Jim on TV," Thrash recalled. "Actually, Zip saw him first,"

> She came running in from the other room, shouting, "I've found my church!" She saw the integrated choir on TV and Jim standing so handsome, and wanted to go.[158]

As one of the few black voices to survive Jonestown, Hyacinth's memoirs are particularly important for understanding the appeal of Peoples Temple to its black congregants in Indianapolis. In an atmosphere of de facto segregation, Jim Jones' Peoples Temple offered its congregants a milieu of love, warmth, and acceptance. Integration was a visible manifestation of this love, and integrated worship itself a practice which required navigation of this Christian feeling. By attending integrated services, the members of Peoples Temple in Indianapolis were afforded the opportunity not only to receive love, but to practice it themselves in ways meaningful to them.

An examination of the Temple's worship services during the Indianapolis period reveals the importance of practiced love to both minister and congregation. In a sermon delivered in 1958, Jones emphasised the importance of congregational intimacy as a path to love and delineated standards of affection he expected his congregants to follow:

> I noticed our gingerly distance that we keep at the altar. We're going to have to swallow that up. We're going to have to know one another, and really love one another, 'cause until we love and understand the human heart, and draw ourselves close together, and be willing to overcome all oppositions… You pull. You don't realise how much you drag.[159]

Toward the end of the sermon, Jones returns to the importance of love within the congregation by clarifying that

> You gotta have contact with God, you gotta have an optimism with God, you gotta have a fellowship, one with another, you gotta be bound together, we're gonna have to come together as one people, bear one another's burdens and support the peoples' need… Well, let's get back to the end of the meeting, and get to know one another and pour out our hearts and love one another, because if we come together, then we'll find God.[160]

[158] Thrash, *The Onliest One Alive,* pp. 47.
[159] FBI Audiotape Q1058-2 (1958). *Alternative Considerations*.
[160] FBI Audiotape Q1058-2.

After attending their first service in 1957 Hyacinth and Zipporah Thrash found a flyer on their doorstep a month later which informed them that Jones and a dozen of his congregants would be holding prayer in their neighbourhood. "Well, he came, held our hands, and had prayer," Hyacinth recalled, "It was wonderful."[161] With this event sealing Hyacinth and Zipporah's entry into Peoples Temple, the practice of calling for prayer was one of the ways that Temple members could express and communicate their Christian love and included physical touch: the tangible violation of socially imposed racial barriers. Jones had argued as much during his sermon at Great Fellowship Convention in Chicago, 1956, as recorded in his abridged transcript published in the *Herald of Faith*:

> I still contend that the only way to reach humanity is to go out to them… If someone really realizes that you love them with all your heart, that you believe in your faith, and are willing to go out into the highways into the field, then they will know that you have Jesus Christ…[162]

Years later, Marceline Jones would recall that direct canvassing played an important role in her husband's early ministry,

> In the beginning he had a hard time making black people believe that he was sincere, and he and his workers knocked on the door of every black family in Indianapolis, Indiana. I think they estimated that they knocked on 10,000 doors… and out of that campaign came a few black people and among them was Archie Ijames.[163]

By directly visiting black neighbourhoods, inviting black Hoosiers to Temple services, and praying with them in the streets, Jones and his early associates were involved in a practical and intimate demonstration of Christian love which was made all the more poignant in Indianapolis' segregated environment.

Of course, other practices were involved in the worship setting which helped cultivate the kind of Christian love which Jones desired his congregation made manifest. In a sermon delivered in 1959, Jones described various practices of love which he wished to see more of among his congregation:

[161] Thrash, *Onliest One Alive*, p. 48.
[162] Jones, "Faith Without Works is Dead."
[163] "Transcription of Marceline Jones," *Alternative Considerations.*

> I wanna be in a church where people are not afraid of the altar, not afraid of slobbering a few tears over one another. Not afraid of giving one another a holy kiss… Some of the Pentecostal people, they amuse me. They'll be fixing to die on every other scripture, but they'll say, "That holy kiss, that's a custom."[164]

What Jones refers to here as the "holy kiss" is the "Kiss of Peace," a traditional early Christian greeting. In the Bible, the holy kiss receives several mentions. For example, 2 Corinthians 13:12 contains the Pauline directive to "Greet one another with a holy kiss," whilst 1 Peter 5:14 instructs Christians to "Greet one another with a kiss of love."

In his work *Kissing Christians: Ritual and Community in the Late Ancient Church*, Religious Studies scholar Michael Philip Penn argued that "the way [early] Christians described and performed the ritual kiss helped them construct a chaste and closed community, a group that was both cohesive and, at the same time, hierarchical and exclusive."[165] Of course, a kiss in and of itself is not a unique nor particularly novel kind of emotional practice: for millennia couples have kissed romantically as a practical expression of love (and often lust). Yet in the contexts of the early Christian church and the early Peoples Temple, a holy kiss represented an emotional practice which worked to manifest feelings of Christian love among practitioners whilst also solidifying and maintaining (new) social relations and boundaries. The holy kiss transcended racial barriers whilst reinforcing the communal identity of Peoples Temple as an interracial community of love: a beloved community, as Martin Luther King, Jr., called it.[166]

Whilst discussions of the holy kiss in the Indianapolis period are limited to this one audiotape, we can be sure that such a practice was regularly performed in Temple services and beyond. One woman, a defector from Father Divine's International Peace Mission Movement (which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter) later recalled that when Jones and his associates visited Divine's Philadelphia headquarters in the late fifties, "we used to hug and kiss."[167] Similarly, a sermon delivered in California in 1973 also suggests the longevity of the intimate practices developed in Indianapolis as Jones requested his congregants "give a very fond embrace, or a salutary kiss of

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[164] FBI Audiotape Q1058-4.
[165] Michael Philip Penn, *Kissing Christians: Ritual and Community in the Late Ancient Church* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005) pp. 2-3.
[166] Kipton Jensen and Preston King, "Beloved Community: Martin Luther King, Howard Thurman, and Josiah Royce," *AMITY: The Journal of Friendship Studies* Vol. 4 No. 1 (2017) pp. 15-31.
[167] "A History by Maurice Kleineibst" RYMUR 89-4286-HH-6-A-39. *Alternative Considerations*.

greeting to your neighbour, and let's fill this atmosphere with warmth and love."[168] Whilst we see the origin of such practices in Indianapolis, by the time the community had migrated to California they were commonplace, definitive features of the congregation of Peoples Temple.

Considering Jones' involvement in Branham's Latter Rain Movement, it is unsurprising that Branham too was a keen advocate of the holy kiss. In a sermon delivered in 1957 at the Madison Square Garden in Phoenix, Arizona, Branham described the importance of the Christian greeting in some detail. "When the host come in, then, and met the guests, he kissed him. And if the host kissed him, he was a brother," Branham sermonised, before continuing as follows,

> That's why when we are taught in the Bible, "Greet the brethren with a holy kiss," that is a welcome of fellowship, see. Today we shake hands; then they kissed on the cheek or on the neck…[169]

For the early members of Peoples Temple in Indianapolis, we can understand the kiss of greeting as an emotional practice intended to arouse Christian love – compassion, empathy, sympathy, and more – among the congregation whilst solidifying social bonds and reinforcing social boundaries. Particularly within the context of integrated worship, a salutary kiss was a powerful demonstration of warmth and love which employed the physical bodies of congregants, regardless of their race, and brought them into intimate physical contact with one another. Between 1818 and 1965 interracial marriage in Indiana was a felony crime, and we might better understand the importance and power of the Christian kiss in an interracial setting as a rejection and inversion of such laws, thereby becoming a powerful social critique on its own merit.

The practice of love in Peoples Temple was not limited to gestures or acts between congregants but love also had an immediate and important economic meaning. In stark contrast to the movement's communal identity in Guyana, in Indianapolis the Temple was staunchly anti-communist in rhetoric and explicitly communalist in practice. As an editorial in the *Open Door* read, "The spirit of anti-Christ (communism) is sweeping the world, bringing the body of anti-Christ (the communist party) together, just as the spirit of Christ is bringing the Body of Christ, together."[170] Authored by

[168] FBI Audiotape Q964.
[169] William Branham, "Washing Jesus' Feet 57-0310A," *Voice of God Recordings.*
[170] Peoples Temple, "The Open Door." *Alternative Considerations.*

Viola Bradley, an unknown member of Peoples Temple's Indianapolis ministry, the piece demonstrates the anti-communist orientation of the Temple in its early years. Published in 1956, this perhaps reflects a negotiation between Peoples Temple and American society at the tail end of McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare. As Jones reiterated in a sermon delivered between 1959 and 1960:

> There's only one thing that's going to counter communism. It has its Messiah. It has its Bible. It has its Kingdom. And the only thing that's going to stop it – and that's going to have to come about quickly – is for us to sell what we have and impart them to every man that has need.[171]

By the time the Temple relocated to California, such anti-communist rhetoric was entirely absent. Yet even in Indianapolis, the Temple's collectivist economic orientation was deeply interwoven with the rhetoric and practice of Christian love.

One of the earliest tapes in the Temple oeuvre, FBI Audiotape Q1017 is particularly revealing as to the links between Jones' theology of love and the collectivist economic framework which developed within Peoples Temple. Although much of the audio is irrevocably distorted, this tape was likely recorded between 1955 and 1957 during a period of ministerial exchange between Peoples Temple and the Elmwood Temple, a revivalist ministry in Cincinnati, Ohio, led by the Reverend Edwin Wilson whom Jones had met at a convention in Detroit, Michigan, at Myrtle Beall's Bethesda Temple.[172] In this sermon, Jones clarifies to his audience that "I feel like it's time to do the work of God," before explaining that "within the next few days, some of us are going to sell our property, just a few, just a controlled few."[173] Further into the sermon, Jones makes clear the link between Christian love and the importance of selling what one has to pursue the work of God:

> You want to get into the Kingdom? It'll have to be Christ. You want to do His work? Then you'll have to pay the price – and the first thing is to sell what you have. You've got to have love – yet they stand and said, "I've done all these things, I've kept the Commandments, I've paid the price, I've done good work," but He said: "One thing thou lackest: Sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor." Tonight, God's saying that to some of us.[174]

[171] FBI Audiotape Q1058-4.
[172] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, pp. 41-42; Reiterman with Jacobs, *Raven*, pp. 45-49.
[173] FBI Audiotape Q1017.
[174] FBI Audiotape Q1017.

Quoting from Mark 10:21 and Luke 18:22, Jones' emphasis on collectivism and redistributive economics were drawn directly from scripture, and thus while the Temple refuted political communism in Indianapolis it appears that an alternative communalist model was developed in line with the Bible.

In a later sermon preserved on FBI Audiotape Q1058-4, Jones explicitly contours the economic practices of Peoples Temple in line with the redistributive practices of Jesus' apostles as written in Acts 2. "And they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need," Jones read, before asking his congregation: "Now what're you going to do with that? Any opinion?"[175] In a different sermon, Jones once more discussed the prominence of Acts 2 within his ministry. "Some people … have accused me of resting my ministry and my gospel in the Acts of the Apostles. Yes, it is true. I believe that's where our foundation is."[176] From the moment Peoples Temple emerged, it contained within it a system of economic redistribution that was drawn from the Bible and the example of the early Church. These economic practices, however, were explicitly linked with the performance of correct Christian feeling: *agape*, with its dual translation of love and charity.

Returning to FBI Audiotape Q1017, Jones describes the importance of love for participation in the Kingdom of God. Entry was only possible "If you come meek, and lower your hearts, if you become poor in spirit," Jones stated, before clarifying: "And what that is? Self-giving. Loving. A saviour."[177] Here Jones emphasises not only Christian love, but also what we might call spiritual poverty. Being poor in spirit reflected an emotional orientation towards God and the world in which the pursuit of God's work and hypothetical Kingdom required one's detachment from worldly items, concerns, and pleasures. As Jones explained further,

> What have you got in your pocketbook tonight? Who is the Kingdom of God? He said if you don't hate all that's not this side of the world you're not worthy of the Kingdom of God. I didn't say that – but in comparison to His love, you've got to hate all motivations, you've got to hate your father and your mother as compared to the love for the infinite Father.[178]

[175] FBI Audiotape Q1058-4.
[176] FBI Audiotape Q1058-2.
[177] FBI Audiotape Q1017.
[178] FBI Audiotape Q1017.

Here, Jones' rhetoric is explicitly scriptural once more as he cites the fourteenth chapter of Luke: "If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."[179] Whilst Jones was not actively encouraging the manifestation of hate between relatives, he was impressing upon his congregation a facet of Christianity which has been central to its development in American history: the importance of the *feeling* of emptiness as a precondition for being filled with God's grace.[180] In order to fully pursue the New Law, congregants were encouraged to depart from their worldly desires, concerns, and attitudes in order to be reborn. Carnal emotions were regarded as a direct hindrance to the divine emotionality expected of participants in the Kingdom of God.

In Indianapolis Temple congregants took Jones' message to heart, and many actively participated in the redistributive economic system which emerged. As Jones suggested, members of Peoples Temple were encouraged to sell what they have and donate it to the common purse of the church itself. This was a remarkably effective strategy. As Hyacinth Thrash later recalled, "He went for those with property too. Between Zip and me, he got $150,000 off us before it was all over, counting our two homes, both of them income-producing… plus bank accounts, insurance, pensions, Social Security checks, and our tithes for twenty-one years."[181]

Edith Cordell (1902-1978) was another member of Peoples Temple in Indianapolis who took Jones' message of love and economic redistribution to heart. As her nephew Don Cordell recalled, Edith had donated "the family home at 2048 North Keystone Avenue in Indianapolis, and six what are known as Doubles – two-units-per-building homes – to Jones. The income from the rentals was to support our aunt the rest of her life, while she lived in the family home."[182] Other women, notably Esther Mueller (1902-1978), made similar sacrifices. As Mueller's great niece recalled, "When she heard Jim Jones preach on loving kindness, faith and hope at her church in Indianapolis, she was

[179] Luke 14:26.
[180] For an in-depth assessment of the importance of emptiness as a Christian emotion, see John Corrigan, *Emptiness: Feeling Christian in America* (University of Chicago Press, 2018).
[181] Thrash, *Onliest One Alive*, p. 57.
[182] Don Cordell, "The Cordell Family Legacy," *Alternative Considerations.*

hooked on his flair for words and his kindness toward her…. She sold her belongings, gave the money to Jim Jones, and followed him everywhere."[183]

Early financial statements preserved in the Indiana State Archives demonstrate the effectiveness of Jones' redistributive theology. In 1955, the Temple listed its total income at $22,536 with change. Of this amount $19,432 were recorded as the proceeds of offerings taken in services.[184] One year later, the Temple's filing with the Indiana Annual Non-Profit Corporation Report listed the total income generated from "Offerings & Gifts" to be at $34,460.[185] Roughly equivalent to over $380,000 in today's dollars, offerings made in services provided Peoples Temple with its most important revenue stream.

Whilst financial donations were one way for Temple members to support the pursuit of the New Law, the leadership of Peoples Temple developed an impressive ministry of human services in Indianapolis. The social gospel practiced by Temple members both justified its redistributive economic structure and gave congregants further opportunities to labour for God in physical expressions of Christian love.[186] For example, Marceline Jones first established a nursing home in the lounge of the Jones family home alongside Esther Mueller, an early member of Peoples Temple. This was the first step in the development of what Hall has described as a "small home-care fiefdom," which drew its staff from Temple congregants who "worked with real pride to offer a standard of 'rest-home' care that was probably unusual for its day."[187] As one Disciples of Christ official reported after visiting the Temple's care homes, there appeared to an emphasis on compassionate treatment "with real concern" and a focus on "gentleness," describing the Temple's care-homes as "the best in the city."[188]

Alongside the nursing homes were other labours inspired by the social gospel, such as the Temple's free restaurant which fulfilled the scriptural command to feed the hungry. Established in

[183] Sharon Jo Allman, "Esther Mueller – a Beautiful Woman Inside and Out," *Alternative Considerations*.
[184] 1955 Financial Statement, published digitally by Bob Gilyeat, a volunteer at the Indiana State Archives. notesfromgreatbookssyntopican.com/
[185] "Indiana Annual Non-Profit Corporation Report" (Wings of Deliverance) 31 (December 1956). Indiana State Archives, 4069A – 117. Published digitally by Bob Gilyaeat at notesfromgreatbookssyntopican.com/
[186] Here we might consider the Benedictine phrase *laborare est orare*, or *to work is to pray*, as an illustrative element of the link between daily labour and one's Christian identity.
[187] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 46.
[188] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 46.

1960 in the basement of the Peoples Temple church, it was largely staffed by church women and within a short time was giving away thousands of free meals per month to the needy.[189] Described by Hall as "applied Christianity," the Temple's human service ministry gave the congregants of Peoples Temple the opportunity to redefine themselves through the application of Christian love in assistance of the needy. Archie Ijames, Jones' associate minister, was a carpenter by trade but soon quit all outside work to dedicate himself to provisioning for the Temple's restaurant.[190] Hyacinth Thrash, too, participated in the free restaurant services. "I helped with feeding and healing, mostly," Thrash proudly recalled, "I worked in the kitchen, preparing meals and giving out baskets. We fed two hundred people at a time on Sundays for dinner at 10th and Delaware… Everybody came – street people, alcoholics, transients."[191]

This kind of voluntary, charitable labour must be considered in its material context. Not only were Temple services staffed by an integrated network of volunteers who served an integrated mass of patrons, but the very act of serving food to the poor represented a real practical engagement with the teachings of Jesus and the clarifications of the Apostles. Such charitable labour was constituted a practice which allowed individuals to express, manifest, and communicate Christian love. The practical social engagement of Peoples Temple was what Jones claimed set it apart from other Pentecostal churches: "If you're wasting God's money today by putting it in some church that's just doing a rat race or formality and feeding some preacher, keeping him plush, and just building a form, you're doing a work that is wrong," Jones said in 1959. "You'd better get out of that thing and become a part of the active work of the Spirit."[192] In a tangible sense, the practices of financial donation and voluntary work were redefined within Peoples Temple to quite literally be understood as *agape* in practice: the "active work of the Spirit."

[189] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 52.
[190] Reiterman with Jacobs, *Raven*, p. 56.
[191] Thrash, *Onliest One Alive*, p. 50.
[192] FBI Audiotape Q1058-4.

Pentecostal Worship.

Worship services in Peoples Temple were held regularly in Indianapolis, with a rigid schedule adhered to throughout the week. These services were ecstatic moments of community ritual and engagement, and also acted as the primary advertising venue in which new attendees – potential members – first encountered Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple congregation. As scholar of Black Religion Milmon F. Harrison noted, the worship style of Peoples Temple was drawn from the "emotionally expressive Pentecostal tradition," which had been shaped by the "black style of worship" since its origins (see, for example, the importance of William Seymour at the Azusa Street Revival).[193] In a series of reflections given at some point between 1977 and 1978, Jones commented on the importance of Pentecostal emotionality as a primary attraction for his early ministry:

> I joined a Pentecostal church, the most extreme Pentecostal church, the Oneness, because they were the most despised. They were the rejects of the community. I found immediate acceptance, and I must say, in all honestly, about as much love as I could interpret love… I'm more comfortable in the expression, the warmth, of a Pentecostal setting, and that's why you saw that kind of a lifestyle, because it was in that setting, of freedom of emotion, that I found my first acceptance.[194]

Offering love, warmth, and freedom of emotion, the Pentecostal church visited by Jones introduced him to an emotionally expressive religious tradition which he pursued thereafter.

As the minister of a church in the Pentecostal tradition, Jones played an important role in creating the same kind of atmosphere that attracted him as a child. Harrison reminds us that Jones' leadership role in the worship setting directly involved the "defining and reinforcing the range of acceptable expressive norms."[195] Throughout this chapter we have seen Jones defining and reinforcing such emotional standards – as with the case of the holy kiss – and Jones' sermons must be understood as important venues in which this process of emotionological definition occurred. In every service, Jones' sermons consistently defined and redefined the emotional framework that bound the congregation together. However, Jones was not alone in this process of establishing emotional

[193] Milmon F. Harrison, "Jim Jones and Black Worship Traditions" in Moore, Pinn, Sawyer (eds.) *Peoples Temple and Black Religion in America*, p. 129.
[194] FBI Audiotape Q134.
[195] Harrison, "Jim Jones and Black Worship Traditions," p. 124.

standards: the congregation, too, played a fundamental role in physically meeting these standards through practice.

The emotional framework found in Peoples Temple was reproduced in worship services through multiple practices, means, and measures. First, and perhaps foremost, were Jones' sermons which guided the congregation and gave both explicit and implicit direction as to the emotional standards and normative expressions expected within the church. Second was the role of music; hymnals, contemporary songs, and other numbers often bookended both the beginning and end of Peoples Temple services, contributing to an emotional atmosphere that relied on the congregation, the choir, the organist, and Jones in tandem. Finally, the emotional framework found in a Peoples Temple meeting was most thoroughly represented by the climax of the event: the healing of believers with the power of faith, or more specifically love, alone.

Like more traditional Pentecostal congregations, Peoples Temple worships services were characterised by the call-and-response model of sermonising. In effect, the call-and-response model takes on a loosely structured yet ritualised form of religious conversation involving a pastor's statements and (usually) the assent or (rarely) the derision of the crowd. As Harrison notes,

> Jones' speech was buoyed along by moments of applause, shouts of "amen," "hallelujah," and other forms frequently found in African American worship services, especially in a Christian context. In this way the speaker and the audience participate in a carefully orchestrated conversation, with the speaker making a claim upon the sensibilities of the audience members, who then bear responsibility for validating that claim (or not) and encouraging the speaker to continue in his or her present vein (or not).[196]

In an insightful sociological study of African American Pentecostal worship, Timothy J. Nelson similarly emphasised the participatory nature of this conversation: "It is impossible for a preacher to fulfil his or her role without the active support and response of the congregation."[197] Whilst Jones held a prominent position in defining the core emotional standards of the community, it was the community itself that bore responsibility for reproducing these standards in every service and in daily life.

[196] Harrison, "Jim Jones and Black Worship Traditions", pp. 129-130.
[197] Timothy J. Nelson, "Sacrifice of Praise: Emotion and Collective Participation in an African American Worship Service," *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 57 No. 4 (1996), p. 391 [379-396].

Each of the three audiotapes surviving the Indianapolis period bear the hallmarks of this worship style. Calls of "Yeah!" "That's right!" and "Amen!" punctuate Jones' sermons, although in this early period it is clear that Jones and his congregation were just getting to know one another. Jones' calls are sometimes met with what he considers insufficient responses, and the congregations engagement is regularly corrected. At this point the congregation simply not habituated the emotional standards Jones expected and Jones himself was not as adroit a speaker as he would later become. Rather, what these tapes show is a period in which Jones and his congregation were *learning* how to emotively interact with one another. For example, in FBI Audiotape Q1048-2, Jones reminds his congregation on several occasions to participate more fully in the service:

> Who would read, perhaps as we begin, and are impressed in the Holy Spirit, at about the 38th verse, Acts 2: 38. [Pause]. Blessed quietness. [Pause]. Don't get worried. [Pause]. Acts 2:38. Can anybody say Acts 2:38, so we can take out the quietness?
>
> [Several voices respond] Acts 2:38.[198]

Later in the sermon, Jones addresses the starchy behaviour of the congregation with a light-hearted admonition:

> To be born again means to put off the old creation. If you're born again, it means to be born out of racialism, born out creedism, born out of selfish, born out of all the lust an immorality, and born out of all the temptations and weaknesses of your flesh. When you're born to God, it means you're a new creature. Everybody say "Amen."
>
> [Congregation] Amen.
>
> [Jones] Don't know what else to say, just say [laughs] "Amen."[199]

The Indianapolis period reveals the formation of the style of worship that Jones and his congregation would perfect in later years, yet it also illuminates the practices by which such a style was formed. Desiring emotional expressiveness and spontaneity to a standard that he did not feel was met, Jones often directly intervened to correct and guide the emotional expressions and standards of his congregation.

[198] FBI Audiotape Q1058-2.
[199] FBI Audiotape Q1058-2.

In the immediate context of a worship service, the call-and-response model also promoted an immediate emotional response and helped to structure the emotional direction and narrative of the service. In Nelson's analysis of the call-and-response model, he suggests that the broad "trajectory of this type of behaviour is one of oscillating movement toward higher levels of intensity and participation, culminating in widespread and prolonged shouting."[200] Especially important in this process is the role of music. Music has been described by some scholars as a "universal feature of religious ritual," and its prominence across a variety of traditions is worth noting.[201]As Monique Scheer reminds us, listening to music is – in and of itself – a location of specific emotional practice: people seek out music (among other things) so as to "modulate our feelings to a greater or lesser degree."[202] Simply put, we listen to music in order to *feel* things: the awe of a crescendo, the pleasure of a harmony, the excitement of an up-beat tempo; not to mention the emotional content of lyrics found in love songs, ballads, and virtually every other genre that involves a lyrical accompaniment to the music itself. This includes, of course, hymnals and spirituals.

Within the Pentecostal-charismatic tradition music is regarded as a constituent aspect of worship. As Anthropologist Judith Becker has argued, Pentecostalism is

> Dependent upon music to structure its religious services and to validate its system of beliefs by provoking intense emotional reactions within its most devoted practitioners, leading them to 'testify.' To dance in The Spirit, to be possessed by the Holy Ghost, is demonstration that one is accepted into the congregation…[203]

Although Becker's analysis primarily revolves around the "listener" in such services, the line between listener and participant is never finely drawn. Whilst some attendees may engage passively in the service through listening, others participate more actively singing, dancing, swaying, shouting, praising, and other participatory practices.

Music and song could be found punctuating every point of a Peoples Temple service. Before Jones' sermon hymns would warm the congregation up, and throughout the service it would be used

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[200] Nelson, "Sacrifice of Praise," p. 391.
[201] Candace S. Alcorta and Richard Sosis, "Ritual, Emotion, and Sacred Symbols: The Evolution of Religion as Adaptive Complex," *Human Nature* Vol. 15, No. 4 (Winter 2005) p. 336 [323-359].
[202] Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice," p. 210.
[203] Judith Becker, "Exploring the Habitus of Listening: Anthropological Perspectives," in Patrik N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda (eds.) *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications* (Oxford University Press, 2011) p. 143 [127-158].

to direct the congregation toward higher and higher levels of emotional engagement. Some services would be dedicated entirely to song. An invitation to service found *Indianapolis Star* dated 9 November 1957, for example, promotes a dedicated "Apostolic Evangelistic and Singspiration" service beginning at 7:45pm on Sundays.[204] As suggested by the term "singspiration," the underlying purpose of a musical service was to inspire the congregation: to create an atmosphere of shared emotional activity.

The music of Peoples Temple in Indianapolis was drawn primarily from traditional Christian hymnals and songbooks. For example, part two of FBI Audiotape Q1058-2 begins with Jones leading the congregation in a rendition of "Jesus is the Light of the World," before instructing his audience to be seated for the sermon.

> Light of the world, oh Jesus is the light, the light of the world… I said Jesus is the light, light of the world, oh, Jesus is the light, the light of the world… We thank you, Christ, that you are our light tonight. Blessed be your name. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah… You may be seated.[205]

Other songs were original compositions. Donald Beck, the Temple's Junior Choir Director in California, recalled a song titled "Welcome" which would be sung by the Junior Choir members at the very beginning of services:[206]

> Welcome, welcome all of you
>
> Glad you are with us
>
> Shake hands, no need to be blue
>
> Welcome to you!
>
> He keeps me singing a happy song
>
> He keeps me singing it all day long
>
> For all the things that we drear
>
> He always is near

[204]Peoples Temple Advertisement, *The Indianapolis Star* (November 9, 1957).
[205] FBI Audiotape Q1058-2.
[206] Donald Beck, "Confessions of a Junior Choir Director," (2013). *Alternative Considerations. https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=30782*

> And that's why my heart is always filled with song.[207]

The lyrics of "Welcome" evoke joy, warmth, happiness, and a welcoming atmosphere, encouraging the practice of handshaking and promoting congregational intimacy at the very beginning of the service. Such songs set the tone of worship, and they convey important emotional standards in their lyrical content as well as the style and method of their performance. As an upbeat number played whilst congregants filled out the pews and aisles, "Welcome" would serve for many years as the introductory worship song which set the tone of emotional conduct for the service.

Music was used to punctuate services leading up to the crescendo of faith-healing that was so central to Jones' early ministry. For example, in FBI Audiotape Q1058-4 Jones can be heard leading the congregation in a rendition of "No One Ever Cared For Me Like Jesus," before the healings begin.[208] The lyrics remain largely unchanged from Charles Frederick Weigle's original composition, although after the first verse Jones begins interspersing the song with instructions to the congregation:

> [Jones and congregation] No one ever cared for me like Jesus
>
> There's no other friend so kind as he
>
> No one else could take the sin and darkness from me
>
> Oh, how much he cared for me.
>
> [Speaking again, with piano continuing in background] Keep your heads bowed for a moment so I can get the mind of the Lord… How many have faith, pray, pray. How many of you really love Christ, pray with all your heart that people will be inclined to the gospel…. Is there a heart here, is there a heart here that needs something from heaven that will lift your hand? Thank you, thank you. Three, four, five.[209]

Although most analyses regard Pentecostal participation as spontaneous, like all practices they must be socially learnt and instantiated. Like the conductor of an orchestra, Jones guides the congregation to the correct performances and gestures, such as the raising of hands and approaching the altar to receive healing:

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[207] Peoples Temple Choir, "Welcome," *He's Able* (1973)
[208] FBI Audiotape Q1058-4.
[209] FBI Audiotape Q1058-4.

> You come up to this altar, God will fill you… If you hum it, hum it. Hum that song… I pray in the name of Jesus, lift your hands, just lift them there. Lift your hands up in the name of Jesus. By the power of the Holy Spirit, bring healing to this life.[210]

Within Peoples Temple, faith-healing was one of the largest attractions that drew crowds to Jones' Indianapolis ministry, and it represented a practice entirely typical across the various modalities of Pentecostal tradition. Broadly speaking, faith healing has a long history within the Christian church.[211] Some authors regard early Christianity specifically as a "religion of healing," a fact which is worth noting when we consider the restorationist origins of Temple theology and the prominence of faith healing in Jones' ministry.[212] The Biblical basis of such a practice is clear in the New Testament's coverage of Jesus' miracles, as well as the healings performed by Jesus' disciples as discussed primarily in the Book of Acts. In regard to Jesus, the Bible tells several stories of his ability to heal, including the curing of the blind (Mark 8:22-26; John 9:1-12); the curing of lepers (Mark 1:40-45; Matthew 8:1-4; and Luke 5:12-16); and even the raising of the dead (John 11:1-44; Luke 7:11-17); not to mention Jesus' own resurrection.

It is the Book of Acts which provides the foundational pattern of Pentecostal faith-healing practices.[213] In the narrative preserved in Acts, Peter heals a crippled man immediately after the day of the Pentecost. As the story is written, Peter and John were en route to a temple for prayer, before being asked for alms by a man unable to walk:

> Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.[214]

Few sources have survived the Indianapolis period as evidence of faith healing within Peoples Temple, but such a practice was frequently reflected on by the earliest members of the movement and by Marceline Jones herself. As Marceline later recalled in Jonestown, Jim's Indianapolis ministry was replete with divine healing:

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[210] FBI Audiotape Q1058-4.
[211] See Amanda Porterfield, "Healing in the History of Christianity: Presidential Address, January 2002 American Society of Church History," *Church History*, Vol. 71 No. 2 (June 2002) pp. 227-242.
[212] Gary B. Ferngren, "Early Christianity as a Religion of Healing," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 66 No. 1 (Spring 1992) pp. 1-15.
[213] Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017) p. 109.
[214] Acts 3: 6-8.

> There were marvelous healings that occurred: cataracts were removed, hip sockets were replaced; people were healed just by having his shadow fall upon them. Growths were spit up. I used to carry a paper bag to the meeting just for the purpose of carrying the growths away. People climbed into the windows to get to him.[215]

Jack Beam recalled similar memories in his reminiscences captured on FBI Audiotape Q777. Interestingly, Beam discusses the difficulties Jones faced in developing a human service ministry when individuals mainly attended for the healings:

> And he would wrap it up in such a way that you had to look at it, you know, you had to look at it. And then, by God, you know, by looking at it, then he'd heal your ass, and it was the Word being accompanied by signs and wonders... And these suckers just stay like to get healing, and out the door, and Jim would just work 'til he fall on his face.[216]

The tension between audiences that came for healing and Jones' desire for congregants who stayed for the human service ministry would last well into the Californian period of Temple history.

The most complete example of an Indianapolis faith-healing service is found in FBI Audiotape Q1017.As in Audiotape Q1058-4 the healings come at the end of the service. As Jones reaches the climax of his sermon, he begins speaking in tongues before a woman in the audience – the subject of the healing – begins religiously shouting and performing tongues as well. "Oh, Christ Almighty, give unto thee this healing in thy body," Jones orates to the audience, "Body, spirit, and soul." The congregation's excitement at this point becomes increasingly audible over the noise and distortion found on the tape, as congregants can be heard moving, praying, and shouting:

> I will pray unto thee with [unintelligible] soul of my heart, and become a minister – become a minister of nursing and compassion. I will bless thee, and I will restore health unto thy body. I have come to thee this night, and I've asked Him... Would you lift your hands and surrender yourself to Him tonight? Would you lift your hands and say yes [unintelligible] tonight? Will the Lord God visit you tonight? Will He heal you tonight?[217]

The intensity of the crowd reaction from this point onwards makes much of Jones' dialogue unintelligible, as the microphone picks up the shouts, cheers, whoops, scraping of chairs, and other noises made by the congregation.

Like interactive theatrical performances, Jones' faith healings were emotionally intense events which relied on the collective emotional practices of participants in the congregation. Although

[215] "Transcription of Marceline Jones," *Alternative Considerations*.
[216] FBI Audiotape Q777.
[217] FBI Audiotape Q1017.

faith-healing as a specific practice will receive further exploration in Chapter Four due to a far richer source base, it is worth noting a comment made by Harrell in his analysis of the ministers of the post-war healing revival. Dedicated "faith-healers" such as William Branham quickly found that the gruelling schedule that success elicited became gruelling. As Harrell described such ministers, "Most were dedicated to back-breaking work and spent long gruelling hours in the centers of the platforms of the big tents praying, clapping, shouting, pleading with the crippled to walk, commanding the blind to see, and bowing dramatically amidst shouts of 'Praise the Lord' and 'Hallelujah.' It was an exhausting, grinding, draining way of life."[218] As Jack Beam recalled, Jones would work until he "fell flat on his face."[219] It seems that the role of faith healing in Jones' ministry bore remarkable similarities with the other ministers of the post-war revival, including his mentor and associate, William Branham, who "was a broken man after little more than a year" of his healing ministry.[220]

Perhaps it is for this reason that, in October l961, Jones was ordered by his primary care physician to take a two month leave of absence from his laborious ministry. Travelling first to British Guiana, and then later to Hawaii, Jones and his family would eventually spend two years in Brazil during which Peoples Temple was left in the hands of his associate ministers, Jack Beam, Russel Winberg, Archie Ijames, and Ross Case. [221] Returning to Indianapolis in December 1963, Jones found that his congregation had severely diminished, and his associate ministers had become fractured.[222]

This chapter has discussed the formation of the early Peoples Temple ministry in Indianapolis with an explicit focus on the theology of love developed by Jones. Christian love was an explicit emotional standard to be met, and which could be mobilised and communicated by several practices. On an interpersonal level, integrated worship (including the holding of hands, kissing in greeting, embracing) were all practices intimately linked with Christian love. Furthermore, agape could be demonstrated through charitable giving and voluntary labour, both of which found purchase in the Temple's redistributive milieu. Equally during services, love was believed to be the force which

[218] Harrell, *All Things are Possible*, p. 6.
[219] FBI Audiotape Q777.
[220] Harrell, *All Things are Possible*, p. 6.
[221] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 59.
[222] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land,* p. 51.

created and made possible the performance of faith-healings, with these theatrical events being reliant on the collective emotional energies of the congregation.

Chapter Two: From Pastor to Prophet.

Jim Jones and Father Divine.

Between the founding of Peoples Temple in 1955 and the year it departed Indiana in 1965, both the church and its minister underwent considerable changes. Although Peoples Temple was based in Indianapolis, Jones regularly departed the city for appearances as a visiting minister, faith-healer, and participant in conventions and services across the nation. In her memoir *Onliest One Alive*, Hyacinth Thrash suggested that it was Jones' relationship with another religious leader which catalysed the biggest change in the young Hoosier preacher's ministry: "I think it all started when he went to visit Father Divine in New York," Thrash wrote, "After that visit to New York, Jim was a changed man. He changed! I saw him change before my very eyes!"[223]

Born as George Baker, Father Divine (1876-1965) was a black preacher who founded his International Peace Mission Movement in the 1920s in Sayville, New York. Regarded as "one of the most prominent religious leaders of the time," Father Divine was an important influence on Jim Jones throughout the Indianapolis period.[224] In many ways the Peace Mission and Peoples Temple were kindred organisational spirits; each were interracial religious movements with redistributive theologies, who each worshipped in the expressive, ecstatic Pentecostal tradition. Once boasting thousands of members, the Peace Mission had stretched from East to West coast with "Heavens" (headquarters and hotels, for profit) located across America and as far afield as Europe. However, by the late 1950s the Peace Mission was an organisation in clear decline. In an effort to secure organisational control and oversight, Divine had deliberately condensed the Peace Mission's holdings around his Woodmont Estate.[225] Despite the waning popularity and favour of the Peace Mission, Divine's person and ministry offered Jones a blueprint and inspiration for his own divinely inspired role and movement. The following chapter will address the influence of Father Divine upon Jim

[223] Thrash, *Onliest One Alive*, p. 57.
[224] R. Marie Griffith, "Body Salvation: New Thought, Father Divine, and the Feast of Material Pleasures," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol. 11 No. 2 (Summer 2001) p. 119 [119-153].
[225] A fully detailed account of the history of the Peace Mission Movement can be found in Jill Watts, *God, Harlem, U.S.A.: The Father Divine Story* (University of California Press, 1995).

Jones, clarifying that one area of influence can be seen in the importation of new and important emotional standards.

The influence of Father Divine upon Peoples Temple has been noted by several scholars. In *Gone From the Promised Land,* Hall noted that "bit by bit [Jones] imported Peace Mission religious themes and operational structures into Peoples Temple practically wholesale."[226] According to Hall, Father Divine inspired Jim Jones in three fundamental ways. First was Jones' adoption of Divine's theology of spiritual possession and personal godhood which allowed Jones to assert his increasing divinity, "and to a lesser degree," the divinity of those who followed him. Secondly, it "offered a way out of the Pentecostalist religious framework: in terms of power, through personal rulership, and in terms of practical theology, through what would be called the human service ministry." Finally, the Peace Mission's description of the Woodmont Estate and its surrounding communes as a "Promised Land" perhaps encouraged Jones to search for a Promised Land for his own flock.[227]

In a comparative analysis of Jim Jones and Father Divine, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya argue that Father Divine's Peace Mission "was the only religious model which seriously affected [Peoples Temple]," a point which underscores the importance of Father Divine but neglects the importance of other key figures such as William Branham.[228] Alongside Hall, Lincoln and Mamiya suggest that one of the clearest influences of Divine upon Jones was that following Jones' visits to the Peace Mission, he steadily encouraged the Peoples Temple congregation to refer to him as Father, and to Marceline as Mother.[229] Although not uncommon in Christian congregations, Lincoln and Mamiya clarify that "in the black cults a leader who become Father or Daddy was more than a mere pastor. He represented absolute authority and commanded absolute obedience."[230]

One area that Jones and Divine both exercised their authority within was the realm of emotional standards. Within the framework of feeling offered by these two religious movements, Jones and Divine held the final authority for defining new emotional standards and behaviours

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[226] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 50.
[227] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 51. For more on Divine's "Promised Land," see Carleton Mabee, *Promised Land: Father Divine's Interracial Communities in Ulster County, New York* (Purple Mountain Press, 2008).
[228] C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, "Daddy Jones and Father Divine," in Moore, Pinn, and Sawyer, *Peoples Temple and Black Religion in America*, p. 39 [pp. 28-46].
[229] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land,* p. 51; Lincoln and Mamiya, "Daddy Jones and Father Divine," p. 39.
[230] Lincoln and Mamiya, "Daddy Jones and Father Divine," p. 39.

expected of their congregation. In a very real sense each minister claimed emotional authority on behalf of the congregation, and this authority was assented to as a constituent part of a charismatic relationship.

The following chapter explores the impact of the relationship between Jones and Divine as it affected the emotional standards of Peoples Temple. It relies primarily upon a close reading of a pamphlet circulated within Peoples Temple, written by Pastor Jones and with explicit focus on Father Divine's ministry. Entitled "Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine," this small, 28-page card pamphlet was intended for circulation among the congregants of Peoples Temple.[231] The stated aim of the pamphlet is to provide "a fair analysis and evaluation of the Rev. M. J. Divine ministry" as "necessary to the progress of every honest believer."[232] Two topics discussed by Jones within the pamphlet each have important emotionological implication. First, Jones discusses the "adulation" of Father Divine (what we might now call charismatic authority or the charismatic relationship). Secondly, Jones addresses the Peace Mission Movement's ideological and theological commitment to positive thought. These two aspects will be explored in the following chapter, demonstrating that the interaction between Jones and Divine prompted recognisable changes in the Temple's emotional framework.

Adulation and Charisma: Daddy Jones and Father Divine.

In *Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine*, Jones begins his discussion of the Peace Mission Movement by focusing on the practice adulation of Father Divine. The worship of Father Divine was rooted in the Peace Mission belief that Father Divine was God incarnated in mortal flesh. For example, during the 1930s in Harlem, Divine's followers addressed to him as "God, Harlem, U.S.A."[233] A more tragic demonstration of faith occurred in 1935, when three of Divine's followers became trapped in an apartment fire in Newark, New Jersey. These three women rejected the assistance of the fire department officers attempting to rescue them on the grounds that Father Divine would do so instead.

[231] Peoples Temple, "Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine," (1959). RYMUR 89-4286-BB-17-O-1 – BB-17-O-33. *Alternative Considerations.*
[232] "Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine," p. 3.
[233] Watts, *God, Harlem, U.S.A*, p. ix.

Before becoming engulfed in flame, one follower was reportedly heard shouting "Peace, peace, it is truly wonderful. Father, Father, peace. Father, you will save us. Father, you are God, Father. Father Divine is God, God, God!"[234] Each of the three Divinites died in the blaze, rejecting material assistance in favour of spiritual salvation.

In the pamphlet *Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine,* Jones first approaches the topic of Divine's adulation by describing the apprehension he felt when entering Divine's ministry:

> I had heard the usual opinions that it was supposed to be a harem run by a demonically possessed immoral person; in fact, I was almost wholly convinced that it was a complete fraud. I had always been extremely opposed to adulation or worship of religious leaders. In order to stop flesh exaltation which seemed to be developing in my own healing ministry I publicly insisted that no one even referred to me as Reverend. Naturally, one can imagine the revulsion I felt upon entering their church and hearing the devoted followers of Mr. Divine refer to him as Father.[235]

Jones continued his discussion be relating his experience at a Peace Mission Holy Communion Banquet. Holy Communion Banquets were the primary venues of collective religious worship within the Peace Mission that featured free meals for the needy alongside more traditional Pentecostal worship.[236] Rather than directing their worship at God, Divine's followers worshiped their minister directly. Jones describes how he initially felt "nauseated by what seemed to be personal worship to their leader," before describing his changing perspective:

> None the less when I would pause to think and be fair in my judgment, I could not help but see a peace and love that prevailed generally throughout the throng of enthusiastic worshippers. Every face was aglow with smiles and radiant friendliness.[237]

In Jones' appraisal, the repulsion he experienced in relation to flesh-exultation or adulation was challenged by the atmosphere of "peace and love" that suffused the service, evidenced by smiles and "radiant" friendliness. Jones underscores his reappraisal of flesh worship with a Biblical quote drawn from Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,

[234] Mayne, "Beliefs and Practices of the Cult of Father Divine," pp. 298-299; see also *The New York Times,* "3 Followers of Father Divine Spurn Rescue And Die in Explosion and Fire in Newark," December 29, 1935.
[235] Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine, p. 4.
[236] See Watts, *God, Harlem, U.S.A.,* p. 33 for a discussion of the Peace Mission's Holy Communion Banquets.
[237] Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine, p. 6.

whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."[238]

As Jones' writing intoned, whatever issues may exist with the flesh-worship of Father Divine, these issues were clearly repudiated by the evidence found on the faces and in the words of Divine's followers. Because of their happiness, joy, peace, love and enthusiastic worship, Jones encouraged his readers within Peoples Temple to reconsider their position on flesh worship as he had. Ross Case, an associate minister in Peoples Temple between 1961 and 1963, later recalled in the aftermath of the tragedy in Guyana that Jones "was always talking about sex, or Father Divine, or Daddy Grace, and was envious of how they were adored by their people and the absolute loyalty they got. Jim wanted all that affection and loyalty for himself."[239]

The worship of Father Divine has traditionally been described as a manifestation of charismatic authority. As defined by Weber, charismatic authority refers to a

> quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or least specifically exceptional qualities.[240]

Sociologist Paul Joosse has argued that Weber's definition of charisma is inherently "relational," and "attributable," stating that the "locus of power is in the led, who actively (if perhaps unconsciously) invest their leaders with social authority."[241] Furthermore, Sociologist Patricia Wasielewski has argued Weber "clearly recognized the interactive basis of charisma when he emphasized the need for followers to collectively validate a leader's exceptional qualities."[242] In short, without the assent and active engagement of his followers there exists no charismatic authority. It might, therefore, be more accurate to speak of a charismatic relationship rather than a narrower field of charismatic authority.

With Peoples Temple as a case study, Rebecca Moore has recently explored the relational nature of charismatic authority in a chapter of the *Routledge International Handbook of Charisma*

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[238] Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine, p. 9; Philippians 4:8.
[239] Robert Lindsey, "Jim Jones - From Poverty To Power of Life and Death," *The New York Times* (November 26, 1978) citing interview with Ross E. Case.
[240] Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (trans. A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons; Oxford University Press,1947 [1924]) p. 358.
[241] Paul Joosse, "Becoming a God: Max Weber and the Social Construction of Charisma," *Journal of Classical Sociology* Vol. 14 No. 3 pp. 266-283.
[242] Patricia L. Wasielewski, "The Emotional Basis of Charisma," *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 8 No. 2 (Fall, 1985) pp. 208-9 [207-222].

titled "Apocalyptic Groups and Charisma of the Cadre."[243] Drawing upon Weber's concept of a "charismatic aristocracy," Moore argues that the leadership cadre of Peoples Temple served to amplify and maintain the charisma traditionally attributed to Jones alone.[244] Moore's analysis, however, is specifically limited to the California period of Temple history and beyond; limited sources, and therefore limited information, have typically precluded an in depth analysis of the charismatic relationship as it developed and emerged in Indianapolis. Despite the dramatic transformation in the leadership cadre that occurred following the move to California, several key and important lieutenants within Peoples Temple joined in Indianapolis, including Archie Ijames and Patricia Cartmell (1929-1978): the former being Jones' leading associate minister, and the latter becoming his Ohio secretary in charge of the small revival circuit he had built.[245]

In recent research, sociologists have increasingly emphasised the emotional basis of charisma and the functional role of emotions in the charismatic relationship. For example, Wasielewski argues that the emergence of a charismatic relationship itself is an inextricably emotional process. "Emotions are central to the 'unstructuring' of social circumstances and to the relationship between the charismatic and his/her followers," Wasielewski writes, going on to emphasise that "emotive cues guide the interactions out of which charismatic authority arises."[246] In the author's analysis, "the definition of a leader as charismatic seems to depend on his/her ability to get followers to reassess the feelings they experience and the manner in which they display them."[247] At the cusp of the emotional turn in the humanities, Wasielewski was among the first authors to explicitly lay out an emotional theory of charisma in which charisma itself reflected the capacity of an individual to define and redefine accepted emotional standards and feelings.

Further research has similarly argued for the foundational role of emotions in the development and maintenance of the charismatic relationship. In the article *Charismatic Leadership: Eliciting and Channelling Follower Emotions* (2018), Thomas Sy, Calen Horton, and Ronald Riggio

[243] Rebecca Moore, "Apocalyptic Groups and Charisma of the Cadre," in José Pedro Zúquete (ed.) *Routledge International Handbook of Charisma* (Routledge, 2020) pp. 277-287.
[244] Moore, "Charisma of the Cadre," p. 278.
[245] Mike Cartmell, "Patty Cartmell, My Mom," *Alternative Considerations.*
[246] Wasielewski, "The Emotional Basis of Charisma," p. 208.
[247] Wasielewski, "The Emotional Basis of Charisma," p. 213.

"argue that charismatic leaders elicit strong emotions from followers which encourage devotion and action, and these emotions mediate the relationship between charisma and its effects."[248] Positing an Elicit-Channel (EC) model of charismatic authority, the authors suggest that the true power of the charismatic figure lies in his or her ability to elicit the correct emotional repertoire and channel these feelings so as to motivate actions and behaviours congruent with the values and vision of the leader.[249]

Divine's use of the call-and-response model exemplifies this process of elicitation and channelling the emotions of his congregants. Like Jim Jones and William Branham, Divine's sermons were recorded, although Divine's messages were regularly transcribed and published in the Peace Mission's periodical magazines. Several different Peace Mission magazines were produced throughout the movement's lifespan, although the two most important were *The Spoken Word* and its successor *The New Day*. [250] These sermons hold value both as emotionological texts and the locations of specific practices wherein these new emotional standards could be instantiated and manifest.

For example, on Thanksgiving Day 1951, Father Divine delivered a sermon at a Holy Communion Banquet proclaiming the virtues of giving thanks as an emotional practice. His words, and the audience responses are reproduced below:

> You find that giving Praise continually, you are multiplying your Blessings over and over again, as many, as many, as many! Aren't you glad! ("Oh, so glad!" came the instant response). Multiplying your Blessings, as Praise is the multiplicand, giving thanks is the addition that you add to what you have by giving thanks; by giving praise you multiply them! Aren't you glad! ("So glad, LORD!" came the response) …[251]

Here, Father Divine's emphasis on giving thanks is the articulation of a clear emotional standard and related practice. The standard is an attitude of praise and appreciation, with the practice of verbal thanksgiving claimed to have multiplicative properties. Divine's words may have established the standard, but his Holy Communion Banquets provided the contexts in which these standards were practiced communally and assented to by the congregation, as shown by the call-and-response of "Aren't you glad?" and "Oh, so glad!" Later, in 1972, Jones would mock the responsiveness of the

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[248] Thomas Sy, Calen Horton, Ronald Riggio, "Charismatic Leadership: Eliciting and Channelling Follower Emotions," *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 29 No. 1 (February 2018) p. 58 [58-69].
[249] Sy, Horton, Riggio, "Charismatic Leadership", p. 63ff.
[250] Watts, *God, Harlem, U.S.A.,* p. 160.
[251] Father Divine, "Our FATHER's Sermon Given Whilst at the Holy Communion Table of the Circle Mission Church," *PeaceMission.info,* peacemission.info/fdipmm/word4/52110518.html

Peace Mission's followers whilst expressing some admiration for the authority Divine wielded over them:

> I'd sit in my chair and look at you very quietly, you know, and keep that religious demeanour. Look holy, yeah. I always wished I could develop what Father [Divine] had on that, he could just look at them and then say, "Aren't you glad!" "So glad!" they'd say [laughter].[252]

Divine used the call-and-response model to elicit the correct emotives from his congregation, thereby encouraging them to participate in communal emotional practices and meet the standard of emotional expression expected of them.

Divine's emphasis on thanksgiving and positivity is evident in any number of his sermons. More than a mere idiosyncratic flair, however, Divine's commitment to positive emotives reflected his theological heritage as a practitioner of New Thought.

New Thought, New Feelings.

In *Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine*, Jones continues his discussion of the Peace Mission Movement by focusing his attention on the emphatic positivity which lay at the heart of Divine's congregation and their respected avoidance of negative thoughts and gestures:

> The Divine followers have a policy of never speaking about negative situations. They keep their conversation wholesome and refuse to discuss their sicknesses or any of their problems; in fact, such terms as sickness and death are obliterated from their vocabulary. They will not bear or receive an evil report upon anyone, which certainly fulfils scripture.[253]

Although not mentioned by name, here Jones is alluding to a theological and doctrinal centrepiece of Father Divine's International Peace Mission Movement, from which much of Divine's idiosyncratic theology was drawn: The New Thought movement. Whilst scholars have explored Father Divine's heritage in New Thought, this work approaches New Thought from an entirely new angle.[254] In the following section, New Thought is approached as an emotionological concept, reliant upon the articulation of new emotional standards, practices, and strategies of navigation.

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[252] FBI Audiotape Q1029, *Alternative Considerations.*
[253] Jones, *Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine*, pp. 9-10.
[254] For more on the link between Father Divine and New Thought, see Watts, *God, Harlem, U.S.A.,* esp. pp. 21-30; R. Marie Griffith, "Body Salvation: New Thought, Father Divine, and the Feast of Material Pleasures*," Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol. 11 No. 2 (Summer 2001) pp. 119-153.

The New Thought Movement emerged and spread across America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including individuals such as Franz Mesmer (1734-1815) who theorised the existence of an invisible force exuded by all living creatures which he dubbed *mesmerism*; Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802-1866), a folk healer, mentalist, and mesmerist; and Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), the founder of the Church of Christ, Scientist; and Emma Curtis Hopkins (1849-1925), Eddy's student and assistant.[255] Each of these New Thought practitioners believed in the power of the mind as powerful tool of healing which, if harnessed correctly, could provide health, wealth, and protection to all.

In *God, Harlem, U.S.A.,* Watts summarises the three main similarities shared by the diversity of New Thought practitioners in the United States: "That God existed in all people, that the channelling of God's spirit eradicated problems, and that Unity with God guaranteed salvation."[256] In a much older and more thorough definition William James (1842-1910), the "Father of American psychology," described the New Thought Movement (what he referred to as the mind-cure movement) as follows:

> One of the doctrinal sources of Mind-cure is the four Gospels… But the most characteristic feature of the mind-cure movement is an inspiration much more direct. The leaders in this faith have an intuitive belief in the all-saving power of healthy-minded attitudes as such, in the conquering efficacy of courage, hope, and trust, and a correlative contempt for doubt, fear, worry, and all nervously precautionary states of mind.[257]

The emotional component of New Thought is clearest in James' classic definition, which suggests that practitioners and formulators of New Thought were promoting a distinct kind of emotionology in their writings and among their followers. This emotionology blended emergent psychological and medical knowledge with spiritual and religious doctrines and beliefs to promote new emotional standards, practices, and vocabularies which were deemed themselves to have the capacity to heal and to ward off ill fortune and poor health. These emotional standards valued expressions of positively valent

[255] Prentiss, Craig R., "'The Full Realization of This Desire' Garland Anderson, Race, and the Limits of New Thought in the Age of Jim Crow," Nova Religio Vol. 17 No. 3 (February 2014) p. 87 [pp. 84-108]; Wade E. Pickren and Alexandra Rutherford, *A History of Modern Psychology in Context* (Wiley, 2010) p. 79; Alfred Whitney Griswold, "New Thought: A Cult of Success," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 40 No. 3 (November 1934) pp. 309-318; Beryl M. Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement 1875-1920* (University of California Press, 2001).
[256] Watts, *God, Harlem, U.S.A.* p. 22.
[257] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Random House, 1929) pp. 93-94.

emotions whilst regulating expressions of negatively valent ones. In this sense, the individuals who practiced New Thought were encouraged to conduct "emotion work" so as to produce healthy minded attitudes and outcomes.

Father Divine's New Thought emotionology is present throughout the history of the Peace Mission movement. Thoughts and feelings were not regarded as separate entities as in the Enlightenment oppositional conception of reason and emotion, but rather as integrated parts of the individual spirit which could be tamed, and their power over the body harnessed. For example, in 1931 Father Divine advised his followers to

> Be happy even if the world burns down and you are all right. Just get to that place and be perfectly closed in by the Universal Mind Substance, perfectly happy, undisturbed and unvoked, and you are in that place then where you are safe.[258]

In a later sermon delivered in 1938, Divine similarly emphasised the importance of positive emotions because of their contagious nature, being socially communicated between persons and thus multiplied:

> These actuated words of expression, and every "emotionated" word or expression, they are all transmittable. We are transmitting them to others. Copy after this Fashion I have shown you, and AM showing you. Not one of my real followers is on the welfare! Not one of my real followers is a beggar![259]

With equal power however were negative thoughts and emotions, which were similarly infectious and reproduced conditions and states of misery and pain:

> Cleanse your minds of every detestable tendency, of every antagonistic and conflicting idea and opinion and recognise GOD as the Infinite among you… The antagonistic and conflicting minds of the people, they create those things themselves by having infantry [sic] minds and impure minds.[260]

Father Divine emphasised positive thought and strictly prohibited negative thoughts, words, gestures, and expressions as an explicit emotional standard expected of participants within his community. As Jill Watts noted, in *God, Harlem, U.S.A.,* "Father Divine believed language subtly influenced consciousness… Positivism was… stressed through the follower's popular mantra 'It is

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[258] Father Divine, "The Word of GOD Revealed: FATHER DIVINE's Words from 'The Notebook of John Lamb,'" (21 November 1931) *PeaceMission.info.* peacemission.info/fdipmm/wogr/31wogr08.html.
[259] Father Divine, "My Plan and Activities Mean More Than Life to Humanity Because I am Showing How to be of Real Practical Service to All Communities," (4 July 1938) *PeaceMission.info*: peacemission.info/fdipmm/worddrtv/38070414.html
[260] Divine, "My Plan and Activities Mean More Than Life," *PeaceMission.info.*

wonderful.'"[261] This mantra, however, represented an emotional practice: the repetition of an emotive sequence in order to curate, manifest, and communicate positivity whilst consciously navigating one's negative emotions.

Of course, this does not mean that the followers of Father Divine did not experience or express negative thoughts or feelings. In April 1930, a young woman by the name of Susan Hadley joined Father Divine's Peace Mission Movement as an informant for the Suffolk County district attorney's office, instructed to report on the practices and beliefs of the movement for potential prosecution. Amidst her findings, Hadley reported that "Even when expressing anger or disgust, [Father Divine's followers] countermanded negative statements by interjecting 'It is wonderful' throughout conversations."[262] Rather than the explicit avoidance of negative thoughts and feelings, Divine's interpretation of New Thought advocated for the constant practice of positivity through emotive sequences as a strategy for the navigation of emotional turmoil.

The role of New Thought as a series of emotional standards and practices powerfully influenced Jones' ministry. As early as 1957 it is clear Jones was attempting to incorporate aspects of Divine's emotionology into his own congregation. A sermon given in 1957, for example, contains seeds of New Thought ideology which Jones communicated to his flock:

> You have that kind of faith tonight? Do you have a real optimism tonight? How many are optimistic? I've heard so uh- so many people say today they thought they was dyin' [laughter]. I've heard people thought they were getting' sick and getting' that and getting the other thing… We can get so positive with God and such an *optimism with God that all things are well, even when we look like we're just dying or naturally we look like we're disintegrating…* [emphasis added].[263]

Here, Jones directly linked the practice of positive thinking and optimistic attitudes with the material betterment of one's life. In much the same way as Divine encouraged his followers to be happy even when the world was burning down around them, Jones emphasised the power of positive thought as the solution to (and a prophylactic against) an individual's problems. As a natural corollary to this, Jones went further and warned his congregation about negative thoughts. As Jones indicates in this

[261] Watts, *God, Harlem, U.S.A.,* p. 65.
[262] Watts, *God, Harlem, U.S.A.,* p. 65; citing the *Suffolk County News*, 25 April 1930, p. 7.
[263] FBI Audiotape Q1058-2. Alternative Considerations.

sermon, this is because negative thoughts bring about negative experiences – one can literally think oneself into illness:

> Last night, I- some sister, she wouldn't open the- she reminded me, I didn't even know it, little window open in that old storefront mission, and she says now, "you better accept that you'll get cold." Uh-huh. That thought come in. I said, I'm not going to think that thought. But it was in. And I felt that breeze coming on my neck… I did everything, but I had that thought on my mind. And Blessed God, I got the first cold I've had in years. I worked myself into a cold, just as sure as your foot. I decided I was gonna get a cold, I got one.[264]

In this same 1957 sermon, Jones also admonished members of his congregation with whom he had shared a car ride with one prior evening. His criticism holds a moral lesson: in speaking of their ills and anxieties they reproduce such things within and around themselves which is harmful to the community:

> There're negative vibrations. Talking about our sickness, or talking about our instant pain, [claps hands once] let no filthy things proceed out of your mouth… we could have a new language, *we could give no place to the Devil*, we tried it around here, but we dragged down to the realms of iniquity and we bind ourselves with the carnal conversation, but we should be a happy people… I'm so confident that we can *visualise the Christ*… let there be joy in our face, let there be peace in our hearts, let there be overcoming power in our members, and we'll look like changed creatures [emphasis added].[265]

In this section Jones' plea to "give no place to the devil" is the same phrase he used in his discussion of Peace Mission doctrine and practice in *Pastor Jones Meets Rev. M. J. Divine*, published two years after this specific sermon. Jones quotes the Bible as the explanation given for the Peace Mission's refusal to even use the words "devil" or "Satan" as a practical expression of the same avoidance of negativity (or evil, in this specific example) discussed earlier. Similarly, the phrase "visualise the Christ" bears great resemblance to Divine's own esoteric rhetoric as recorded in his sermons. For example, in one sermon delivered on the evening of 5 March 1943, Divine reminded his congregation that:

[264] FBI Audiotape Q1058-2. *Alternative Considerations.*
[265] FBI Audiotape Q1058-2. *Alternative Considerations.*

> The things you vividly visualize, you tend to materialize ... When you vividly visualize GOD by realizing GOD you tend to reproduce and materialize GOD in your life even as you observe HIM in HIMSELF.[266]

Although Jones sought to incorporate these aspects of New Thought ideology into his Peoples Temple, it is clear that this was not an immediately successful enterprise. A tape recorded in 1966, one year after the move to California, reveals the difficulties Jones faced in establishing new standards of feeling within Peoples Temple's emotional framework:

> Last week it was affirmed here that there would be no more talking of sickness and tiredness and disappointment and grief, and yet, last evening every time I'd ask somebody how they were, it was well- [laughter] all right… People, I hear you talking. I heard some conversation about uh, how hard times you've had since you've been here, the month you've been here. And we've got newcomers coming. You oughtn't be talking like that, and then the newcomer himself, he doesn't know what he… should be here or shouldn't be here.[267]

Although this new emotional standard was not incorporated without difficulty into Peoples Temple, it became a central aspect of the framework for feeling developed by Jones and which was adhered to (to varying degrees) by his most loyal congregants. As with all other emotional standards, however, it was not rigidly adhered to but required constant practice on the part of the congregation and regular intervention on the part of Pastor Jones.

Fear, Flight, and Migration.

During the Indianapolis years, Pastor Jones regularly counselled against fear among his congregation. In one sermon, Jones described fear as one of the "four mortal enemies of the soul" alongside aimlessness, feebleness, and pessimism.[268] In his abridged sermon *Faith Without Works is Dead*, Jones also chastised the fire-and-brimstone style of many of his Pentecostal contemporaries for bringing "a group of fearful people into the church."[269] When Jones first set out in his ministerial career he had warned against the use of fear in the church; yet by the time Peoples Temple left

[266] Father Divine, "When you vividly visualise God by realizing God you tend to produce and materialize God in your life even as you observe him in himself," (5 March 1943) *PeaceMission.info.*: peacemission.info/sermons-by-father-divine/when-you-vividly-visualize-god-by-realizing-god-you-tend-to-produce-and-materialize-god-in-your-life-even-as-you-observe-him-in-himself/
[267] FBI Audiotape Q1055-2. *Alternative Considerations.*
[268] FBI Audiotape Q1058-2. *Alternative Considerations.*
[269] "Faith Without Works is Dead," *Herald of Faith. Alternative Considerations.*

Indianapolis in 1965 fear played an important role in mobilising the community toward shared goals and actions.

In October 1961 Jones allegedly received a prophetic vision of nuclear holocaust. "One day as he strode into the house and started up the stairway, he had wheeled around suddenly, holding his eyes," writes Reiterman, "He had seen a big flash of light, he told his people: a vision of a nuclear explosion in Chicago that burned down within miles of Indianapolis."[270] The avoidance of fear as an emotional standard was now abandoned, in favour of fear being used as a tool of mobilisation. Earlier in the late fifties, Jones had sermonised that the fear of an approaching catastrophe would be needed to ignite a change within his congregant's hearts:

> I said something is going to bring us to our knees… Something's going to get us out of our attitudes of complacency – our thoughts of self-closure, self-abasement, and something's going to cause us to surrender ourselves. If it's an atomic war, then I say God send it.[271]

This vision of atomic war has been widely attributed by scholars of Peoples Temple as the primary reason Jones effected the migration of one hundred devotees from Indianapolis to California in 1965. Most scholars have pointed towards a January 1962 issue of *Esquire* magazine, which contained an article titled "Nine Places to Hide," as providing the impetus and location of this first migration.[272] Included on this list was Belo Horizonte, Brazil, where Jones would spend two years between 1961 and 1963, and Eureka, California, listed as the safest place in the continental United States – a short distance away from Redwood Valley, Ukiah, where the Temple would eventually settle.

Many members of Jones' congregation took his prophecy of nuclear holocaust seriously, including Jones' associate ministers. Rick Cordell immediately sold all his property and went to California in 1964 to scout ahead for the Temple's planned relocation.[273] Ross Case, prior to his departure, had argued passionately that the community migrate to California: "I pushed the idea that we should move the church so that we would be alive to evangelize what was left of the world after

[270] Reiterman with Jacobs, *Raven*, p. 76.
[271] FBI Audiotape Q1017. *Alternative Considerations*.
[272] Caroline Bird, "Nine Places to Hide," *Esquire* Magazine (January 1962).
[273] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 63.

the nuclear holocaust hit," he later claimed.[274] Although Jones may have capitalised on and encouraged the fear of nuclear Armageddon, this fear was not his alone.

Other former Temple members have disagreed on the reasons that Jones left Indianapolis. Don Cordell, for example, argued that it was a lawsuit filed by his brother, Gene, regarding their aunt Edith's donation of properties and money to Peoples Temple, that prompted Jones to flee Indianapolis. "My brother filed a lawsuit against Jim to recover the property for our aunt, four or five months before Jim uprooted the Temple in Indianapolis and moved to California. In our family's view, it was this lawsuit – not the *Esquire* article – which was the entire reason for the move."[275]

Whatever Jones' personal reasons for effecting a large-scale migration from urban Indianapolis to rural California may have been, we must appreciate the role of fear on the part of the congregation in motivating such a drastic collective action. Underscoring the role of fear as a motivator, Hyacinth Thrash wrote that:

> Jim predicted the nuclear holocaust would come June 15, 1967, but I didn't believe it. Some older people did. They were so afraid. Poor people, they were so ignorant, they couldn't even write their names.[276]

Whilst some like Thrash didn't believe in Jones' nuclear vision, she offers researchers some insight into the impact of Jones' fearmongering upon the older members of Peoples Temple. Thus, we can see in Indianapolis the first time that fear was used within Peoples Temple to affect a response behaviour; arguably the first recorded instance of the strategic use of fear which would become increasingly prominent behind the Temple's Californian closed-door services.

Most authors in the Temple oeuvre agree that the decision to transplant the community from urban Indianapolis to rural Ukiah represented a genuine fear of nuclear war on the part of both Pastor Jones and several within his congregation. Dismantling suggestions that Jones' prophecy was purely Machiavellian, Rebecca Moore observed that if growth, acclaim, and recognition were the primary motivations for the relocation then Jones would have likely moved first to an urban centre such as San Francisco rather than an "isolated and rural part of northern California."[277] Hall equally observed that

[274] Weightman, *Making Sense of the Jonestown Suicides*, p. 23.
[275] Cordell, "Cordell Family Legacy." *Alternative Considerations.*
[276] Thrash, *Onliest One Alive*, p. 58.
[277] Moore, *Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple,* p. 23.

the attention the Temple was beginning to receive in Indianapolis – a mixture of conservative Hoosier hostility and congregational friction – formed part of the decision, as the Temple had grown all it could in the rust belt's silver buckle.[278]

If fear was the primary motivator for the Temple's first migration, then it is clear that Peoples Temple were operating well within the bounds of the emotional climate of the early-mid-sixties in America. Nuclear fear was such a pervasive, socially contagious emotion that addressing and managing this sweeping sentiment became a cornerstone of American domestic defence policy. Guy Oakes and Andrew Grossman have explored the affective dimensions of America's hypothetical home front, demonstrating that an explicit and sophisticated system of emotions management was developed by civil defence specialists so as to "suppress an uncontrollable and dangerous terror of atomic weapons and foster in its stead a more benign and pliable nuclear fear."[279] Both "propaganda and a marketing effort," the program educated American citizens about the dangers of nuclear war, clarified the normative behavioural standards and responses in the event of an attack, and provided a system of related emotions management so as to reframe dangerous, panicked atomic terror into useful, malleable nuclear fear.[280]

Nuclear fear encompassed a variety of behaviours, and each represented once more the intimate relationship between hope and fear. For example, civil defence readiness in American schools as early as 1952 advocated for the "Duck and Cover" technique with a catchy jingle and animation that taught children to fear the bomb and hope for survival in equal amounts – for why else should they duck and cover?[281] It is also worth mentioning the notable surge of home fallout shelter kits manufactured throughout the early 1960s. Whilst several hundred thousand of these kits were estimated to have sold, issues of cost and complexity hindered their wider adoption. Interestingly, among the largest criticisms levelled at unpopular shelter salesmen was the charge that they were

[278] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 62.
[279] Guy Oakes and Andrew Grossman, "Managing Nuclear Terror: The Genesis of American Civil Defence Strategy," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, Vol. 5 No. 3 (1992) p. 361 [pp. 361-403].
[280] Oakes and Grossman, "Managing Nuclear Terror," p. 376ff.
[281] "Civil Defense for Schools: Duck and Cover" (United States: Castle Films, 1952) *Library of Congress* (MacDonald Collection) hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsmi/ntscrm.01836081

"exploiting private citizens and making a profit out of a community of fear."[282] As research has increasingly shown, nuclear fear was a fundamental aspect of Cold War culture within the United States, and it prompted a variety of responses from a variety of individuals and groups.[283] One such response was that of Jim Jones and Peoples Temple, who moved from Indianapolis to northern California with the intent of surviving whatever nuclear apocalypse may come.

This chapter has explored the influence of Father Divine and his Peace Mission upon Jim Jones and Peoples Temple. It has outlined the emotional basis of the charismatic relationship as the assent given to leaders by followers to define and redefine communal emotional standards. It has presented an original analysis of New Thought as a specifically emotionological movement, and compared the ways Jones and Divine instantiated the new standards of feeling implicit in New Thought theology within their respective congregations. Despite the rejection of negative emotion adopted by Jones within the emotional framework of Peoples Temple, the chapter has concluded with a brief examination of the use of fear within the movement to achieve collective actions.

Whatever Jones' motivation for the move to California may have been, the end result remained the same. In 1965 Jones and one hundred dedicated Hoosier Temple members – equally divided between white and black followers – left Indianapolis to head west for California. A new environment marked a new beginning for Peoples Temple, one which would see the movement adapt and change in quite remarkable ways. The following section explores the California history of Peoples Temple and will trace the development of the Temple's emotional standards between 1965 and 1977.

[282]Thomas Bishop, "'The Struggle to Sell Survival': Family Fallout Shelters and the Limits of Consumer Citizenship," *Modern American History*, Vol. 2 (2019) pp. 117-138

[283] For example see Spencer R. Weart, *Nuclear Fear: a History of Images* (Harvard University Press, 1988); see also Paul Boyer, "From Activism to Apathy: The American People and Nuclear Weapons, 1963-1980," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 70 No. 4 (March 1984) pp.821-844.

Part Two: California, 1965-1977.

Chapter Three: God, Love, and Socialism.

Arriving in California in 1965, Peoples Temple was a small and relatively unknown organisation trying to find its footing in the rural Redwood Valley. Without a dedicated church building or any local connections, the Temple at first grew slowly as it sought to expand across its new Californian environment. Introduced to new allies and new opponents, the Temple would change into a very different kind of organisation than it had been in Indianapolis; and although its Hoosier roots were never shed completely, California provided the most important transformative environment for both Jim Jones and his Peoples Temple.

The largest and most visible change throughout the California period was the introduction of new members who took on important administrative positions, and a subsequent explosion in rank-and-file membership from 1970 onwards. Many key members who joined between 1965 and 1970 brought with them expertise in a number of key fields. For example, Linda Sharon Amos (1936-1970) was a social worker from San Francisco who joined the Temple in 1967, bringing with her knowledge and experience in dealing with the existing social care network available.[284] Another important example is found in Garrett Lambrev (1943-), who was a conscientious objector of the Vietnam War and who had dropped out of Stanford in 1966. He first encountered the Temple while working as a welfare officer in Mendocino County, providing a further important link between the Temple's social care franchise and the existing State social care network.[285] Sandy Bradshaw (1946-) was another social worker from Mendocino County who joined the Temple in 1970 would become a probation officer for the county, providing another link in the operational network fostered between Peoples Temple and State social care networks.[286]

[284] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 65.
[285] Garrett (Garry) Lambrev, interview quoted in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (University of Minnesota Pres, 2013) p. 38.
[286] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 66.

Other important figures joined the Temple in this period, notably Laurence (Larry) Layton (1946-) and his wife, Carolyn Moore Layton (1945-1978). The pair had married in 1967 and joined Peoples Temple in 1968 in Redwood Valley whilst Larry performed alternative service as a conscientious objector at Mendocino State Hospital, and Carolyn worked as a teacher at Potter Valley High School. Both would become committed cadres in the Temple's upper administration, with Carolyn in particular becoming Jim Jones' lover, and arguably the second most influential figure in the movement as Jim's "chief of staff," superseding even the role of Marceline Jones.[287] In 1970, one of Carolyn's younger sisters, Annie Moore (1954-1978) would trace her sister's footsteps and join the Temple as well, eventually becoming a personal nurse to Jones and a trusted confidante in the final years of the movement. In 1971, Larry Layton's eighteen-year-old sister, Deborah Layton (1953-) opted to join the Temple as the organisation offered her a way to improve the world, whilst also bringing "structure and self-discipline" to her own life.[288] Similarly, Teri Buford, a "quick-witted young hippie" had been hitchhiking through Redwood Valley when she encountered the Temple in 1972, basing her decision to join on the congruence of her "Quaker upbringing and antiwar and socialist ideals" with the Temple's stated mission.[289]

Further notable additions to the Temple's slowly growing congregation in the cohort of the late sixties also include Timothy Oliver Stoen (1938-), a prosecuting attorney in Mendocino County's district attorney's office who would fully commit to the Temple in 1969, and one year later he would bring his girlfriend and soon-to-be-wife, Grace Grech (Stoen, 1950-) into the Temple's communal fold.[290] Another critical addition to Peoples Temple in 1969 were married couple Deanna (1939-1980) and Elmer (1929-1980) Mertle. Both rose to positions of administrative importance within the Temple, with Deanna working as head of the Temple's growing publications department and Elmer as the lead photographer; their murders in 1980 have sometimes been linked to their involvement in the

[287] Reiterman with Jacobs, *Raven,* pp. 114-16; Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 64; Mike Cartmell, "Carolyn Layton: The Grey Eminence," (25 July 2013), *Alternative Considerations*.
[288] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 68.
[289] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 68.
[290] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 67.

Concerned Relatives leading up to the tragedy in Jonestown, although the exact motive remains unknown – as well as the perpetrator(s).[291]

From expertise among state and local welfare networks, to legal expertise, and administrative skill, the individuals the Temple drew into its fold undoubtedly shaped the movement as much as the movement shaped them. The most notable effect arising from the inclusion of this cohort of well-educated and professionally skilled cadres, as Hall suggests, was that this cadre facilitated the expansion "the operation to an entirely different scale."[292] With Redwood Valley as the mother-church and base of operations, the Temple began expanding into San Francisco and Los Angeles whilst also committing to large scale, cross-country bus tours which would carry Jones' message and the Temple's revival atmosphere to congregations across America. By April 1970, the Temple had purchased a large Scottish Rite Masonic Temple at 1859 Geary Boulevard next to San Francisco's Fillmore District. Within a few short months, the Temple had complemented this real estate purchase with its first Greyhound bus, and by November of 1971 the evangelical fleet had expanded to eleven vehicles.[293] By 1972 another permanent church building was purchased at 1336 South Alvarado Street in Los Angeles, which became a fundamental source of revenue for the Temple, bringing in an estimated $25,000 dollars every weekend in offerings, donations, and purchases.[294]

The expansion of Peoples Temple in Redwood Valley introduced a number of young, white, college educated liberals into the movement who ascended to positions of organisational important among Jones' cadre. The expansion of the movement in San Francisco and Los Angeles, alternatively, expanded the rank-and-file membership of the Temple from a few hundred by 1970 to several thousands by 1975. Both demographics – the administrative elite and the congregational members – contributed to the movement in important yet different ways. The administrative elite brought with them organisational expertise and important links to existing state networks as discussed above, whilst the expansion of the congregational membership brought money, bodies, and acclaim to the rapidly growing Peoples Temple.

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[291] The Jonestown Institute, "The Murders of Al and Jeannie Mills," (June 2013). *Alternative Considerations*
[292] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 68.
[293] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 69.
[294] Moore, *Peoples Temple and Jonestown in the Twenty-First Century*, p. 15; Jeff Guinn, *The Road to Jonestown: Jim Jones and Peoples Temple* (Simon and Shuster, 2017) p. 247.

Perhaps the largest shift identified in studies of the Californian Peoples Temple between 1965 and 1977 was the movement's transition from an explicitly Christian organisation into a far more politicised, outwardly socialist community. Whilst Jones had spoken about collectivism and economic redistribution in Indianapolis, in California his message became more explicitly political. As Hall notes, Jones "was able in this way to bend the format of the Pentecostal sermon from typical concerns with personal edification and inspiration to social, political, and economic issues portrayed in the vivid messianic terms that Pentecostalists already understood.[295] Jones' syncretism of Pentecostalism with the political concerns of modern Socialism found expression in what the members of Peoples Temple referred to as "Apostolic socialism," a combination of Marxist philosophy and Pentecostal practice. In Indiana Jones had decried Communism and posited a primitive Christian focus on collectivism as the only viable solution to the "anti-Christ" of socialism, yet in California Peoples Temple became outwardly and proudly socialist.

The following chapter explores the development Peoples Temple's theology of love into a political theology of love. It examines the expansion of the Temple's pursuit of love to include a political dimension, before analysing the way redefinition of love was accompanied by shifts in emotional practice intended to mobilise that love and regulate other, disparaged forms of love (such as romantic, or sensual). The notion of apostolic socialism provides the conceptual basis from which the analysis is presented, with this chapter demonstrating that apostolic socialism was a core component of the Temple's emotional framework which supported its pluralistic system of experiential belief. Ultimately, the chapter concludes by suggesting that the success of Jones' ministry in this period was directly related to the movement's capacity to craft a successful and coherent emotional framework that was expressed in evocative services and a comprehensive commitment to the social gospel.

Apostolic Socialism: Love in Theory.

Apostolic socialism provided the conceptual bedrock of Peoples Temple practice throughout the California period. As previously discussed, the concept reflected a degree of syncretism between the

[295] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 28.

Pentecostal model of redistribution as described in the Book of Acts with modern, political, socialist theory. As described by Chidester in *Salvation and Suicide*, apostolic socialism fused

> the communist slogan of Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program with the depiction of the early Christian communities in the Book of Acts in which those apostolic Christians held everything in common (Acts 2:45; 4:34-35).[296]

Apostolic socialism was, however, more than a simple theory. It provided the orientation and justification for the Temple's developing economic and political practices throughout the entire Californian period. In *Gone from the Promised Land* Hall observed that in modern America religious organisations have necessarily had to modernise to survive: "The upshot of modernisation," Hall suggests, "is that religions today are businesses, often big ones." Within Peoples Temple this modernisation process resulted in what Hall has called the "business of apostolic socialism."[297]

Throughout the Californian period, the notion of apostolic socialism was defined by Jones in relatively stable ways, and it served as a useful bridge between religious believers and atheistic activists (as well as those who fell somewhere between these two points). Citing several recovered audio tapes, Chidester clarified how "What Jones called 'The Divinity of Socialism' was manifested when love became the central principle for the ordering of society."[298]Among scholars of Peoples Temple and Jonestown, Chidester comes closest in appropriately identifying the emotional foundations of apostolic socialism as an affective-ideological-religious concept. Within the matrix of apostolic socialism, religious belief and political values were syncretised alongside an emotional, affective logic that underpinned and supported both aspects. The emotional discourse of love worked as a binding agent within the community; a tangible, affective vernacular which appealed to religious and political sentiments alike. It is important to remember, however, that Jones' articulation of the Temple's belief system may not actually reflect the diversity of beliefs which existed among the congregation.[299] Whilst Jones may have articulated and defined the notion of apostolic socialism, this

[296] Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, p. 56.
[297] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, pp. 78-80.
[298] Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, p. 57.
[299] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices of Jonestown*, p. 15; Folk, "Divine Materialism," pp. 15-39.

concept was understood in a variety of different ways by the rank-and-file members of Peoples Temple.

In a recent review Rebecca Moore has argued that the concept of apostolic socialism was one of the two threads which wove the "diversity of religious perspectives" found within Peoples Temple together, the second being a kind of "apocalyptic socialism." As Moore defined it, apostolic socialism reflected "the conviction that ultimate divinity *existed in love lived out concretely*" [emphasis added].[300] Alongside Chidester, Moore acknowledges the importance of apostolic socialism as a reflection of active, practiced, Christian love. The discourse and practice of love found within Peoples Temple, framed by Jones' sermons and reproduced in the practice of others, acted as a homogenising agent which drew together the often radically disparate perspectives found within Peoples Temple as a movement. Love might have *felt* different to a senior Pentecostal worshipper than it did to a young, college-educated socialist; but both could feel and mobilise this love through participation in the shared pursuits offered by membership in Peoples Temple. The pursuit of love was open to religious believers and political activists alike, providing that the end goal – love lived concretely – remained the same.

As in Indianapolis, love lay at the heart of the Temple's religio-political discourse as espoused by Jones. Love, however, was not a static construction and as a conceptual web it underwent a transition throughout the California period. At its core, as in Indianapolis, love required action; it was a feeling that was believed to be capable of guiding individuals and societies to moral, divinely ordained modes of living. Throughout the California period, love within Peoples Temple retained its divine origin but it expanded to include manifestations that were political in content and character.

FBI Audiotape Q1055-2 illustrates the development of love as a syncretic feeling-idea of religious emotions and political sentiments. The second sermon on the tape appears to have been recorded in late 1966, likely within a small church building owned by the Christ's Church of the Golden Rule (CCGR), a congregation local to Redwood Valley who initially worked with Peoples Temple as the latter began establishing themselves in the area. In this service, Jones repeatedly

[300]Moore, *Peoples Temple and Jonestown in the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 30-31.

utilised a religio-emotional discourse linking God to love which would have resonated with his established flock as well as any potential converts among the CCGR's apostolic congregation:

> Infinite mind, hallow this atmosphere, and this can be done only through our obedience to the perfect mind of love…the identity of man is lost in the fullness and consciousness of all sufficiency which is God, our love… May health flow from heart to heart as we gently touch our neighbour.[301]

A similar emotional language is found in an undated faith-healing service preserved on FBI Audiotape Q648, explicitly linking God to love:

> So learn to be patient and gentle with one another. That's the most important attribute of God. *Love,* gentleness… Letter to Romans, letter to Thessalonica, letter to Timothy. The Bible kills but the spirit makes alive. I'm just Americanizing it. *Love* makes alive. The Bible kills, but *love* makes alive [emphasis added].[302]

Here, the emotion of love is equated with God – and in particular, the Spirit – which serves as a justification and practical basis on which Jones increasingly moved away from the written word of the Bible. That the members of Peoples Temple should be guided by the feeling and experience of love, and not by scripture, became an increasing focus of Jones' sermons throughout the California period. Importantly, what this reflects is a shift away from the Biblical emotionology which lay at the heart of Temple practice in Indianapolis, with authority to define and redefine emotional standards drifting from Jones and the Bible to Jones alone. Here, Temple members were encouraged to guide their actions and their practices in line with the shared morality of Peoples Temple, which was understood primarily as a commitment, above all, to love.

At least in the early days of Peoples Temple in Indianapolis the relationship between God and love was a bilateral equation. As the Temple expanded into California's urban centres, however, this equation became trilateral in form. FBI Audiotape Q950 preserves a sermon recorded in May 1972 at the Redwood Valley mother church which demonstrates the way this formula had shifted. First reaffirming the basic foundation of God and love being the same, Jones clarified further that:

> God is love, is principle. The Greek's said it's principle. God is principle. Principle, Eros, of love, agape. God is a love principle… It's most important to understand the principle that God is love.[303]

[301] FBI Audiotape Q1055-2.
[302] FBI Audiotape Q648.
[303] FBI Audiotape Q950.

God was love, as it was in Indianapolis, but love could be practically realised through explicitly political action. This sense of practical action became increasingly related to politics; in particular, the politics of socialism. As Jones continued his sermon, this link was made explicit:

> If God is love… what does love mean? …it comes from a word meaning perfect equality. Well, what brings perfect equality? A system. A system that guarantees that there'll be perfect equality…. God is love. Then what brings perfect love? Socialism.[304]

Thus, within Jones' rhetoric, love was redefined with its ideal application found in a system of socialist political and social relations. Expanding beyond the realm of personal charitable action, love grew to include an entire idealised system of social and political organisation defined under the loose ideological banner of Socialism. Continuing, Jones explicitly condemned personal and romantic love as well as the love of material possessions, before concluding dramatically that

> …you cannot have a nebulous love… you've got to define that love, and that love can only be defined by the divinity of socialism. When God is socialism, God is love. Love is socialism.[305]

In *Salvation and Suicide,* Chidester highlights the affective dimension of apostolic socialism in some detail. Citing FBI Audiotape Q967, Chidester surmises that

> Socialism was regarded as the demonstration of Divine Love, the mathematics of Principle, the workings of God in action. "What is perfect love?" Jones asked. The answer was "Socialism, Apostolic socialism, as it was every time the Holy Spirit descended in the New Testament, they sold their possessions" (Q967).[306]

For Jones, love – which was also God – found its most powerful and concrete expression in systems of government which (purportedly) emphasised equality of persons and outcomes. Because love was manifest in equality, sharing, cooperation, and kindness, a system of government designed with those metaprinciples in mind would most fully reflect divine love – in Jones' political-theology, at least. God, love, and socialism were manifestations of the same divine principle, with love providing the affective rhetoric that bridged the divide between Pentecostal believers and left-wing activists that both found their place within the Californian Peoples Temple.

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[304] FBI Audiotape Q950.
[305] FBI Audiotape Q950.
[306] Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, p. 57.

It is important to not fall victim to the error made by Chidester in assuming that Jones' statements were uncritically adopted by the members of Peoples Temple. Rather, the emotional framework which underpinned Jones' sermons and broader rhetoric was itself intended to bridge ideological or religious divides by bringing two radical perspectives, Pentecostalism and Socialism, together into an affective structure which allowed for, and supported, both as forms and expressions of love. Some members leaned towards the religious side of this equation, while others tended to lean towards the political side. Jones' chimerism in appealing to the religious beliefs and political convictions of his followers alike has been noted by several former members. For example, Laurie Efrein Kahalas (1944-) recalled how Jones "appealed to religious holdovers and the politically radical alike."[307] Some members even rejected the outwardly communist aspects of Temple life. In her memoir *Onliest One Alive*, Hyacinth Thrash alternatively recalled how she rejected suggestions of communist living despite her belief in the apostolic roots of the movement: "[Jones] talked a lot about communism, but I knew he couldn't get it going. … I told him flat out I wouldn't go along with it."[308]

The concept of apostolic socialism was interpreted in a variety of ways by different members of the Peoples Temple congregation, with some accepting it and others not. During worship services Jones' sermons would take on a more explicitly pedagogical form as congregants discussed and worked to understand the concept of apostolic socialism. For example, in a sermon recorded in 1973 at the San Francisco Temple, Jones selects an unidentified female congregant from the crowd who poses an important question for clarification.

> Unidentified woman: Father, I think of principle as a recipe like- am I right in thinking that way?
>
> Jones: A principle?
>
> Unidentified woman: Yes.
>
> Jones: Is a recipe?
>
> Unidentified woman: Yes, just like a formula or a recipe. Something to go by.[309]

[307] Laurie Efrein Kahalas, *Snake Dance: Unravelling the Mysteries of Jonestown (Trafford Publishing, 1998)* pp. 90-91.
[308] Thrash, *Onliest One Alive*, p. 76.
[309] FBI Audiotape Q1023 (1973), *Alternative Considerations.*

Taking the opportunity to expound his affective, religious, and political trinity further, Jones responds with a lengthy agreement and clarification of the woman's understanding of the concept of principle:

> In great measure, yes… God is principle, principle is love. Love is apostolic communalism where there is total equality…. It's a pretty good point you make. Principle is a recipe. The way to that recipe is love, but you have to define love… love gives, love sacrifices, love does what the other person needs…. So, this love has to be defined today, and how do we define love? Some call it socialism.[310]

The relationship between Pastor and congregation is one not unlike that of a teacher and student, and Jones' illustrations of apostolic socialism were not made in a vacuum; the framework for feeling he espoused required understanding and internalisation on behalf of his listeners. His sermons, as such, were pedagogical and instructive, although – as any educator understands – his words were subject to a variety of interpretations and internalisations. Yet rather than defining a narrow system of belief, the concept of apostolic socialism instead provided an emotional framework which accounted for the many different and complementary systems of belief which each found expression in the Temple's redefinition of Christian love.

In a recent interview, former associate pastor within the Los Angeles branch of Peoples Temple, David Parker Wise, explained how he understood the matrix of apostolic socialism:

> …my idealism was very high and I was not deterred from introducing there on the cafeteria wall, written with massive huge letters: "God is love, and love is work." So it sounded a bit *1984* or *Brave New World* or something like that, in retrospect, but back then when we were defining love has to be made real, not just kept in the sky or between the sheets, but you have to perform it. In other words, love required deed and action.[311]

Although Wise joined the Temple in 1971, his words recall a notion that Jones had built his Hoosier ministry upon some fifteen years prior; that faith without works was dead. In this context, however, it was *love* without works which was dead.

Of course, life in Peoples Temple was complex and the thousands of people who interacted with the Temple in this period brought with them a multitude of emotional attitudes and behaviours. Although Jones laid out a distinctive emotional standard for his followers, life in Peoples Temple remained quotidian. Although researchers have been tempted to homogenise the Peoples Temple

[310] FBI Audiotape Q1023.
[311] David Parker Wise, "Episode 16: MK United," *Transmissions from Jonestown*, (January 2021). Transcript available at www.transmissionsfromjonestown.com/transcripts/episode-16-mk-united

experience, it is important that the mundanity of Temple life equally be respected. Whilst Jones worked to redefine new emotional standards for his community, these standards were not always met in practice. In his autobiography, Jonestown survivor Eugene Smith challenged monolithic assumptions about the nature of the Peoples Temple community: "I think the outside public thinks that we all got along, we all loved each other, we were all on the same page. We weren't."[312] Smith described the Temple community as "just like society. Some [people] agreed, some didn't agree. Some fought, some didn't fight. Some wanted peace, some wanted war… Everything in society was represented in Peoples Temple in a microcosm."[313] Rather than viewing the emotional framework of Peoples Temple as a monolithic structure rigorously applied, it is important to remember that what this framework offered was instead a structure which allowed for fluid navigation and which could never be totalising.

Throughout the Californian period, love continued to occupy the pinnacle of the Peoples Temple's emotional framework. In Indianapolis, love had provided a unifying discourse and series of emotional practices that encouraged and promoted the cooperation of individuals who had come from a variety of religious traditions such as Pentecostals, Methodists, and Baptists. Furthermore, Christian love in Indianapolis also worked to transcend racial barriers and the institution of de facto segregation. In California, however, the feeling-idea and emotional ideal of love grew to be more expansive. With a new political dimension, Jones' discourse of love could incorporate the participation of individuals who might have held no religious belief at all.

Even within Jones as an individual, the tension between religious belief and political commitment found expression throughout the California period. In 1972, for example, Jones stated to his congregation that he was not an atheist but behaved like one.[314] That same year, during a service held at Redwood Valley, Jones stated that "We make no criterion for worship here. We have atheists who come, who are attracted because we take in every child that is brought to us."[315] Years later in 1976, during a recorded phone conversation between Jones and John Maher (the founder of the non-

[312] Eugene Smith, *Back to the World: A Life After Jonestown*, (TCU Press, 2021) p. 62.
[313] Smith, *Back to the World*, p. 62.
[314] FBI Audiotape Q932 (1972). *Alternative Considerations.*
[315] FBI Audiotape Q1021-A (1972). *Alternative Considerations.*

profit organisation the Delancey Street Foundation), Jones claimed that "Off the record, I don't believe in any loving God. Our people, I would say, are ninety percent atheist."[316]

The status of Peoples Temple as either a religious organisation or a political one forms one of the most contentious areas of debate within the scholarship. Summarising the debate, Holly Folk observed that "Peoples Temple simultaneously proclaimed a secular socialist message and maintained a framework of Christianity that outsiders, and arguably many of the members themselves, believed. Whether this edifice was a solid construction, or a stage set depended on the angle from which it was viewed."[317] Members held competing, contradictory points of view; and an individual's belief system or opinions were too subject to change at any time. For these reasons, Folk describes the belief system in Peoples Temple as one of "experiential pluralism," reflecting the "intrinsically heterogenous" nature of the movement.[318]

In Folk's analysis, "The variety of messages promoted by Jim Jones meant that Peoples Temple offered several religious options for members."[319] Yet what bound each of the "options" offered by Peoples Temple together into a coherent, unified whole was the syncretic and intrinsically emotional discourse of love that permeated the Temple's framework of feeling. Take, for example, a sermon delivered by Jones in May 1974 and recorded on FBI Audiotape Q953:

> What is the Spirit? God is love, or love is God. Whosever loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. So when anyone loves, whether they're an atheist, an agnostic, a Catholic or Jew, whether they're a communist or whether they're a moderate capitalist, whatever their politics or their religion, whatever their race, if they love, they're born of God. Don't make any difference whether they're baptised, don't make any difference whether they go to church, whosoever loveth is born of God.[320]

It was not just Jones who spoke about the mission of Peoples Temple as one grounded in the desire to love. For example, during a Los Angeles service held in 1973 and recorded on FBI Audiotape Q357, Rosie Ijames – wife of Archie Ijames, assistant pastor – welcomed the congregation at the beginning of the service by stating:

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[316] FBI Audiotape Q622 (1976). *Alternative Considerations.*
[317] Holly Folk, "Divine Materiality: Peoples Temple and Messianic Theologies of Incarnation and Reincarnation," *Nova Religio*, Vol. 22. No. 2 (2018) p. 18.
[318] Folk, "Divine Materiality," p. 19.
[319] Folk, "Divine Materiality," p. 20.
[320] FBI Audiotape Q953 (1974), *Alternative Considerations.*

> Peace, everyone, and this great love that Father's teaching us about. My name is Rosie Ijames from Redwood Valley, and I came to testify to you, to witness to you, to tell you about this great love that Father is teaching us about, the greater love than no man than this one we have with us, Father, who's concerned about all of us.[321]

Whether a left-wing intellectual or a Pentecostal believer, the community was united in the pursuit of love.

As in Indianapolis, Jones continued to promote a restorationist theology of love which bridged denominational and congregational divides. In California, however, love became an increasingly political concept. By syncretising socialist politics and restorationist theologies with an affective rhetoric of love, Jones was able to establish a broad movement which appeared to religious believers and political thinkers alike.

Love in Practice.

Within Peoples Temple, love was constructed as an emotion that required practice – repeated, habitual, and conscious effort on the part of congregants to refine and curate the feeling at the heart of the Temple's political theology and communal identity. As such, the standard of Christian love was the orienting principle by which Temple congregants were encouraged to perform emotion work. In the sermon recorded on FBI Audiotape Q964, Jones makes this fact explicit to the attending congregation:

> I've got people who see me on every kind of level, and whosoever loveth – if people are kind and gentle and they practice the great ethics of the Judeo-Christian tradition or the ethics of love general, they're welcome in here. These doors are open to everyone that loves…I should say these doors are welcome to everyone trying to love, because most of us are just getting to know a little bit about love.[322]

Learning about love required practice. Throughout the Californian period, Peoples Temple utilised a variety of emotional practices designed to mobilise, regulate, communicate, and as we have seen, name certain emotions. These emotional practices formed the basis of the emotional framework of the Temple as it was produced and reproduced in the collective worship setting. Where the preceding section has described the redefinition of love in the early California period, the following section

[321] FBI Audiotape Q357.
[322] FBI Audiotape Q964.

examines how the Temple felt, expressed, and curated this vision of redefined love through practices that formed standardised aspects of the Temple's emotional framework. The emotional framework of Peoples Temple allowed for and encouraged a variety of practical expressions of love, with some valued higher than others.

The members of Peoples Temple expressed love in a variety of ways, usually (but not always) in accordance with the emotional standards of the wider community. The qualifier "but not always" here is important, as the Temple's emotional standards represented ideals and expectations that individuals were expected to conduct emotion work to conform to. Within Peoples Temple, worship services provided an important space for the communal practice of love, which was made manifest in song, praise, physical touch, ecstatic healing, and other combinations of gestures and words. Members were expected to attempt to realise standards expected within this emotional framework, and the performance of correct emotional practices in the correct settings was not only desirable, but an absolute precondition of membership.

The importance of emotional standards and appropriate expressions as a precondition of membership was not an entirely unique characteristic of life within Peoples Temple. As Amy C. Wilkins found during fieldwork with an Evangelical Christian group, "good feelings are not just an outcome of being in a supportive community but prerequisite for ongoing community participation."[323] Like other evangelical congregations, the members of Peoples Temple were expected to – at least outwardly – feel congruently with their peers in line with the expectations of the community. What remains unique about Peoples Temple is not that they valued emotional congruence highly, but rather the kinds of emotions and their expressions which were valued or prohibited within Peoples Temple.

In the diaries of Edith Roller, an elderly woman who joined the Temple in California and who recorded several years' worth of journals detailing her daily activities within the movement, provide fascinating insights into the internal workings and emotional atmosphere of the movement. For

[323] Amy C. Wilkins, "Happier than Non-Christians: Collective Emotions and Symbolic Boundaries among Evangelical Christians," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 71 No. 3, p. 295. [281-301].

example, in an entry dated 12 May 1976, Roller noted that a member of the Temple's security team was "brought on the floor" and questioned for his refusal to hug a new member during a service:

> A young white man, who is new, had reported that someone sitting in the security section has refused to embrace him when congregation has been told to greet their neighbours. The persons concerned were brought on the floor… Jim emphasised the need to show affection. Touching has an effect upon health.[324]

Refusal to participate in the emotional framework of the Temple was subject to immediate corrective action, even within the members-only services held in Redwood Valley which were not accessible to the general public. Showing affection through distinctive emotional practices was a fundamental component of group membership, not a secondary characteristic, and the failure to practice this uniquely defined love required immediate intervention on the part of the Temple's leadership.

As suggested above, physically intimate practices continued to be important aspects of the Temples' emotional framework which were intended to mobilise and communicate love. A sermon delivered in 1973 and recorded on FBI Audiotape Q958 demonstrates the importance of the physical practices of the holy kiss and a fond embrace within the Temple milieu. In this sermon, Jones directly instructs his congregation to "Turn around and hug your neighbour… Kiss and hug 'em all up, that's it."[325] Shortly after this directive, Jones descends from the podium to hug members of the congregation as a demonstration of ideal practice:

> Don't be afraid to hug. Don't be afraid to hug. Bless you. Bless you. Bless you. Bless you. Bless you. C'mon back there. Hug her now. Shake 'em up![326]

After the hugging has passed, Jones returns to the stage and clarifies his is an example to be followed. As a leader responsible for the channelling and eliciting of communal emotions, Jones' example was a paramount demonstration of the Temple's emotional standards and practices:

> If I had my way, we'd do nothing but hug the rest of the day, but I did not proceed further… I'd have to hug all of you, because I don't want to hug one without hugging you all. I was just giving you an example of how to do it, 'cause some of you act like you're afraid you're gonna get broke or something.[327]

[324]Edith Roller Journals, May 1976 (12 May). *Alternative Considerations.*
[325] FBI Audiotape Q958. *Alternative Considerations*.
[326] FBI Audiotape Q958. *Alternative Considerations.*
[327] FBI Audiotape Q958. *Alternative Considerations*.

Such an expectation was entirely normative and expected across every Peoples Temple service. In a later meeting in 1973 and recorded on FBI Audiotape Q1027, Jones concludes his sermon by evoking love and instructing the congregation to hug and kiss:

> I love you. I love you. It's always my custom every Friday night, Saturday night to shake your hand, but tonight I shan't… Peace. Kiss your neighbour, hug them, 'cause I'd like to hug each of you.[328]

As the subject of the charismatic relationship and key authority figure at the head of Peoples Temple, Jones' instruction to the congregation to follow the practices of kissing and hugging were important prescriptions of the community's emotional standards and relevant practices. Yet, as in the case described by Roller, these standards were not always met by members of the community.

As the charismatic leader of Peoples Temple, Jones was directly involved in exemplifying the correct emotional repertoire expected of congregants. Within the religious logic of the Temple, it was believed that the atmosphere of love produced by practices of intimate contact empowered Jones to help or heal congregants in attendance. As Jones described in one service,

> See, socialism is love. Love is God. God is socialism. Draw close and hug your neighbour close to you… Draw close… Close to your neighbour. See, as you love the God in them, I can help you better. Don't be afraid somebody's gonna call you a little strange [audience laughter]. Come on, love each other. Sisters and sisters, brothers and brothers, there's no need to be separated. Pure hearts shall see God.[329]

Here we see Jones' ability to navigate the imposition of new emotional standards on newer members and first-time attendees in the congregation by acknowledging that, by the emotional standards of other communities, the practices of hugging and kissing fellow congregants might appear "strange." The intimacy these practices developed, however, were argued by Jones to be fundamental to the congregation's character. In yet another service dated October 1974, Jones encouraged his congregation to contemplate the love formed in the Temple's worship atmosphere:

> Remember the beautiful things we've shared. Remember the kisses and the warmth we've had for each other. Remember that we've loved like none have loved. And we've known the beauty, the beauty of honesty and sincerity as none others have known it.[330]

[328] FBI Audiotape Q1027, *Alternative Considerations.*
[329] FBI Audiotape Q1059-3, *Alternative Considerations.*
[330] FBI Audiotape Q1053-1, *Alternative Considerations.*

This quickly leads into the request for an offering, which itself becomes sandwiched between evocations of love:

> So, I'm asking everyone, some of you that could give five, ten or twenty, or even a hundred, please do it tonight. We need it… Greet everyone with a holy kiss now, as I would kiss each of you, if I could, because I love you with all of my soul.[331]

Given the regularity of such practices within the Temple worship setting, we must appreciate the role of emotional practices in forming powerful affective bonds both horizontally between congregants and vertically between Jones and the wider congregation. As kinds of practice which eliminate the material boundaries between bodies by bringing them into close and often prolonged contact with each other, kissing and hugging in Peoples Temple worked to affirm individuals as members of the community whilst strengthening those very same communal ties.[332]

Within the Temple's emotional framework, practices such as hugging, kissing, holding hands, and other practices were utilised to foster an "atmosphere of love" that is found regularly discussed in the testimonies of former members and survivors alike. Neva Sly Hargrave, a member of the Temple between 1968 and 1976, reminisced on a similar experience in a reflective piece written in 2013. She describes her feelings at the grand opening of the Redwood Valley Temple in 1968 as intimately linked to the atmosphere of emotion the Temple could produce:

> We were overwhelmed, not only by the crowd – a congregation from San Francisco was in attendance, and their choir sang – but by the feeling of love that seemed to wrap each one of us within it.[333]

Or as Don Beck humorously recalled of his first experience at a Temple service,

> Several people were "called out." This meant Jim had some message for them or an answer to a situation. We all held hands and sent love to protect the person. Seemed nice but a bit weird.[334]

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[331] FBI Audiotape Q1053-1, *Alternative Considerations.*
[332] A biological mechanism for this process has been explored in recent research. See, for example, Robert Sapolsky, "This Is Your Brain on Nationalism: The Biology of Us and Them," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 98 No. 2 (March/April 2019) pp. 42-47; see also Carsten K. W. De Dreu, Lindred L. Greer, Gerben A. Van Kleef, Shaul Shalvi, and Michel J. J. Handgraaf, "Oxytocin Promotes Human Ethnocentrism," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Vol. 108, No. 4 (January 25, 2011) pp. 1262-1266.
[333] Neva Sly Hargrave, "Four Years of Utopia, Then Prison!" (March 2013), *Alternative Considerations*. jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=17020
[334] Don Beck, "A Peoples Temple Life," (2013). *Alternative Considerations.*

Similarly, in the wake of the Jonestown tragedy, one woman provided an interview to the *San Francisco Examiner* dated February 3, 1979, in which she stated that Peoples Temple in California "Provided the atmosphere of love, trust, and social concern that she found lacking in other black institutions."[335] In a letter addressed to American activist and analyst Daniel Ellsberg (1931-2023), Temple Member Patricia Grunnet (1941-1978) wrote that

> Under the inspiration of our pastor, Jim Jones, many of us have gathered in Redwood Valley, in a community of mutual help and service to others. We have brought over one hundred children and more than one hundred drug addicts from backgrounds of poverty and oppression to live in an atmosphere of love and learn to respect themselves and live responsibly.[336]

In an interview with the Federal Bureau of Investigation later published on 12 January 1979, Jim Cobb told investigators that "he came to Redwood Valley two or three months after his family had come, and the reason that he came was due to letters he was receiving from his family that it was a paradise in that it was multiracial and there existed nothing but an atmosphere of love and kindness and equality."[337]

The atmosphere of love was the product of several emotional practices working together to produce an elevated whole. The integrated crowd and choir, music and song, the intimacy of the congregation, Jones' sermons, and the dramatic performance of faith healings contributed to an intense, emotionally arousing atmosphere of worship which held love as its centrepiece, means, and end. Although Jones played an important role in this, the Temple's emotional climate was a collective effort that necessitated the participation of the congregation. In Stanley Nelson's documentary *Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple* (2006), Hue Forston Jr. recalled that "By the time Jones did come out to do his speaking, the table had already been set."[338]

Love formed an important part of Temple worship. For example, FBI Audiotape Q1016 records a Peoples Temple service in Los Angeles, in 1972. At the beginning of the tape, Jones is heard

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[335] *San Francisco Examiner* (February 3, 1979); cited in Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, p. 44.
[336] Patricia Grunnet, "Letter from Patricia Grunnet to Daniel Ellsberg," (September 3, 1972). *Daniel Ellsberg Papers* (MS 1093). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
[337] FBI, Interview with Jim Cobb. RYMUR 89-4286-1681-8. *Alternative Considerations*.
[338] Stanley Nelson (dir.) *Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple* (Firelight Media, 2006). Program transcript provided as part of the PBC documentary program "American Experience." www-tc.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/media/pdf/transcript/Jonestown_transcript.pdf

leading the large congregation in song while the organ plays an uplifting, romantic melody in the background. The lyrics of the song explicitly evoke love, with Jones leading the verses:

> I promise to love you forever
>
> I know you're the strength of my love
>
> And since I have made this endeavour
>
> You take me through with you somehow
>
> You can bet I will
>
> Love you, love you
>
> I'll be loving you
>
> Love you – forever faithful and true
>
> Daytime and nighttime, all the year through
>
> I'll just keep right on loving you.[339]

The song continues for several choruses before Pastor Jones thanks the congregation, subsequently inviting people to "exercise their faith." One male voice in the crowd responds immediately, speaking in tongues briefly before exclaiming "God has come. Love has come, in another man. True apostolic charity exists!" The beginning of the sermon involves some direction from Jones as to the content of his audience's participation. For example, one man exclaims "Jim Jones has come to bring socialism to the United States of America. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!"[340]

After several more testimonies complete with speaking in tongues, Jones moves on to define the communal atmosphere of Temple worship as one firmly rooted in love:

> Whatever you folk are doing here, if God is love, then certainly there is no question that this is the most God force, or Godenic power, in the universe. 'Cause there's no place more loving, more honest, more true… Now if God is love, then nobody can go wrong in this atmosphere.[341]

[339] FBI Audiotape Q1016 (1972), *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=28008
[340] FBI Audiotape Q1016, *Alternative Considerations.*
[341] FBI Audiotape Q1016, *Alternative Considerations.*

The audience's enthusiastic participation is heard throughout the tape, featuring applause, cheers, shouts, and praise at various interjections. This kind of participation is a characteristic feature of almost every tape in the archival base that records a collective occasion. Participation, however, included practices which audio recordings do not capture; physical gestures and movements such as smiling, swaying, moving, dancing, the lifting of hands in praise, the laying of hands upon bodies desiring to be healed, and more.

The atmosphere of a Temple service and the important position of love within the Temple's emotional framework encouraged congregants to participate in emotion work to bring their personal feelings in line with the expectations of the community. As Jeannie Mills recalled in her autobiographical account *Six Years with God*, she felt the need to focus, practice, and curate a specific vision of love which she felt she had fallen short of. Mills recalled wanting to bring her emotional experience in line with the emotional standards of the Temple community. Writing in regard to her first experience of a Temple healing service, Mills wrote

> When Jim's sermon was over, he began his healing service, which I watched closely. I was determined to *learn to feel empathy*. I was disgusted with myself *because I hadn't felt the concern and love* that I knew Jim was feeling with each healing. Tonight, I silently vowed to myself, "I am going *to feel their suffering and feel their joy* as they are healed" [emphasis added].[342]

We might consider the above as an example of emotion work, or the effortful and conscious attempt to manage one's feelings in light of wider cultural and social expectations and emotional norms.[343] As Jones had stated, the doors of Peoples Temple were open to everyone trying to love; and Jeannie Mill's reflections show how individual congregants could consciously navigate the emotional framework found within Peoples Temple by managing, and thereby changing in quality or nature, their own feelings. Individuals pursued the feeling of love within Peoples Temple, just as Peoples Temple as an organisation pursued the realisation of love in renewed social relationships and political activism.

[342] Mills, *Six Years with God*, p. 136.
[343] Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*: *Commercialization of Human Feeling* (University of California Press, 1983) esp. pp. 35-55.

Although love was the foundational emotional standard of Peoples Temple, emotion work intended to manifest and refine this emotion within individuals was often reliant upon a very different emotion: guilt. As Deborah Layton recounted of her early experience with the Californian Peoples Temple,

> As I listened to his sermon I became aware of how spoiled, privileged, and white I was. He spoke about the pain we had to encounter to grow and fuel change and I thought that maybe with his directions, I'd be able to understand and how I could correct the wrongs I had perpetrated.[344]

By her own admission, Layton was unable to fully bring her personal feelings in line with the standards expected of the community. Guilt forms a prominent aspect of her narrative as a former member of Peoples Temple, for example in her discussion of how she managed her personal, divergent feelings:

> …as my weeks inside the Temple turned into months, I began to feel a twinge of homesickness and with it a deep feeling of guilt. I missed my parents, I missed the occasional drag on a cigarette, but worst of all I secretly hated the all-day and all-weekend revival meetings… But I felt even more guilt on the fleeting occasions when I wished I hadn't joined.[345]

Although love provided the orientation of the Temple's emotional framework and the foundational standard upon which the community was built, other emotions formed important parts of the tools and strategies through which members could navigate their divergent personal feelings. In particular, guilt appears as a recurring motif in the narratives produced by apostates from the church. In *Six Years with God,* Mills reproduced a letter she had written when departing from the church in 1976. Cautioning others against joining Peoples Temple, Mills warned that "This minister, Pastor Jim Jones, has a strange power over his members… The power is fear, guilt, and extreme fatigue."[346]

Giving Love.

The congregants of Peoples Temple were expected to practice and demonstrate their love through more than simple embraces, holy kisses, or affable greetings, however. As in Indianapolis, the

[344] Deborah Layton, *Seductive Poison*, p. 36.
[345] Layton, *Seductive Poison*, p. 53.
[346] Mills, *Six Years with God*, p. 13.

Temple's emotional framework explicitly supported the financial practices and economic structures of the community. The main difference in the Californian period, however, is the scale at which such operations were conducted. The "business of apostolic socialism" as described by Hall eclipsed the small care-home fiefdom the Temple had built in Indianapolis, and the Temple's income and expenditures skyrocketed as the scope of the social gospel expanded. Owing to the redistributive basis of Temple operations in this period, Hall characterised Peoples Temple as a "corporation of people," clarifying that the huge financial turnover generated within the movement contributed to a single cause: "bankrolling Peoples Temple as an extended family that was becoming an ark of survival."[347]

In sum, the Temple became a remarkable redistributive community that offered a genuine alternative outside of existing state or federal networks. Children's homes, educational and rehabilitation facilities, volunteer work, and other services were largely funded by member contributions. As in Indianapolis, devoted members continued to donate property, money, time, and labour to Peoples Temple (donating their wages as tithes, if externally employed); and as in the revival circuit, crowds and audiences dazzled by Jones' stage performances offered vast sums of money to the Temple's collective coffers. Trinkets and realia were sold after services, and an impressive direct-mail system was implemented by the Temple's Publications Department which included the solicitation of donations and the mail-order purchase of other items such as cloths and photographs of Jones which, purportedly, could heal a number of ailments.[348]

The financial scope of Peoples Temple cannot be understated. With a redistributive orientation, the Temple was a voracious fiscal machine that by November 1978 had accumulated over eight and a half million dollars in cash and bank deposits. This figure seems even more staggering in light of the investments poured into Jonestown between 1974 and 1978.[349] San Francisco court-appointed attorney Robert Fabian, in the subsequent investigation, identified another ten million dollars in assets across the Temple's vast property network in the States, and a large amount of cash

[347] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 69. A thorough and separate examination was published as Hall, "Collective Welfare as Resource Management in Peoples Temple: A Case Study of a Poor People's Religious Social Movement", *Sociological Analysis*, Vol. 49 Supplement: Presidential Issue (December 1988) p. 70S [pp. 64S-77S].
[348] Hall, Gone from the Promised Land, p. 84-92.
[349] Rebecca Moore, *A Sympathetic History of Jonestown* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1985) pp. 343-44.

held in individual accounts.[350] As in the Indianapolis period, the sheer scale of the Temple's financial operations suggest a great degree of success in crafting an environment in which individuals genuinely felt as though they were improving the world through their donations of time and money to Peoples Temple.

Discussions of the financial arrangements of Peoples Temple, as with other Pentecostal and Charismatic churches which practice tithing and the taking of offerings, are often characterised by a discourse of material exploitation. Reverend Dr Mel White, in his theological investigation and critique of Peoples Temple from a Christian perspective, *Deceived* (1979), wrote that Jones inveigled Temple congregants by first promising that they would receive directly from their act of giving, and secondly in "getting the victims of his financial appeals to believe that they were giving to help others" having "mastered the art of the emotional appeal."[351] Such a position suggests a fundamental difference between the Temple's financial practices and the practices of other comparable institutions; yet this does not appear to be the case. In *Gone From the Promised Land,* Hall notes that Jones' "pitch for an offering seems to have been about as 'high pressure' as that of more conventional Pentecostal churches." Although the taking of offerings appeared to be a relatively normative practice, Hall does go on to describe the practitioners of direct-mail solicitation (including Jones) as "charlatans."[352]

As with the tension between the Temple's religious veneer and political undercurrent, the financial practices of Peoples Temple take on a different character depending upon the perspective from which one looks at them. Rather than repeating the tautological line of Jones as a material exploiter, this thesis instead looks at the *meaning* of such financial practices as they were framed to the congregation and the system of reciprocity that entering into these financial systems offered congregants. Rebecca Moore explains the complete financial commitment of her two sisters, Annie and Carolyn, in material terms:

> Depending upon the amount of tithe and the amount of need… members received food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and, when necessary, bus fare. Carolyn and Annie donated most, if not all, of their salaries to Peoples Temple

[350] Moore, *A Sympathetic History of Jonestown*, p. 353.
[351] Mel White, with Paul Scotmer and Marguerite Shuster, *Deceived* (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979) p. 95.
[352] John R. Hall, "Collective Welfare as Resource Management in Peoples Temple: A Case Study of a Poor People's Religious Social Movement," *Sociological Analysis,* Vol. 49 Supplement: Presidential Issue (December 1988) p. 70S [pp. 64S-77S].

> when they lived in Temple apartments… They ate communally. They spent Thanksgiving and Christmas with their church family.[353]

For other congregants and members – senior citizens, children, single parents and struggling families - Peoples Temple offered similar material benefits: "shelter, security, and structure," as Moore succinctly put it.[354] The benefits of participation within the Temple's redistributive financial system have also been examined by Hall, who has outlined the material rewards reaped as a direct result of commitment to Peoples Temple and engagement with its system of tithes, offerings, and communal commitments.[355]The crowd-funding methods of capital accumulation found within the Temple contributed to the running of social programs, the availability of material and legal assistance, and a plethora of other attractive benefits. By donating time and/or labour to Peoples Temple, congregants could enter themselves into communal relationships which granted them tangible, material rewards as well as other intangible benefits such as a community of love and empathy. Here, the Temple's practices of monetary donation were largely typical of other Pentecostal organisations as well.

A comparison to other Pentecostal-styled churches here may illuminate the nature of the redistributive economy found within Peoples Temple. In Devaka Premawardhana's ethnographic study of a Neo-Pentecostal church in Boston, the author argues that the practice of tithing – expanded to include non-fiscal donations of time or other material goods – was a transformational opportunity for donors to redefine their sense of selves whilst entering or intensifying "multiple relations of reciprocity with their church community, their God, and their distant loved ones."[356] Examining the financial practices of prosperity theology from the perspective of the practitioners, Premawardhana concludes that "Understood this way, tithing is far from exploitation. While it may materially deprive some of needed resources, it also has the effect of transforming their experience of their needs."[357]

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[353] Rebecca Moore, *In Defense of Peoples Temple – And Other Essays* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1988) p. 161.
[354] Moore, *In Defense of Peoples Temple*, p. 162.
[355] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, pp. 90-5.
[356] Devaka Premawardhana, "Transformational Tithing: Sacrifice and Reciprocity in a Neo-Pentecostal Church", *Nova Religio*, vol. 15, no. 4, 2012, pp. 85–109.
[357] Premawardhana, "Transformational Tithing", p. 100.

The following analysis argues within Peoples Temple, the practices of tithing played a similarly transformative role. Vociferous donations of money and time, even to one's own material deprivation, symbolised one's commitment to the community and to the pursuit of love as a manifestation of renewed social relationships. By participating in these economic structures, the members of Peoples Temple entered themselves into concentric circles of reciprocal exchange in which they could practice charity – love – and receive love and charity in kind. Take, for example, the case of Irene Mason as described in retrospect by former Temple associate pastor David Parker Wise:

> Ireme Mason was a sweet and feisty member. I moved her out of a dangerous bullet-ridden part of town into one of these federally-subsidized new apartments right down the alley from the church. In the meetings Irene Mason always sat on either the first or second row. She was bold and enthusiastic and dedicated. She donated every cent she could put her hands on. One day while making my pastoral rounds, I opened her cupboards and discovered that she only had a few cans of peas and corn. I was devastated. I could see that it was up to me to follow up on peoples donations to make sure they were not going without food. I filled Mrs. Mason's cupboards from the church pantry, which had lots of donated food, and encouraged her to come use the church kitchen any time.[358]

Mason's example illustrates the enthusiasm and willingness of Temple members to donate all they could to the Temple's coffers, whilst also alluding to the apparent exploitation of members which such practices could result in. Despite Mason's material deprivation, such an example also captures the benefits offered individuals through their participation in the movement, as Wise's direct intervention demonstrates.

Of course, there were limits to the willingness of individuals to continually participate in these reciprocal relations. In her memoir, Hyacinth Thrash recounted how "Lots of folks left when [Jim] raised the tithe from 10 to 25%."[359] On the other hand, Jonestown survivor Eugene Smith wrote in his memoir that donations provided one path for advancement within the Temple's authority structures: "You had people who were dastardly, but they donated vociferously," Smith wrote, going on to clarify that "They donated as much as they possibly could, so they were put into positions. They were purchasing their power. They were all on the Planning Commission."[360]Although framed as an

[358] David Parker Wise, "25 Years Hiding from a Dead Man," *Alternative Considerations* (2013).
[359] Thrash, *Onliest One Alive*, p. 116.
[360] Eugene Smith, *Back to the World: A Life After Jonestown* (TCU Press, 2021) p. 64.

act of love, giving could also be an act of selfish advancement even by the Temple's own internal standards.[361]

There were a multitude of reasons that individuals tithed, donated, or volunteered vast amounts of time or labour to Peoples Temple. The theologian and writer Stephen C. Rose in his work *Jesus and Jim Jones* (1979) argued that members of Peoples Temple were driven by what he names as the "Herculean conscience," defined as an "overwhelming desire to do good." Although not described specifically as such by Rose, the "Herculean conscience" reflects a distinctive kind of emotional orientation, attitude, or style that was fundamental to the broader emotional framework of Peoples Temple. For Rose, the Herculean conscience describes

> the attitude of a small portion of the American populace, a group of people whose consciousness is formed by an existential awareness of major destructive forces in the world and by a strong desire to do something to combat them… The Herculean conscience is a product of social and historical forces."[362]

Through donations and contributions to the vast network of social support offered by Peoples Temple, congregants were able to contribute as individuals towards a collective goal of doing good in an otherwise troubled world. As recent research from psychologists and economists suggests, the act of charitable giving itself may well promote positive emotional feelings, referred to by one author as feelings of "empathetic joy," and by another as the "joy of giving."[363]

The emotional framework of Peoples Temple intrinsically supported its financial practices and economic structures. Within the Temple milieu, the act of giving itself became named as an act of love. Therefore, the practices of tithing, offering, and "going communal" became methods of emotional navigation offered to congregants who desired to labour to meet to the emotional standard of love. Hall suggested a similar motivation in his discussion of the success of the Temple's financial

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[361] This seems to reflect the various mechanisms which promote charitable giving, as explored in recent research examining the psychological mechanisms of altruism. See René Bekkers and Pamala Wiepking, "A Literature Review of Empirical Studies of Philanthropy: Eight Mechanisms That Drive Charitable Giving", *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol. 40 No. 5 (2011) pp. 924-973.

[362] Stephen C. Rose, *Jesus and Jim Jones* (The Pilgrim Press, 1979) p. 22

[363] C. D. Baston and Laura L. Shaw, "Evidence for Altruism: Toward a Pluralism of Prosocial Motives," *Psychology Inquiry*, Vol. 2 No. 2 pp. 107-122; cited in Bekkers and Wiepking, "A Literature Review of Empirical Studies of Philanthropy," p. 938; James Andreoni, "Giving with Impure Altruism: Applications to Charity and Ricardian Equivalence," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 97 No. 6 (1989) pp. 1447-1458; William T. Harbaugh, Ulrich Mayr, Daniel R. Burghart, "Neural Responses to Taxation and Voluntary Giving Reveal Motives for Charitable Donations," *Science*, Vol. 316 pp. 1622-1624, cited in Bekkers and Wiepking "A Literature Review of Empirical Studies of Philanthropy" p. 934-8.

practices, echoing Roses' concept of the Herculean conscience. Hall found that "Despite the apocalyptic and world-transforming orientation in the group, or more precisely, because of it, Temple staff were able to exhort followers to maximize donations."[364] In this sense, Hall directly links the economic success of the Temple's financial practices with the apocalyptic or world-transforming orientation found within the group; in short, by appealing to what Rose described as the Herculean conscience.

That the act of giving was itself an emotional practice of love is evident upon a reading of Temple services, as preserved on audiotapes, and in textual documents archived by the California Historical Society. In worship services and Temple direct-mail solicitations, the affective vernacular of love underwrote requests for participation in the community's economic systems. Financial donations were not simply bundles of cash but *gifts of love* or *love gifts*. By reframing the act of giving as an act of love, Peoples Temple facilitated the transmutation of capital into emotional currency wherein congregants could exchange their love and, in return, be recipients of love's dividends. Considering the scale and success of the Temple's economic structure of affective redistribution, it is important to explore the embodied circumstances and material contexts in which the request for and exchange of offerings was made.

Within worship services requests for donations and offerings were firmly characterised by the emotional rhetoric of love. FBI Audiotape Q497, recorded on the day of the Temple's first service at their newly purchased Los Angeles property in 1973, explicitly captures the way offerings were emotionally framed by Pastor Jones as gifts of love. The service proceeds in a way characteristic of Temple gatherings throughout this period: music and song contribute to the increasingly ecstatic atmosphere as Jones performs a series of procedural faith healings. Some individuals emotively and passionately testify to the good things which had happened to them within the Temple, whether that good was a kind of healing or a more mundane boon. When a handful of new attendees arrive late, however, Jones makes a specific request to them as well as an additional request to the committed body of members present:

[364] Hall, "Collective Welfare as Resource Management in Peoples Temple," p. 76S.

> I'm going to ask that – people have come in late – I'm going to ask that you have an opportunity to give, and I'm going to ask now for purely no blessing, *but just because you love*. Some of you in the family, how many would give an extra dollar right now? [Emphasis added].[365]

Similarly in FBI Audiotape Q1053-1, recorded a year later in October 1974, Jones utilised a similar emotional vernacular directly linking the feeling of love to the practice of financial donation. The request for an offering once more names the appropriate feeling – love – to be felt when such an offering was made:

> I'm going to ask you, rather than take up any time with this joyous occasion, each of you will have your offering in hand – a *special love offering* – at the end of the day [emphasis added].[366]

The distinctly emotional framing of the Temple's pitch for offerings or donations is perhaps more prominent in the archival documents and ephemera held in the California Historical Society's Peoples Temple Collection. For example, in a direct mail pamphlet circulated by the Temple to solicit funds for the Agricultural Project in Guyana entitled "Operation Bread Basket," the pitch for a financial donation once again synonymises the act of financial donation as an act of love:

> If you would like to help support this project send your Love Offering today to help us acquire equipment and land.[367]

On the final page of the pamphlet is a prewritten script with a blank space for the respondent to fill in the donated amount:

> Pastor Jim, I am interested in helping the hungry people of the world. Here is my OFFERING OF LOVE to use in this Mission Work. I enclose my offering in the amount of $___[368]

By clarifying the act of donation as an "offering of love" or a "love offering," the money donated to the Temple's coffers became transubstantiated into a tangible act of love. At the most granular level of interactions between persons, where the economic structure of Peoples Temple was lived out in the day-to-day life of the community, love was the justification and means through which donations were secured.

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[365] FBI Audiotape Q497, *Alternative Considerations.*
[366] FBI Audiotape Q1053-1, *Alternative Considerations*
[367] "Operation Bread Basket," Direct Mail Pamphlet, Peoples Temple Ephemera and Publications MS 4124, Box 2 Folder 2, California Historical Society.
[368] "Operation Bread Basket", CHS.

Further examples are replete throughout the collection. An undated postcard pamphlet calling for mail donations contains identical emotional frame for the practice of donations: "Dear Pastor Jones," the respondent's section reads, "Here is my Love Offering to help with your human services ministry."[369]In yet another undated pamphlet disseminated throughout the California period, love continued to frame charitable giving. The pitch for a donation reads:

> As you send your letter, if you are able to send a GIFT OF LOVE to help the work financially God will honor your faith… Your measure of faith should be the measure of your GIFT OF LOVE. God knows how much you can give, and as you prepare your gift, remember the store of the Widow's Mite – it was all she had. Jesus said that she would be blessed for her sacrifice more than the rich man would, even though he had given a large offering.[370]

A later pamphlet produced and disseminated between 1974 and 1975 drew the attention of Temple's mailing-list readership to the plight of global starvation – a problem which the budding Jonestown Agricultural Project posed as a solution. Appealing to the Herculean desire to combat evil in the world by the doing of good works, the pamphlet requests financial donations with explicit reference to the charitable, global goal of the Agricultural Project. Interestingly, the final page of the pamphlet includes an editorial written by Donald Beck which explicitly describes the desired emotional response expected of a participant donor:

> As our efforts to help those in need increase, we witness the mighty and abundant blessings of God's love. His love is causing this work to grow in effectiveness. *If you are able to help us, we are sure you will experience the wonderful feeling that comes from sharing.* Service to suffering humanity is indeed the highest form of worship of our God [emphasis added].[371]

The bottom right quarter of this final page contains a space for a respondent to fill out their personal details, as well as the amount being donated. In bold, red text, a final message reads "Your gift will make the love of Jesus Christ real to those who are suffering today," with space left for the reader to fill out. Preceding the written amount for donation is a sentence which reads "Yes! I want to help! Here is my LOVE GIFT $___."[372] Beck's editorial suggests that love was more than a rhetorical

[369] "Dear Pastor Jones," Direct Mail Pamphlet, Peoples Temple Ephemera and Publications MS 4124, Box 2 Folder 2, CHS.
[370] "A Revelation from Pastor Jim," Direct Mail Pamphlet, Peoples Temple Ephemera and Publications, MS 4124 Box 2 Folder 2, CHS.
[371] "Did You Know That 100,000,000 people will die of starvation in 1975?" Direct Mail Pamphlet, Peoples Temple Ephemera and Publications, MS 4124 Box 2 Folder 2, CHS.
[372] "Did You Know," CHS.

justification for giving, but that congregations were actually encouraged and expected to feel the "wonderful feeling" that came from sharing one's wealth, however humble as that wealth may have been.

The emotional framework of Peoples Temple allowed for and encouraged financial donations as an avenue of emotional management which was intimately related to the broader economic structure of the movement. By framing donations and offerings as gifts of love, Temple administrators created an environment where fiscal donations became transmuted into tangible exchanges of love. In doing so, "love" was made real; it was manifest in the practice of congregants who donated fiercely to meet the emotional standard expected of them. As such, within the Temple's Californian milieu, "love offerings" and "gifts of love" were distinctive fiscal-emotional practices that sought to mobilise the most valued and financially useful emotion of all: love.

Love was not the *only* motivator for economic participation in the Temple's collectivist financial network, however. Throughout the California period, the way Peoples Temple administrators solicited member contributions shifted in a notable manner. Whilst love continued to act as the dominant emotional frame for giving, other emotions such as guilt and shame became increasingly utilised both by Jones and the broader Temple marketing machine. In some cases, it seems evident that fear, too, played an increasing role in the practicalities of soliciting or maintaining economic cooperation. In apostate narratives, for example, fear is described as one of the primary motivators for large scale donations to the Temple. Former members Wade B. and Mabel M. Medlock claimed their financial donations were made under duress, for example, in a lawsuit filed on 6 June 1978. The Medlocks accused Jones and several members of the Temple's inner circle of threatening them in order to secure the sale of the couple's two properties in order to acquire capital for the Agricultural Project in Guyana. According to the lawsuit, Jones had stated to the Medlocks that "You will either sign these papers or you will die." As the legal filing made clear,

> All apparent consents by plaintiffs to all such other documents were obtained by the defendant solely through reminders of the aforesaid threat of defendant Jones and solely through said duress and menace of unlawful and violent injury to the person of each plaintiff.[373]

Thus, whilst the Temple continued to frame their cause as the pursuit of love in the public eye, within the private realm of Temple life other emotions and emotional practices were utilised to keep the wheels of the financial machine turning.

Emotional practices of guilt and fear emerged, intensified, and were increasingly adopted into the Temple's emotional framework; the use of negatively valent emotions such as these, however, was often – but not always – kept behind closed doors. Practices of guilt and fear, and the increasing valorisation of guilt as an emotional standard within Peoples Temple, will be explored more fully in the following chapter. For now, this thesis returns to love.

Forbidden Love.

So far, this chapter has explored the Temple's redefinition of love as both a religious feeling and political sentiment throughout the California period. Within Peoples Temple, however, this new standard of love as a feeling-idea was consistently compared to and juxtaposed against other forms of love found in modern American society. As love became syncretically redefined within Peoples Temple, divergent expressions of love became increasingly regulated. As Jones emphasised in a sermon delivered in January 1973,

> We believe that the only way you're gonna get out of this plane is to overcome the lust for power and the lust for property. You've got to do it. Lust of power includes a lot of things, sex, a whole lot of things that're figuring into that area.[374]

By the time the group had moved to Guyana in 1977 sexual relationships became largely prohibited among congregants, with married couples often separated from one another and promiscuous individuals facing punishment and discipline in varying amounts. Whilst these kinds of relationships were regulated among the congregation, no such restrictions applied to Jones who, throughout the seventies, entertained a string of mistresses with a dubious and concerning record of consent.

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[373] Wade Medlock and Mabel Medlock v. Jim Jones, Peoples Temple, Enola Nelson, Enola Nelson Realty, Hugh Fortsyn [Hue Fortson], James McElvane et al., RYMUR 89-4286-BB-31-b-15 – BB-31-b-35. *Alternative Considerations*.
[374] FBI Audiotape Q1027.

In the previous chapter, this thesis explored Jones' discussion of the practice of celibacy as encountered within Father Divine's Peace Mission Movement. Whilst never enforcing absolute celibacy among his congregation, Pastor Jones maintained a general prohibition of casual sexuality. In the posthumously published *A Lavender Look at The Temple* (2011), author Michael Bellefountaine explored the often-conflicting place of sex and sexuality within Peoples Temple's diverse community. As Bellefountaine writes, "In 1971, after a cross-country trip to the Father Divine Peace Mission in Philadelphia, Jones expanded his earlier theory that sex was a needless self-indulgence that served as a distraction from the movement. The only love people needed could be derived from the cause and all the good work that they were doing."[375] Jones' positions on sex, however, were largely contradictory and, when viewed with a wide-angle, mostly incoherent. As Reiterman observed, "Jones tailored his sexual theories and rulemaking to a functional opportunism."[376] In the words of former Temple member Garrett Lambrev, "Jim often spoke of the desirability of free love once the state of communism had been achieved. In the meantime, however, he insisted that we refrain from sexual relations outside of marriage."[377]

The topic of sex features prominently in FBI Audiotape Q1021, a three-hour long recording of a meeting held in Redwood Valley in August 1972. In the first portion of the tape, a nephew of Hyacinth Thrash, named Herman, is cross-examined for poor work performance and sexual impropriety in a confrontation mediated by Jones. "We can show people we're good integrationists, that we're good socialists, by how we work. You violated that. Your temper and your interplay, your sex play," Jones charged.[378] Later in the tape a woman named Valerie, who has joined Peoples Temple from Father Divine's International Peace Mission Movement, testifies that Father Divine had intimate relations with her despite the strict celibacy imposed on Peace Mission congregants. As Jones replied,

> Valerie, Valerie, Valerie. Listen. I think you're wonderful. I like you… When he put you in the bed, I'd have said right then, something is wrong. Something is wrong, if he's telling everybody else not to have sex and to live

[375] Michael Bellefountaine with Dora Bellefountaine, *A Lavender Look at the Temple: A Gay Perspective of the Peoples Temple* (iUniverse inc., 2011) p. 12.
[376] Reiterman, *Raven*, p. 172.
[377] Garrett Lambrev, "Joe Phillips: A Reflection," (2013) *Alternative Considerations.*
[378] FBI Audiotape Q1021, Alternative *Considerations.*

> evangelically, not even touch, can't even have any undue mixing… You should have at that moment said, "Well that's not the kind of God I want."[379]

Further into the recording, Jones explains why he advises against sexual relationships. "That's why I'm trying to say, stop sex. I want to say that to you. I want to say stop sex, because I don't want to get on that plane of selfishness."[380] That this was a rhetorical strategy intended to elevate Jones in comparison to Divine is clear; by 1972 Jones had engaged in sexual relationships with several leading individuals within Peoples Temple – some consensual, others not; some female, others not.

One incident in Los Angeles may have catalysed the development of more intense regulation concerning sexual relationships within the Temple, and at the very least highlights the hypocritical nature of Jones' demands for sexual restraint. On 13 December 1973, Jones was arrested by a plain-clothed officer from the Los Angeles Police Department after an incident in the men's bathroom at a large cinema. As the officer's report stated, Jones was caught "walking toward [the officer], with his erect penis in his hand."[381] Cruising for sex, Jones instead found himself in handcuffs and cruising to a nearby LAPD precinct for processing. Although the charge would later be dismissed, this incident demonstrates Jones' hypocrisy in light of the regulations surrounding sex he promulgated to his congregation. More importantly, however, it also suggests that Jones became intimately aware at this point just how dangerous extramarital liaisons could be, and thus he perhaps sought to regulate sexual practices among his congregation to keep the image of Peoples Temple family friendly.

By 1974 Jones' discourse on sex had become more explicitly prohibitive. In FBI Audiotape Q218, Jones can be heard chastising the youth within the Temple's community for their sexual activities during a disciplinary meeting. "When the youth are caught up in the trick of the anarchistic terrorist plan of the conspiracy to do their own thing, get on drugs, do this, do that, go out on a free love trip, every kind of perversion anymore. We spend our hours with perversion," Jones stated. He admonished this promiscuity on the basis that the seniors within the church "had no free love. It's cost them with every bit of their blood and sweat to get anything free."[382] In a discussion among the

[379] FBI Audiotape Q1021. *Alternative Considerations.*
[380] FBI Audiotape Q1021. *Alternative Considerations.*
[381] Hall, *Gone from the Promised Land*, p. 103.
[382] FBI Audiotape Q218. *Alternative Considerations.*

Planning Commission during an early visit to Jonestown in that same year, Jones outlined his perspective on idealised sexual relations in a utopian socialist society:

> Perfection of understanding and love. Perfect sharing. No more jealousy. That's what I would see as the ideal [unintelligible]. Like I'm at right now. My wife wants you? You want my wife? And I love you both. Happy, happy. When you love somebody, you don't want to hold them. You want to free them. You understand what I'm saying?[383]

This did not apply to the members of Peoples Temple, however, who couldn't be trusted to practice socialistic sex. As Jones clarified,

> But being that no other communist nation has tried that, I would say "Jones - temper your goodness." 'Cause people are not ready for that goodness…That's why I don't urge ahead in the Peoples Temple, to do that… Sex is superficial. The best fucker gets more.[384]

Within Peoples Temple, sex was characterised as a selfish act which drew people away from focusing their attention and energies on the cause of movement-building. With increasing regularity, sex and sexuality would occupy more time in the Temple's disciplinary sessions.

Jones was very aware that Peoples Temple did not hold a monopoly on the use of the term "love" throughout the seventies. Throughout his sermons, Jones was careful to distinguish the Temple's definition of love from the love expressed by other alternative groups and social movements in American society. FBI Audiotape Q1024 preserves a recording of a 1974 Temple meeting in Redwood Valley in which Jones speaks at length about The Children of God (COG; now The Family International). Founded in 1968 by David Berg (1919-1994), the COG were an evangelistic alternative religious movement who became infamous for the practice known as "Flirty Fishing" wherein followers acted as "sacred prostitutes" by evangelising through sexual encounters.[385] Much like the members of Peoples Temple, the COG believed in the scriptural basis of Christian love espoused in 1 John: 4:8, that "God is Love," although this was extended to an ultimately erotic conclusion: if Christian love meant feeding the hungry, nursing the sick, clothing the naked, and

[383] FBI Audiotape Q568. *Alternative Considerations.*
[384] FBI Audiotape Q568. *Alternative Considerations.*
[385] For more on the Children of God, see apostate accounts such as: James D. Chancellor, *Life in the Family: an Oral History of the Children of God* (Syracuse University Press, 2000) and Miriam Williams, *Heaven's Harlots: My Fifteen Years as a Sacred Prostitute in the Children of God Cult* (William Morrow, 1999); and academic analyses such as David E. Van Zandt, *Living in the Children of God* (Princeton University Press, 1991).

offering alms to the poor, Berg argued that the same principle should be applied to those in need of affection and sex.[386]

In his discussion of the group, Pastor Jones described Berg's emphasis on sex as perverse. In this way, Jones juxtaposed the emotional framework of Peoples Temple with that of the Children of God on their different definition and application of Christian love. Whilst Jones conceded that, on certain issues, the COG were "talking with some sense for Jesus," he decried the sexual rhetoric and practices central to the COG:

> Now, the Children of God, an outfit that is not really socialistic, not certainly fascistic, more likely hedonistic… Terri Buford's got some articles that they're putting out that would blow your mind. Shows people using their mouth on each other in the name of Jesus… The sex poems are out of this world. Out of this world. The sex poems look like the man is a blimey nut… It's just filled with sex and malarkey.[387]

Following this, Jones reads one of Berg's "sex poems" aloud to his congregation, eliciting which encourages gasps from some and laughter from others. In particular, Jones provides a rendition of a poem entitled "Mountin' Maid!" (1971) which is replete with offensive and misogynistic couplets such as "Flying buttress, deep crevasse / There is nothing like her ass!" and "If you'd view ecstatic wonder / Tits like hers can make hearts thunder!"[388] Continuing, Jones reads:

> Furry creature holy flock, loosely wrapped about her smock, easily drawn aside by hand, of the shepherd of her land… Of the shepherd of her land. This is too much. Of the shepherd of her land – See, he's not socialist, he's too – he's property-class minded here. She's a piece of property to him, a sex object.[389]

That Jones sought to reframe sexual relations in a socialist context is clear, and his criticism of Berg's "property-minded" attitude toward women reveals an important aspect of the Temple's attitudes towards sex and sexuality. "We couldn't write that kind of poetry. Nonetheless, if we did, we would – we would make one issue only," Jones joked with his audience, "It'd be our first and last publication."[390]

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[386] The Family International, "The History and Theological Premise of Flirty Fishing (1977-1987)," *DavidBerg.org*.
[387] FBI Audiotape Q1024. *Alternative Considerations.*
[388] David Berg, "Mountin' Maid," (1971). *Xfamily.org*.
[389] FBI Audiotape Q1024. *Alternative Considerations.*
[390] FBI Audiotape Q1024. *Alternative Considerations.*

In critiquing Berg's attitudes toward sex and sexuality, Jones describes sex as "animal aggression, as we now have it in this life. It's all frustration, aggression, aggression, aggression."[391] A year earlier in another service, Jones had made a similar point whilst explicitly differentiating love from sex:

> Some people think love means sex. And that's the farthest thing from love. There's nothing farther from love than sex. Sex is animalism, sex is sensuality, sex is narcissism. I'm not knocking it, but there's no love in it. There's no love in sex, because people are seeking to be mirrored in the partner that they're identifying with in sex. They want someone to tell them how good a lover they are, and if they're not told how good a lover they are by a lot of emotional sounds or word verbalising, they can't make love.[392]

If sex represented narcissistic attitudes, it was held in direct contrast to the idealised sexual relations implicit in Jones' vision of socialism. By explicitly differentiating sex from love, Jones challenged a broader emotional standard within modern American (and European) societies in which sex and romance are intimately interwoven concepts. Within Peoples Temple, romantic love and sex were regulated with increasing frequency through the use of disciplinary emotional practices.

Edith Roller's journals provide an illuminating insight into the frequency of sex-talk in Temple disciplinary meetings. Throughout November 1976, Roller made note of four individuals disciplined for various kinds of sexual activity. In the case of one young man disciplined on 7 November, Roller notes there was a "discussion of his sex activities." Roller also noted Jim's response: "I don't care about his sperm any more than I do a worm." Roller records his punishment as a two-hundred dollar fine.[393] Three days later on Wednesday 10 November, Roller made note of the discipline of Betty Jean Gill (1960-1978) a sixteen-year-old girl. In Roller's notations, "Grandmother says she leaves panties for 3 weeks without washing. Michael looking for sex with her. He thought she is easy. She names others with whom she has had sex play… She didn't tell on white brothers. She admits she likes white brothers best."[394] Jones' solution to Gill's alleged promiscuity was to enforce her exclusively dating Michael Young as a "trial case without sex," to "see how it works."

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[391] FBI Audiotape
[392] FBI Audiotape Q1023. *Alternative Considerations.*
[393] Roller, "Edith Roller Journals," Sunday 7 November 1976.
[394] Roller, "Edith Roller Journals," Wednesday 10 November 1976.

Gill's case is concluded with Jones warning the Temple's youth that gonorrhoea has become resistant to penicillin, before Roller dispassionately recorded, "Punishment given."[395]

Later in the month on 17 November 1976, Paulette Jackson (1951-1978) was subject to catharsis for sexually liaising with a man external to Peoples Temple. Although she had invited him to services, and he had attended three, he did not join the movement. Roller recorded Jones' reprimand of Jackson, which captures the way sex was discussed as running contrary to the socialist goals of Peoples Temple: "You can't think what effect you might have had on him if you had represented socialism instead of sex."[396] Sexual relationships became increasingly regulated within Peoples Temple precisely because they distracted individuals from the cause that the Temple was collectively pursuing: a society reimagined and ordered on the emotional and moral principle of love. In *Seductive Poison,* Deborah Layton recalled a similar understanding of why sex was increasingly prohibited within the Temple's milieu, with such strict rules "intended to discourage any bonds with the opposite sex that might compromise our allegiance to [Jones]… We were taught that sex was selfish and harmful because it took our thoughts away from helping others."[397]

The regulation of sexual and romantic relationships was also framed as a response to the potential for subversion that such relationships could engender. Returning to Audiotape Q1021, recorded in August 1972, Jones departs from the usual structure of a service by refusing to "fill the atmosphere with love" because, at that moment, the Temple was in danger:

> And it's not in danger from without, but from within. Alliances that are being formed within the movement. I'm principle. The marriage should be to me. I don't need that marriage, and I don't want that marriage, but the office doesn't have anybody else to put in its position right now, so I'm here, and the first alliance and first marriage should be to me. Too many of you people follow someone else here, instead of me, as a basic ideal. And I'm afraid of it.[398]

Jones' preoccupation with the subversive nature of romantic and sexual relationships is clear, with the minister explicitly stating that such attachments between people constituted subversive relationships that threatened the coherence of the entire movement.

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[395] Roller, "Edith Roller Journals," Wednesday 10 November 1976.
[396] Roller, "Edith Roller Journals," Wednesday 17 November 1976.
[397] Deborah Layton, *Seductive Poison*, p. 54.
[398] FBI Audiotape Q1021, *Alternative Considerations.*

Relationships within Peoples Temple certainly had the capacity to become subversive ones. Marriages, romantic relationships, and even intimate trysts could create spaces of emotional refuge where the rules, norms, and standards of behaviour prevalent in the Temple's collective life could not only be relaxed but discussed and even challenged. As Reddy noted of emotional refuges, they can take the form of "a relationship, ritual, or organization…that provides safe release from prevailing emotional norms and allows relaxation of emotional effort, with or without an ideological justification, which may shore up or threaten the existing emotional regime."[399] Within the emotional framework of Peoples Temple, which proscribed sexual relationships, separated married couples, enforced collective child-raising, and increasingly regulated expressions of love which fell outside the normative expressions demanded in this milieu, intimate relationships could offer participants a refuge from those prevailing norms and could – as Jones feared – be subversive in the context of the Temple's world-transforming, socialist goals.

In *Six Years with God*, Jeannie Mills described the importance of her marriage to her husband, Al, as a kind of refuge from Peoples Temple. "I feel like I'm being torn apart," she recalled explaining to her husband, "Part of me wants to help Jim and the Cause, but inside, all I really want is to be home to enjoy the children and spend time with you and my parents." Prioritising romantic and filial love over the all-encompassing political agape of the Temple's apostolic socialism, Mill's marriage provided a refuge where the prevailing emotional standards of Temple life could be safely rejected. Mills recalls her husband's response as follows: "Don't forget, Jeannie, we can leave any time you want. The most important thing is our marriage and our family, and if you can't take the pressure, we'll just quit going to church."[400]

In the case of Jeannie and Al Mills, their very marriage promoted a relationship which, within the context of Peoples Temple's increasingly strict emotional regime, became an emotional refuge of its own kind. It was not just married couples, however, who found the Temple's strict regulation of romantic and sexual relationships unfavourable.

[399] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, p. 129.
[400] Mills, *Six Years with God,* p. 241.

In 1973, the Temple experienced its single largest defection when eight individuals, who named themselves The Eight Revolutionaries, departed from the movement leaving only a signed letter addressed directly to Jones. The letter explained their reasons succinctly: "To put it in one word – staff," the letter summarised. "The fact is, the eight of us have seen a grotesque amount of sickness displayed by staff. The ridiculous double standard and dishonesty that's practiced does not agree with us."[401] The letter continues with its first, and most important, charge:

> Proceeding, a revolutionary as you and staff would say, does not engage in sex. Anyone with any awareness concerning socialism would give up sex. The reasons for giving up sex are agreeable with us, however, who takes the privileged liberty to abuse such a decision – STAFF. Carolyn Layton, Sandy Inghram, Karen Layton, Grace Stoen, Janet Phillips etc., has to be fucked in order to be loyal. Jack Beam Sr., Tim Stoen... Mike Prokes etc., have to be fucked in the butt for the same reason. Who has to do it to them but Jim Jones…. The eight of us feel if loyalty has to be achieved through such double standard measures, then loyalty will never be achieved. At most a temporary secrecy will be kept, not loyalty nor the spirit of socialism.[402]

Within the Letter, the Eight Revolutionaries took issue not with the principle of revolutionary celibacy, but rather with the fact that this standard was not practiced by members of the leadership team who disciplined the rank-and-file for breaching that same standard. In this sense, the disaffection of the Eight Revolutionaries appears to be include a distinctive conflict over emotional standards and their application to the lives of the community.

Further supporting the character of this conflict as a conflict of competing emotional styles, is the Revolutionaries' critique of the practices of intimacy so central to the Temple's worship. "We're told we're not ready – we need more money – we have to be closer. Well, [Peoples] Temple is a multi-million-dollar church," they wrote, "and there's nothing being done to bring people closer. Hugging each other in services will not do it."[403] For the Revolutionaries, the emotional practices which generated congregational intimacy were rejected as insufficient tools for Peoples Temple to build the kind of socialist community that members believed they were building.

This defection was the conclusion of a conflict which included an undeniable emotional element: a conflict between a dominant emotional style and an oppositional style contained within the

[401] "The Eight Revolutionaries' Letter," *Alternative Considerations.* California Historical Society, Moore Family Papers, MS 3802.
[402] "The Eight Revolutionaries Letter," *Alternative Considerations.*
[403] "The Eight Revolutionaries Letter," *Alternative Considerations.*

Temple's overarching institutional framework. In the midpoint of the letter addressed to Jones by the Eight Revolutionaries, the authors suggest as much: "You said that the revolutionary focal point at present is in the black people. There is no potential in the white population, according to you. Yet where is the black leadership, where is the black staff and black attitude?"[404] The Eight Revolutionaries believed that they were participating in a black, revolutionary socialist movement; yet they questioned whether or not that was true in questions of staffing and, importantly, attitude. "Staff creates so much guilt in males that it breaks their spirit of revolution," the authors later suggest in the letter, before continuing:

> Why are there no black men or women with a revolutionary attitude coming into Peoples Temple? For the past 6 years all staff have concern themselves with – have been the castrating of people, calling them homosexual, sex, sex, sex. What about Socialism? Why isn't it top priority? [405]

The conflict between the young left-wing intellectuals and the established leadership of Peoples Temple reflected a conflict of emotional styles which, until this point, had both found purchase within the Temple's emotional framework. On the one hand was an emotional style which supported an attitude of black revolutionary activist, whilst on the other was a style adhered to by the administrative elite and large body of Temple congregants: its dominant emotional regime.

The tension between Peoples Temple as a religious movement and as a political movement would remain throughout the California period and into the short-lived Guyanese period of Temple history. In Guyana, Jones would resolve this tension (at least, on paper) by declaring the community at Jonestown to be an atheistic, communist movement that rejected God and Christianity completely. Yet such a transformation did not occur overnight, and the transition from communal religiosity to communal atheism began in California. The Golden State provided an environment wherein this communal metamorphosis took place, and the negotiation of politics and religion within the Peoples Temple milieu appeared to take on a split between public/private. The Temple – Jones, his administrative team, and other organisational leaders – worked hard to promote a public image of Peoples Temple which remained within the established Christian tradition. It was, to the public, a

[404] "The Eight Revolutionaries Letter," *Alternative Considerations.*
[405] "The Eight Revolutionaries Letter," *Alternative Considerations.*

church above all. Yet if one entered the church on a weekend service, and after a period of attendance ranging from a few weeks to a few months, was invited to attend a service held at Redwood Valley on a Wednesday evening, one might find the community with a very different character.

The following two chapters explore the nature of Peoples Temple's public and private services by examining the different emotional standards and practices that characterised members only meetings from services open and available to the general public in Los Angeles, San Francisco, or other host churches. Chapter Four explores the nature of the Temple's public emotional style, whilst Chapter Five explores how the Temple's emotional framework accounted for, and adjusted its style, in private contexts and encounters.

Chapter Four: Emotions and Public Worship.

Throughout the Californian period of Temple history, the community operated first and foremost as a church in the public sphere with an enthusiastic, if not radical, approach to the social gospel. Pastor Jones was committed to a rigorous schedule that included weekly meetings in Redwood Valley and San Francisco, with trips to Los Angeles increasing in frequency throughout the period. During the summers, the Temple's fleet of twelve Greyhound buses would take hundreds of members on tours across the United States in a kind of Peoples Temple revival circuit. Some buses would be taken empty, with the intention of bringing new followers back to be full-time members of the Temple; this occurred particularly when Jones and his congregation visited Mother Divine at Woodmont, Philadelphia, following Father Divine's death in 1965.

The public image of Peoples Temple was largely characterised by the community's behaviour during worship. Within the San Francisco and Los Angeles Temples – the spaces wherein worship most commonly took place – the congregation adhered to specific emotional standards and performed the appropriate practices to meet them. These services, however, were open to the general public, and functioned equally as experiential advertisements of the Temple as a community and social movement. The following section explores the importance of ecstatic emotional release to the Temple's public worship and analyses the ways such emotional energies were manifest through the strategic use of different emotional practices.

Ecstatic Worship and Emotions in Peoples Temple.

Peoples Temple offered its Californian audiences a musical religion. Just as in Indianapolis music continued to structure and style the worship found in Peoples Temple, as it did in other black and Pentecostal congregations, by "provoking intense emotional reactions within its most devoted practitioners."[406] Weekly services in San Francisco and Los Angeles began with the integrated choir singing in tandem with the congregation, guided in their song by a Temple band. Musical numbers

[406] Becker, "Exploring the Habitus of Listening: Anthropological Perspectives," in. Juslin and Sloboda (eds.) *Handbook of Music and Emotion,* p. 143.

ranged from more traditional songs drawn from the Black and Pentecostal worship tradition through to more modern revisions of popular releases. The choir even sang original compositions, including the Indianapolis hold-over "Welcome!" which often played as congregants entered the church. As former choir member Laura Johnston Kohl described it, the choir "became the heart of the meeting and set the tone for the entire service and the introduction to the dynamic of Peoples Temple."[407]

Music was used to reproduce the emotional framework which drew the congregation together and bound them in their quest for a better life, both communicating distinctive emotions and mobilising powerful feelings among attending audiences. The Temple's success at crafting a moving, evocative choir and band is clear in the memoirs and testimonies of former members and survivors. Laurie Efrein Kahalas recalled her first experiences at Peoples Temple as being defined by song: the music drew her in long before Jones had even appeared on stage.

> I loved the singing. I love it still. The greatness of a people is their song. The spiritual meter of a people is their song… I'll always remember… the children that day. It was the children's choir that led the preliminaries, in their vibrant checkerboard trademark of black-white-black-white-black-white, a continuous face-by-face integration almost too flowing to be designed. They began to sing, "Brotherhood is our religion, for democracy we stand, we love everybody, we need every hand…" I cried in awe… Jim Jones was still nowhere in sight, but I knew I was home.[408]

Similarly, Jeannie Mills reflected on the role of music in the moment of her conversion to the group:

> The members all looked normal. In fact, they were the happiest and most wholesome-looking people we had ever seen. Several of the people already seated came over to welcome us, and a few even embraced us… There seemed to be no racism in this atmosphere of peace and love, and I began to relax… I had never before witnessed the warmth and love I was seeing in this totally integrated group, and their songs were sweet and simple. This made a strong impression on me.[409]

Laura Johnston Kohl highlighted the importance of music and song in her own conversion experience, when she first attended and joined the Temple in March 1968:

> Here was an interracial church with an awesome choir singing about revolution, equality, freedom, and socialism. I could have listened to the choir for hours. The musicians were accomplished, and the singers poured their hearts out when they sang… The melodies were hauntingly beautiful… I loved what I saw.[410]

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[407] Laura Johnston Kohl, "Making the *He's Able* Album," (2013). *Alternative Considerations.*
[408] Laurie Efrein Kahalas, Snake Dance, p. 52.
[409] Mills, *Six Years with God* p. 117
[410] Kohl, *Jonestown Survivor*, p. 26.

Deborah Layton, alternatively, describes her feelings as being somewhat overwhelmed by the energy generated during her first Temple meeting. Visiting her brother, Larry, during the summer of 1970, Layton attended a worship service at Redwood Valley, which she recounted in *Seductive Poison* as follows:

> I was flustered by all the commotion around me. People were jumping up and down and clapping their hands to music…. I watched as the young people began dancing around, happy, comfortable, not the least bit self-conscious. I took it all in, mesmerised by the energy in the room.[411]

In *Slavery of Faith*, Jonestown survivor Leslie Wagner Wilson equally recalled the second Temple service she had ever attended with her parents, as a deeply emotional collective experience rooted in music and song:

> The choir sang high volume gospel, and the people joined in, singing and holding up their arms in the air. Afterwards, a white woman – Marceline Jones, Jim's wife – started singing "My Little Black Baby," a slow melody about a black child. Tears ran down her face as she sang, and many in the audience were crying too.[412]

Whilst the music of Peoples Temple often reflected the community's emotional standards, the use of music itself continued to act as an important emotional practice which guided, provoked, and encouraged the emotions of participants within the worship setting.

Music features prominently across many of the FBI Audiotapes which record Peoples Temple worship services throughout the California period. Classic spirituals, hymns, and Christian numbers continued to inform the Temple's music catalogue but many of these songs often had their lyrics changed to more accurately reflect the Temple's values. FBI Audiotape Q357 contains a service which exemplifies the Temple's innovative use of song and the participation of the congregation in these original musical endeavours.

The tape starts recording near the beginning of the service: Jones has not yet appeared on stage, but a microphone is being passed around the crowd as individuals take the opportunity to testify their thanks and gratitude toward Jones for various miracles he has performed and the improvements seen in their lives since joining the Temple. One woman, Caroline Washington, receives the

[411] Layton, *Seductive Poison*, p. 38.
[412] Leslie Wagner Wilson, *Slavery of Faith*, p. 23.

microphone and greets the crowd with “Peace and love.” With tangible excitement in her voice, she testifies that she had been a member of many churches but had not found God until she had joined Peoples Temple. Speaking of what Jones has done for her, Washington proclaims: “He put my feet on a rock to stay. He put a song in my soul today, and now, I can sing! Hallelujah!” After a round of applause and cheers, whoops, and hollers from the congregation, Washington announces that she will sing “God is real, because to me, Jim Jones is real,” before clarifying, “I’ll change the words to that.”[413]

With lyrics almost identical to the original hymnal, Washington adapts the song to replace “God” with “Jim Jones.” For example,

> He’s so real in my soul
>
> Jim Jones is real
>
> For he has washed and made me whole
>
> His love for me
>
> Is like pure gold
>
> Jim Jones is real
>
> Oh, I can feel
>
> Him in my soul.[414]

Another example appears shortly after Washington’s rendition. Another woman from Los Angeles identifies herself as Pearl Cole, taking to the microphone to testify to the miracles Jones has performed in her life. Among these miracles, Cole includes the release of her son from a prison camp in Korea, which she attributes to the power held by Jim Jones. Almost exasperated with her own excitement and audibly overwhelmed with emotion, Cole states that “just one verse of this song, was so long it been a part of me, and now I know the meaning of it,” before singing to the congregation:

> This love God is

[413] FBI Audiotape Q357 (24 June 1973). *Alternative Considerations.*
[414] FBI Audiotape Q357. *Alternative Considerations.*

It's flowing out today

A perfect love in all God's perfect ways

Not all in here

But out in roaring flames

Against God's love no mortal man can stand

This love Jim is

Is flowing out today

A perfect love, in all Jim's perfect ways.[415]

A cynical reading of such tapes might suggest that individuals were directly encouraged to adopt the lyrics of traditional songs. Upon fairer review, the answer seems that researchers will likely never know whether performances like Washington's or Cole's were spontaneous, insofar as they were motivated without coaxing by Temple administrators.

Other services and tapes reveal a similar pattern of appropriation and adaptation of hymnals, spirituals, and popular music to fit the Temple's emotional and cultural repertoire, whilst others preserve songs that are likely original compositions. In FBI Audiotape Q964, for example, Jones leads the congregation in a rendition of a song titled "Brotherhood is Our Religion," which was an unofficial motto of Peoples Temple. Jones introduces the song as one he composed and likes, before leading the choir and congregation as follows:

Brotherhood is our religion

For democracy we stand

We love everybody

We feed every hand

It's based on the Constitution

And it certainly is God's command

[415] FBI Audiotape Q357. *Alternative Considerations.*

For the rights we adore /

…

They are liberty, fraternity, equality for all![416]

Examples like the ones provided above suggest the important and multifaceted role played by music in both communicating the Temple's emotional framework and contributing to the realization of these emotional standards in the practices of worshipping congregants.

Across the California period the style and technology of the Temple's musical output only became more sophisticated. The leadership circle within Peoples Temple was very aware of the influence and utility of the church's music, as well as its status as a potential - yet untapped – financial asset. In 1973 the Peoples Temple choir recorded and released an album entitled *He's Able*: a funky, gospel, pop offering which included spirituals and chart toppers alike alongside upbeat foot-tappers and soulful, pensive ballads.[417] Featuring vocals from the junior choir, talented individual singers, and even Jim and Marceline Jones themselves, *He's Able* was an expression of the Temple's emotional framework which allowed congregants to take the church's music home with them. From another perspective, *He's Able* reflected the commercialisation of the Temple's emotional style. As a 1973 advertisement for the album in a Temple newsletter read, "Bring the service into your own home! You will close your eyes and imagine yourself right in the services of Peoples Temple with your Pastor, Jim Jones."[418] As the creative force behind *He's Able*, Jack Arnold Beam would later recall that he had discussed with Jones the potential for an album after directing the Choir for several years, with the pair concluding that "We could not only promote Peoples Temple with music, but sales of the record would make money for the church."[419]

He's Able is composed of twelve tracks, with "Welcome" as the opener to the album which also functioned as the opener to a standard Temple service. Towards the end of the album the track "Black Baby" is also featured, sung by Marceline Jones as it was in the service attended by Leslie

[416] FBI Audiotape Q964 (18 July 1973). *Alternative Considerations.*
[417] Peoples Temple Choir and Reverend Jim Jones, *He's Able* (Brotherhood Records, Vinyl, 1973).
[418] Peoples Temple Newsletter (1973) cited in Brian Kevin, "Songs Primarily in the Key of Life," *Colorado Review* Vol. 37 No. 2 (Summer, 2010) pp. 68-101.
[419] Jack Arnold Beam, "Sing the Song of Life… Follow your Dreams," (2013) *Alternative Considerations*.

Wagner-Wilson described above. “Black Baby” is an adaptation of Nina Simone’s “Brown Baby,” with both tracks offering a deeply emotional and sentimental reflection of a parent considering what the future holds for their child. In both cases, the lyrics capture the tragic love and hopeful sorrow of a mother, and her desire to watch said child grow up in a society free from racism and oppression. As the final verse of “Black Baby” proceeds,

> My little black baby, I feel so glad
>
> You’ll have things that Mom never had
>
> When out of men’ hearts all hate is gone
>
> You’re going to live in a better land
>
> My little black baby.[420]

As a song which undoubtedly spoke on a personal level to many black mothers within Peoples Temple, it also held a deeply personal quality to the community when sung by Marceline Jones. In 1961, the Joneses had adopted Jim Jones Jr., a black child, being the first white couple in the State of Indiana to do so. As such, “Black Baby” remains a powerful song in which Marceline Jones communicates the sorrow and hope experienced by many mothers of black children.

Other songs on the album, such as the track “Will You?” capture more positively valent community emotions. Verse one begins with a clear emotional standard linking the musical, affective culture of Peoples Temple with its economic structure and practices:

> We’ve found joy in sharing
>
> Sharing what we have with one another
>
> And we’ve started caring
>
> Caring what becomes of our brother.[421]

[420] Peoples Temple Choir, “Black Baby,” *He’s Able* (1973).
[421] Peoples Temple Choir, “Will You?” *He’s Able* (1973).

Another track composed of a single verse sung slowly and accompanied by a wavering melody, “Because of Him” functions in much the same way, communicating a series of emotional standards which are representative of the broader framework and organisation of Peoples Temple:

> Because of Him, this world has hope again
>
> Because of Him, this world has got a good friend
>
> …
>
> So that all may see
>
> That it’s so wonderful to care
>
> To love, to give, to share
>
> Oh, let us start today
>
> To live the same way...[422]

This song is both an advertisement of the Temple’s goals – living like Jim Jones (“Him”) – and an invitation for individuals to take up the mantle of responsibility to follow the example set before them.

The seventh track of the album is the title track, “He’s Able.” Rather than communicating a specific emotional standard, “He’s Able” seems to communicate the emotional structure of the charismatic relationship. The chorus is an up-beat encouragement and reminder that through Jones, all things are possible:

> Don’t you know God is able?
>
> He’s able, He’s able, He’s able
>
> Clouds may gather, all around you,
>
> So dark and stable…
>
> He’s a friend, to the friendless
>
> He’s a father, to the fatherless
>
> He’s your joy in your sorrow

[422] Peoples Temple Choir, “Because of Him,” *He’s Able* (1973).

He's your hope for tomorrow.[423]

Each track on *He's Able* captures a unique aspect of Peoples Temple's emotional framework, encompassing emotional standards and instantiating them in song. Taken as a holistic offering, *He's Able* represents a cultural production which, in some ways, captures the true depth and variety of emotional life in Peoples Temple perhaps moreso than any other single source. It captures the driving force of love, the power of hope, the pain of sorrow, the joy of community, and the peace of safety as felt by the members of Peoples Temple. *He's Able* is, above all, an expression of communal feelings.

Music had an important function within the worship setting, however, that could not be reproduced on vinyl. Within the spatial context of a Peoples Temple worship service, music also functioned to help guide the congregation towards a collective state of emotional excitement which preceded the climax of the event: the faith healing of afflicted individuals within the congregation.

The Love That Heals.

Faith healing remained an important practice within Peoples Temple throughout the California period. On the one hand, it attracted huge (and generous) crowds to Temple services which provided an important weekly revenue stream for the organisation's redistributive pursuits; on the other hand, the practice of faith healing brought with it the possibility of bad media coverage, suspicion, and the derision of the wider public. In the Temple's documentary record (including editions of the *Peoples Forum* available in the California Historical Society's archive) discussions of healing are regularly featured in editorial articles and news pieces and framed not as alternatives to medical treatments but complementary, related health practices.

For example, in the *Peoples Forum* issue dated 2 April 1976, two articles are featured in a discussion of spiritual healing. In one editorial on page 3, titled "Spiritual Healing: Inspiration or Imagination?" the authors claim that faith-healings occur frequently in Temple services, although "no one knows exactly how they came to pass."[424] The editorial emphasises that such healings do not replace medical science, and that those who have been healed are always encouraged to visit a doctor

[423] Peoples Temple Choir, "He's Able," *He's Able* (1973).
[424] Peoples Temple, *Peoples Forum*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (2 April 1976) p. 3., Peoples Temple Ephemera and Publications, MS4124, Box 2, CHS.

to have their claims verified thereafter. Whilst emphasising that the cause of such miracles is unknown, the Temple's theology of love does appear to be the justification offered by the author of this editorial:

> Though no one claims to know how these things come to pass, the effect of love as an encouraging force to help the body heal itself is known to be so dramatic that even certain medical schools and nursing schools are teaching it.[425]

At all points of Temple history, the practice of healing was intimately related to the manifestation of divine love. For example, in a service held at Redwood Valley in 1973 Jones explicitly evokes love as a precondition to healing, and encourages emotional practices believed to help manifest the requisite atmosphere of love:

> Infinite mind, hallow this atmosphere, and this can only be done through our obedience to the perfect mind of love… May health flow from heart to heart as we gently touch our neighbour's hand. May the warmth of our concern be felt intensely.[426]

That miraculous healings were intimately linked to the practice and feeling of communal love remained throughout the entire Californian period. These events, however, relied on more than just love; they were highly expressive and evocative moments of communal celebration and prayer wherein emotional excitement was not just a byproduct, but a fundamental component of the faith-healing performance.

FBI Audiotape Q964 preserves an audio recording of a Peoples Temple service delivered in July 1973. The audio immortalises a lively service which includes song, music, faith healing, and Jones' sermon woven into an expressive occasion. After a selection of songs, Jones introduces the service by inviting his congregation to affectively interact with one another so as to produce the correct atmosphere for the service leading into the healing:

> Now, will each of you give a very fond embrace, or a salutary kiss of greeting to your neighbour, and let's fill this atmosphere with warmth and love.[427]

[425] Peoples Temple, *Peoples Forum*, Vol. 1 No. 2, p. 3.
[426] FBI Audiotape Q357, *Alternative Considerations.*
[427] FBI Audiotape Q964, *Alternative Considerations.*

As the service works towards the ecstatic faith healings, Jones can be heard inviting the congregation to bow their heads, before stating that "we enter into a place of concentration. God is love. Love is a healing remedy."[428] One woman in the crowd is selected to be healed of a visually striking malady: she is seated in a wheelchair. As the organ plays in the background, increasing the intensity of its melody as Jones' ministerial voice guides the procedural healing supported by the cheers and shouts of the audience, he declares to the wheelchair bound woman:

> I love you. Jesus Christ loves you. Jehovah Jireh – all the goodness of the world's great religions, in the name and the mercy and the goodness of Jesus wherein I stand. Come forth my dear. Stand up.[429]

In an atmosphere characterised by a discourse of love and the performance of distinctive emotional practices intended to aid its manifestation, the woman stands. The crowd cheers while the organ player riffs a revival refrain. Jones continues the healing, directing the woman to not just stand, but walk:

> Move forward, move forward child. Sweetheart, would you step out of the way just a moment, so that I can just keep my *love thought* on her. Now move forward. Freely, freely, freely. Now begin to exercise the hip. Begin to exercise the joint. *I love you. Christ loves you; the people love you* [emphasis added].[430]

As the woman does so, the crowd cheers and whoops, with shouts of "Amen" and "Hallelujah" heard interspersed throughout, until she eventually runs. Several more faith healings proceed in a remarkably similar manner, with love the central emotional evocation of the ceremony; defined by Jones, but practiced by the congregation, choir, and musicians in toto as they worked to make their compassion, empathy, and love *felt* by those who needed it most.

As one might expect following the example of the wheelchair-bound woman leaping to her feet, the "faith healings" performed within Peoples Temple have been a subject of intense critical discussion. Those who do not believe in the practice regard faith-healing as little more than charlatanism, whilst others – including former Temple members – remain firm in their belief that Jones was capable of healing individuals from a variety of illness and injuries.

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[428] FBI Audiotape Q964, *Alternative Considerations*.
[429] FBI Audiotape Q964, *Alternative Considerations*.
[430] FBI Audiotape Q964, *Alternative Considerations.*

The accounts of survivors and former members alike seem to confirm a change in the Temple's faith-healing practices throughout the 1970s, as they became more routinised, more theatrical, and involved more Temple administrators in outright deception. In a 2013 reflective piece, Mike Cartmell described the healing services performed within the Temple as "the glue that held [Peoples Temple] together as a group," before clarifying that this assertion "is highly controversial within the survivor community."[431] Cartmell describes his role in the early 1970s as a collector of offerings, until Jones selected him to assist in the performance of a faith healing service in the Los Angeles Temple:

> [Jones] explained to the congregation that he was going to perform the afternoon's healings through me. On Jim's incantation, and to the hushed astonishment of the congregants, I named three people [whom] I did not know, told them about items in their homes, identified ailments they suffered, and pronounced them cured. As I recall, the three of them swooned and the building itself seemed to rock as the entire assembly erupted in pandemonium.[432]

Cartmell's reflections offer a unique perspective on the Temple's faith healing services, inasmuch as they demonstrate the ecstatic reaction such performances seemed to manifest (not only among the healed, but among those participating through observation). Yet – for Cartmell – these were *only* performances; he had been provided with all the information required to pull off such a theatrical feat beforehand. During the bus trip to Los Angeles some hours before the service, Jones informed Cartmell that he had been selected for this task:

> He told me to see Carolyn Layton, his chief of staff, for details then sent me on my way… [Carolyn] gave me three blue 3" by 5" cards, which displayed highly personal details about each of three Los Angeles Temple members, who were unknown to me… This information included the individual's prescription medications, unusual household objects, specific articles of clothing… Carolyn instructed me to memorize all the details on each card, explained how the healings would be staged and, much like a theatrical director, assisted me in preparing for my role and shored up my confidence.[433]

Interestingly, Cartmell goes on to note that he was "so moved by the assembly's response that I nearly believed it was real," before qualifying this experience with the assertion that the Temple's healings were mostly fake, although he had hoped "against all reason, that some were in fact 'genuine.'"[434]

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[431] Mike Cartmell, "Temple Healings: Magical Thinking," (July 2013) *Alternative Considerations.*
[432] Cartmell, "Temple Healings."
[433] Cartmell, "Temple Healings."
[434] Cartmell, "Temple Healings."

Whether genuine or not, the faith-healings performed at Peoples Temple were effervescent and highly emotionally charged interactions which created the very environment and atmosphere such performances were reliant upon. In his religio-historical account of Peoples Temple, David Chidester made an interesting suggestion as to the nature of faith healing which provides an important avenue for study, citing the work of Psychologist Jerome Frank who argued that recipients and believing observers in faith-healing rituals give emotional assent to the proposition that the individual has, in fact, been healed. As Chidester continues, "This interpretation seems to suggest that while the magician's art in these healing practices involves deception, it is not merely deception. There may be a willing suspension of disbelief that allows the patient to achieve a certain intensity of emotional involvement that might be regarded as therapeutic."[435]

If an intensity of emotion is, to some degree, a prerequisite for the performance of faith-healing rituals in the Pentecostal tradition, then Durkheim's notion of collective effervescence is a useful tool for examining this in such congregations. Collective effervescence is a concept suggested by Durkheim to explain the process wherein communities, societies, or social groups come together for a period of collective, unified action (such as a religious ritual) which results in a feeling of shared energy, excitement, and even ecstasy or awe. In these moments, social and emotional energies build in intensity: "Every sentiment expressed finds a place without resistance in all the minds, which are very open to outside impressions; each re-echoes the others, and is re-echoed by the others." Furthermore, as Durkheim noted, such collective expressions of communal feeling tended to be expressed with music, song, and dance, because "a collective sentiment cannot express itself collectively except on the condition of observing a certain order permitting co-operation and movements in unison," and therefore "these gestures and cries naturally tend to become rhythmic and regular, hence come songs and dances."[436]

In Durkheim's analysis, it was this moment of effervescence itself "that the religious idea seems to be born."[437] Returning to Cartmell's recollection of his involvement in a deceptive faith

[435] Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, p. 76,
[436] Emile Durkheim (trans. Joseph Ward Swain) The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (George Allen & Unwin, [1912] 1964) p. 216.
[437] Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, p. 219.

healing performance, it seems that the notion of collective effervescence maps onto Cartmell's experience: being so "moved by the assembly's response," Cartmell found himself almost believing in his own deception. For Cartmell, the emotional energy of the congregation spurred a moment of potential faith; or, as Durkheim might have said, the religious idea was born (and snuffed out) in this moment of collective effervescence.

Faith-healing was an explicitly emotional process which invoked love in the performance of miracles, but which relied upon the intense emotional energies generated by these dramatic performances. As well as generating powerful socio-emotional forces, faith-healings were also important fundraisers for Peoples Temple, attracting large crowds and potential converts by the hundreds. In her journal entries, Edith Roller dutifully noted the proximity of offering requests to the performances of faith-healing within services. For example on 19 July 1975, Roller recorded that:

> Jim took an offering by sum, saying this was the only offering. However, after more healings, he said the first offering was so inadequate he took another, having the names of those giving written down. He went on with more healings. Though the hour was late, he said people should come to the altar because the offering was so low. The service ended about 7:30.[438]

In the entry for the very next day, Roller simply recorded that "Jim intermingled offering taking with healings."[439] By producing powerfully, emotionally moving and theatrical faith-healing performances, Jones and the administrators of Peoples Temple were able to invite higher and more frequent levels of monetary donation; capitalising on the effervescence in the room by punctuating healings with the taking of offerings.

Don Beck (1943-1978) had joined Peoples Temple at the turn of the seventies, becoming a trusted leader within the movement. In 2013, he reflected on his involvement in the movement and the issue of faith healings, which he regarded as the "most contentious" issue at the heart of Peoples Temple's history. Beck stated that many of the Temple's healings were faked – with this being common knowledge among the movement's leadership – but that these faked healing services increased in prominence as the Temple expanded:

[438] Edith Roller Journals (19 July 1975). *Alternative Considerations.*
[439] Edith Roller Journals (20 July 1975). *Alternative Considerations.*

> People often came to Jim initially more for the healings than for a message of helping your neighbour. We knew the healings were a way to draw people to the Temple for the first time, and some of them did stay. More and more embraced working for building a better world… As we had more and more members, it was more of a drain on [Jones] to support those members and then "perform" for visitors. That's when the faked healings came in – and that's how those who knew of the faked healings participated in them ourselves and how we justified the subterfuge.[440]

Whilst we can acknowledge the prominence of fake healings within Peoples Temple, we must equally acknowledge the excitement and emotional intensity generated by such events regardless of their validity. As the primary attraction of a Temple service, drawing crowds in the thousands, healings provided the gateway to the Temple's human service ministry. As Jones surmised in FBI Audiotape Q964, he considered the greatest achievement of his healing ministry to be the fact "That healings turn people on to social action."[441]

Love for, and of, the Father.

Within the first year of the community's resettlement in California, one of Jones' associate ministers had already chosen to depart from Peoples Temple. Although Ross Case had moved first to California in order to find an appropriate locale for the Temple, he soon parted ways with Jim Jones due to the developing charismatic relationship that supported Jones' claims to divinity. Decrying the changing emotional tenor of life within Peoples Temple, Case wrote to an acquaintance that "Love for and trust in Jesus appears to be fading, while love for and trust in James Jones is growing," he wrote to a friend.[442] In California, love continued to provide structure of the charismatic relationship shared between Jones and two groups: his lieutenants within the "inner circle," and the congregation more broadly. Jones was both a living example of love to be followed, but also an object to be loved above all within the Temple's emotional framework.

In a pamphlet produced around 1968, co-written by Mike Cartmell and Sharon Amos (with editorial input from Caroline Moore Layton) the link between love and authority was emphasised in print. Entitled *The Letter Killeth,* this twenty-four-page printed booklet contained well researched and

[440] Don Beck, "The Healings of Jim Jones" (July 2013) *Alternative Considerations.*
[441] FBI Audiotape Q964. *Alternative Considerations*.
[442] Ross Case, Unpublished Correspondence, June 6, 1965.

consistent Biblical criticism, highlighting textual contradictions and pointing towards evidence of the illegitimacy of certain passages as viewed from the Temple's critical perspective. In instructing its readership to base their faith not on the Bible but the spoken word, the pamphlet contains a "Message From the Apostle" on page two which clarifies who, or what, should be followed if not the written word. "God is Love," the message reads, "therefore whoever reincarnates love more fully should be followed!"[443] By encouraging his otherwise Christian congregation to move away from their reliance upon scripture, Jones was striking at the foundational emotional standards upon which the community had first been built in Indianapolis. In California, the Bible provided no emotional standards; this authority drifted solely to Jones.

Jones' role as the exemplary practitioner of divine love continued to justify the development of the charismatic relationship. Eventually, Jones would supplant the position of God as the primary object of worship within Peoples Temple. In a 1972 sermon delivered in San Francisco, Jones told his congregation that they would receive no blessings – neither health, wealth, nor happiness – until they committed to emulating his example: "You will not get Father, you will not get Christ in Jim Jones' blessing until you walk like Jim Jones, until you talk like Jim Jones, until you act like Jim Jones, until you look like Jim Jones."[444] Rather than the Christ of the Bible, it was Jim Jones – the incarnation of divine love – whose authority would be followed in Peoples Temple.

Within Peoples Temple Jones was both an object of the congregation's love and the exemplification of that love. For example, FBI Audiotape Q1056-4 contains a recording of an undated worship service where Jones' love takes centre stage. Discussing the unity of his congregation, Jones maintains that he would never allow a single loyal follower to suffer needlessly. The power to do this, he claims, results from his unconditional love:

> If in your heart you covenant, united we stand, divided we fall. But please, though it matters not to me, if you're not ready to make that commitment, I will still love you whether it's in jail falsely accused, or whether it's on a gallows, I will still love you because no one will keep you from my love. I have loved you from the beginning, and I shall love you in the end.[445]

[443] Peoples Temple, *The Letter Killeth*, California Historical Society, MS3800 (Peoples Temple) and MS4123 (Margaret T. Singer materials on Peoples Temple, 1956-1998). *Alternative Considerations*.
[444] FBI Audiotape Q353.
[445] FBI Audiotape Q1056-4.

As a charismatic authority, Jones was responsible for defining the emotional standard of love which he desired those within his congregation to emulate. In this message, Jones drew a powerful link between absolute loyalty and commitment and love.

In *Gone From the Promised Land*, Hall found that in California Jones' charismatic authority "became institutionalised in the form of a charismatic community," composed of an administrative staff which was demographically at odds with the composition of the broader Peoples Temple. Whereas the Temple was an institution with at least three-quarters black membership, Jones' inner circle was almost ninety percent white and more than sixty percent female.[446] The role of well-educated white women in the upper echelons of a culturally and demographically black organisation has been thoroughly explored by some scholars, such as Mary M. Maaga in *Hearing the Voices of Jonestown* (1998). Maaga found that "emotions, sex, and love were elements in the involvement of many women, [and] it is clear that these were not separate motivational impulses from their desire to exercise leadership and to contribute to changing the world."[447] As both Hall and Maaga agree, Jones' selections for leadership typically reflected "the patterns of his intimate relationships."[448]

That Jones had intimate relationships with many of the women among his administrative cadre is well documented, as well as a number of men within the Temple as well. Carolyn Layton joined Peoples Temple in 1968 when the church was still anchored to Redwood Valley, and she quickly became Jones' most trusted confidant, his lover, and the second most powerful person within the institution, in many respects outweighing even Marceline Jones.[449] A recent article written by independent researcher Jennifer Louise Sullivan has highlighted love as a powerful, if not dangerous, aspect of Carolyn's relationship with Jones and Peoples Temple. In her article "Carolyn Moore Layton & The Extreme Madness of Love," Sullivan describes the example of Moore as an "example of the extreme madness of love… Carolyn loved Jim."[450]

Although Jones and Carolyn appeared to share a deep and intimate relationship, Jones participated in many other sexual trysts. Of course, these engagements were not public knowledge

[446] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 96.
[447] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices*, p. 19.
[448] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 52.
[449] Mike Cartmell, "Carolyn Layton," (2013) *Alternative Considerations;* Maaga, *Hearing the Voices*, pp. 56-58.
[450] Jennifer Louise Sullivan, "Carolyn Moore Layton & The Extreme Madness of Love," (2023) *Alternative Considerations.*

although many within Peoples Temple knew of such activities. When these things were discussed, they were often framed as something Pastor Jones was required to do in order to secure the loyalty of individuals within the community. As the Eight Revolutionaries had charged in their departure letter: "Carolyn Layton, Sandy Inghram, Karen Layton, Grace Stoen, Janet Phillips etc., has to be fucked in order to be loyal. Jack Beam Sr., Tim Stoen, … Mike Prokes etc., has to be fucked in the butt for the same reason."[451] The link between sex and loyalty within Peoples Temple was a fundamental aspect of the relationships and organisational structure at the very top of the movement. The reasons for such a link remain unclear, especially in light of the prevailing emotional standard within the Temple to avoid romantic and sexual love as manifestations of a selfish, property-minded animal.

In a reflective article exploring the theme of sexuality within Peoples Temple, the late Laura Johnston Kohl suggested that despite not finding Jim physically attractive, the aging Hoosier minister "oozed sexuality." Explaining this in more detail, Kohl continued:

> When he smiled, when he talked and joked, when he watched, when he aptted you on the back, he radiated it. With his black hair and penetrating eyes, he was very sexy. I could tell that he was a sexual being. As time went on, Jim often spoke about members – both men and women – who were about to stray, and how he had helped keep them in the fold by making a personal sacrifice and having sex with them.[452]

The role of sex and sexuality in Peoples Temple remains one of the most complicated and divisive themes in academic and popular discussions alike. More research remains to be conducted on the nature of the Temple's sexual dynamics, but it seems clear that Jones reinforced his authority structures by developing intimate, emotionally intense relationships with the women (and some of the men), who surrounded him.

[451] "The Eight Revolutionaries' Letter," *Alternative Considerations.*
[452] Laura Johnston Kohl, "Sex in the City? Make That, The Commune," (July 2013) *Alternative Considerations.*

Chapter Five: Emotions and Private Spaces.

The daily life of the Peoples Temple community was not only conducted in public spaces characterised by worship, praise, and song. In private spaces, such as members-only services held at Redwood Valley on Wednesday nights, or "upstairs" at the San Francisco Church, the collective life and interactions of the community took on a different character. When Peoples Temple gathered in these private spaces, different standards of emotional conduct were expected as befitting the occasion, and different practices emerged as the community grappled with issues of discipline and behaviour.

The following chapter explores way private spaces were utilised within the Temple's emotional framework, suggesting that the Temple's system of discipline and punishment was reliant upon the mobilisation of negatively valent, uncomfortable emotions. It explores the role of emotions such as fear, guilt, and paranoia within the Temple's emotional framework and the way expressions of these collective feelings became more prominent throughout the Temple's lifespan.

Emotional Catharsis, Discipline, and Punishment.

In Indianapolis, Peoples Temple began to offer its members what was then called a "corrective fellowship," although little is known about this practice. Hall described it as one in which "church members were confronted with their shortcomings by a select group of peers."[453] In California, this process expanded and morphed into what became known as "catharsis," usually held on Wednesday evenings and available only to committed, long-term members "for development of our spiritual growth," as one Temple newsletter from 1971 put it.[454] Former member Garrett Lambrev recalled how his friend and fellow Temple member Teresa King was required to attend three successive meetings before receiving her membership card. Without this card, she would have been turned away from the doors of the Redwood Valley church.[455]

[453] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land,* p. 54.
[454] Peoples Temple Newsletter (July 1971). CHS, *Peoples Temple Collection* MS3800, Box 77, Folder 1203. *Alternative Considerations*.
[455] Garret Lambrev, "My Friend Teresa King: From the Avenue of Fleas to Jonestown," (2013). *Alternative Considerations.*

That these meetings were held behind closed doors and their attendance heavily vetted was no surprise. Catharsis sessions in Peoples Temple involved the same kind of peer confrontation which characterised the Hoosier Temple's corrective fellowship, but it gradually grew to become more intense, more theatrical, and more violent. "At deeper-life catharsis and family-night meetings beginning in the late 1960s," writes Hall, "the inner-circle of members gradually became exposed to the church as an intimate family."[456] These meetings took on the basic structure of the encounter-group model, popularised in the sixties in counter-cultural groups, in which participants were encouraged to confess to a tableau of personal crimes, failures, and shortcomings whilst their peers confronted, challenged, and criticised them.

Catharsis itself represented a collection of emotional practices within Peoples Temple intended to mobilise feelings of guilt, fear, and shame. In doing so, catharsis was expected to produce an observable change in future behaviour on the part of the recipient. Even catharsis, however, was framed by the Temple's rhetoric of love. "Love gives discipline," Jones said at an undated catharsis meeting held at Redwood Valley, "Part of it's the humiliation more than the physical pain," he explained.[457] As one member reported of a catharsis session, it was:

> A painful experience, but oh so necessary, in which each member of the body was encouraged to stand and get off his chest everything that was in any way a hindrance to fellowship between himself and another member or between himself and the group, or the leader even… The catharsis was greatly needed; it opened the clogged channels for the flow of love.[458]

Although catharsis sessions provided Temple members with the opportunity to air their grievances in the communal setting, they were also explicitly disciplinary sessions which involved corporal and financial punishment as corrective measures – both for the individuals receiving punishment, as well as observers. As Eugene Smith described *Back to the World*, "It was almost as if, if you made a mistake and they embarrassed and demeaned you publicly, maybe that would teach somebody else not to do the same thing."[459] The late Laura Johnston Kohl equally reflected on her experiences at catharsis sessions by describing them as emotional abuse: "If I had understood the progression of

[456] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 120.
[457] FBI Audiotape Q454.
[458] Unknown member, cited in Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 121.
[459] Smith, *Back to the World,* p. 68.

emotional abuse at that time, I could have been alerted to the effect [Jones'] strategy was having on us."[460]

Other members have reflected on the Temple's Californian catharsis sessions with mixed emotions. Recalling "Hours and hours of catharsis," former member Laurie Efrein Kahalas described the use of "Some probably ill-advised physical punishments, sometimes even of adults, for infractions of various norms of behaviour." Importantly, however, Kahalas acknowledged that "there were benefits. Like our kids didn't steal – they didn't even think of it. They would have mass wrath, or… the wrath of Jim Jones to pay the piper."[461]

The participation of Temple members in catharsis sessions was nominally voluntary. Whilst many eagerly participated in both receiving and meting out varying levels of physical punishment, others were directly coerced and forced to sign waivers absolving the Temple of any wrongdoing. As Edith Roller (1915-1978) recorded in her journal on 16 August 1975, a young man was ordered to box as a punishment. "He was reluctant to sign the release for boxing," Roller noted, but "Jim threatened to call Juvenile Hall in connection with other misdemeanours of which he was guilty… [He], like the others, had to box."[462] In this case, the "voluntary" participation of the young man in question was acquired through the threat of allowing the United States justice system to handle his crime instead.

Other members of Peoples Temple believed that catharsis was a powerful and useful process through which more intimate and productive relations between members could be fostered, thereby benefitting the group's ultimate redistributive pursuits. Annie Moore was one such member who perceived catharsis as important to her personal development as well as that of the community. In a letter to her family, Annie wrote that Peoples Temple was

> The only place I ever saw that people aren't phony and really come face-to-face with their hangups and problems. It's really refreshing because then you don't have to deal with people through blocks they put up… No one really cares what you have done anyway. As long as you're doing good, it doesn't matter. The main part is working for change in our society… as Jesus said, "You have to take the cinder out of your own eye before you can change others."[463]

[460] Laura Johnston Kohl, *Jonestown Survivor*: *An Insider's Look* (iUniverse Inc., 2010) p. 48.
[461] Laurie Efrein Kahalas, *Snake Dance,* p. 123.
[462] Edith Roller Journals (16 August 1975). *Alternative Considerations*.
[463] Letter from Annie Moore, cited in Moore, *A Sympathetic History of Jonestown*, p. 130.

In *Six Years with God*, Jeannie Mills recalled a catharsis session in which fellow Temple member Peter Wotherspoon (1947-1978) was "called to the front" for child molestation, which he admitted to seeking psychiatric treatment for. Jones' reply was instructive as to the role of fear and shame as disciplinary tools: "Perhaps where the psychiatrists have failed, a switch will succeed," Mills recalled Jones stating.[464] Wotherspoon's punishment was meted out by James Nelson McElvane (1932-1978), a member of the inner circle who broke "switch after switch on Peter's backside while he sobbed in pain." Afterwards, Wotherspoon thanked Jones for being "the first person that ever cared enough about me to punish me for hurting others."[465]

Fear played a prominent role in the Temple's disciplinary procedures. In a message given in January 1973, Jones suggested that fear was a powerful tool of behavioural correction which could be utilised where positive reinforcement might fail:

> Say, "People should come to the truth through goodness." They should, but if they don't, I've got two secret whammies. Talk about goodness and appeal and sweetness, as I said. Nothing in the world reach some people except a little fear. What is it that's said, the old gospel said? Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.[466]

Citing Proverbs 9:10 which reads "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom," Jones suggested that fear *could* in fact be used instrumentally. In *Six Years with God*, Jeannie Mills recalled how Jim's disciplinary methods became centred around fear. Discussing a five-year-old child who was sentenced to ten whacks with a belt, Mills recalls Jim's response: "I've tried to rule with love, but people took advantage of that. The only thing people understand is fear."[467]

The Temple's idiosyncratic disciplinary procedures provided one avenue for the mobilisation of fear, with the underlying logic that such fear would result in corrected behaviours. Mills recalled how, once Temple attorneys had drafted release forms for the Temple's internal discipline, Jones introduced a "spanking board, carved from a one-by-four-inch board about two and a half feet long…. He assigned Ruby Carroll to do the beatings. She was a tall black woman who weighed at least 250 pounds. She was strong and knew how to whip hard… Screams filled the room and fear filled every

[464] Mills, *Six Years with God*, p. 269.
[465] Mills, *Six Years with God*, p. 269.
[466] FBI Audiotape Q1027.
[467] Mills, *Six Years with God*, p. 259.

heart."[468] Not only for the recipient of the paddling, but also for observers, fear of punishment was an important tool in the Temple's arsenal of corrective measures. "Maybe now you people will learn to obey the rules," Mills recalled Jones as saying.[469]

Sometimes, the Temple's disciplinary process looked more like a gladiatorial arena. Boxing between peers was a recurring motif at these events wherein (whilst maintaining the basic behavioural modification premise of catharsis) these meetings also became intense emotional events of their own. Edith Roller's journals contain numerous descriptions of catharsis sessions which in some ways depart from the dispassionate, factual approach found in more mundane entries. In an entry dated Wednesday 20 August 1975, Roller described the punishment of Pauline Groot (1950-1978) who was called to the floor for refusing to be counselled by Maria Katsaris (1953-1978). After one member reveals that Pauline had allowed another woman to massage her feet, after having her own teeth extracted, Jones "became so infuriated that he rushed toward her and had his hands on her throat before staff on the platform could restrain him."[470] Following this outburst, several more members testify to Pauline's "unregenerated behaviour." As Roller describes it,

> Pauline was required to box with Paulette Jackson, then with a second person and finally a third. Although all had superior ability to hers, she stood up to the first two. The third, a small black girl, got her down. The audience was eager to see her worsted. She is to bring in $200.[471]

After the catharsis concluded, Roller recounted Jim's final instructions to the group before they all departed the meeting: "Jim warned that we were not to reflect in any way on anyone who had been disciplined by the group. They were to be treated as kindly as usual…. Jim warned as he had previously that we were to turn no one over to the police."[472] In an entry dated four days later on Sunday 24 August 1975 Roller described the punishment of a "boy named Marko," who had hit someone with a stick. His punishment, a boxing match, seemed to disappoint Roller: "He gave the most cowardly demonstration we have had. He hid his head and fell down, delaying the finish."[473]

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[468] Mills, *Six Years with God*, p. 261.
[469] Mills, *Six Years with God*, p. 261.
[470] Edith Roller Journals (20 August 1975). *Alternative Considerations.*
[471] Edith Roller Journals (20 August 1975). *Alternative Considerations*.
[472] Edith Roller Journals (20 August 1975). *Alternative Considerations*.
[473] Edith Roller Journals (24 August 1975). *Alternative Considerations.*

In her work *A Sympathetic History of Jonestown*, Rebecca Moore suggested that "Somewhere along the line, catharsis changed. The fact that the group rewarded confession meant the greater the outrage, the greater the absolution, or sense of belonging."[474] Catharsis certainly did change, in an escalation of intensity which developed throughout the California years and culminated in Jonestown, resulting in more severe punishments across a wider range of potential infractions. The mechanism for this shift in catharsis can be better understood from an emotions-scholarship perspective: whereas the emotional logic of Peoples Temple prescribed intense, negatively valent emotional experiences as purifying and purgative, this understanding was based on an incorrect theory of human emotion. Rather than reducing communal anger by providing an outlet, what catharsis sessions actually accomplished was promote a venue where emotionally intensive catharsis could be *practiced*. Whilst emotives and other form of emotional practices may have unexpected outcomes, as Reddy reminds us, the usual result is an "escalation of intensity."[475]

Within Peoples Temple, catharsis was a powerful corrective tool of discipline which relied on emotional practices that mobilised fear and shame in particular to achieve the corrective end. Another such useful emotion was guilt, which was equally used to motivate the correct behaviours where it was perceived love had failed to do so.

Guilt.

Guilt was regarded as another useful emotion within Peoples Temple. Its use in worship to elicit donations, in literature and solicitations, and notably in catharsis sessions grew dramatically throughout the Temple's Californian tenure. As Hall noted, "Jim Jones, and counsellors as well, became practiced at the art of making their subjects feel guilty for their shortcomings, then alternately showing mercy that proved the Temple's benevolence or confirmed a member's sinfulness."[476] Specifically within the frames of catharsis and punishment, Hall's discussion largely approaches guilt

[474] Moore, *A Sympathetic History of Jonestown*, p. 130.
[475] Reddy, "Sentimentalism and its Erasure," p. 131.
[476] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 120.

as something imposed by Jones and his cadre upon congregants: "the Temple became powerful in its capacity to shape the innermost feelings of members."[477]

Within Peoples Temple, guilt was often framed in terms of one's commitment – or, more accurately, lack thereof – to the cause. In California, guilt became a fundamental part of Jones' rhetoric that worked to link the individual behaviours of congregants with the world-transforming message of Peoples Temple. In Chidester's words, "egocentric desires, manifested in the love of money, the lust or property, and the desire to extend the power of the body through the accumulation of possessions, were regarded as the very definition of evil in the world."[478] In a sermon delivered in 1973, Jones made this quite clear to the congregation. "I think that the worst problem," Jones began, before starting anew, "It all boils down to the love of money is the root of all evil."[479]

That "the love of money is the root of all evil" reflects further synchronicity between religious and political attitudes within Peoples Temple. 1 Timothy 6:10 reads, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Less needs to be said about the rejection of capital accumulation from the standpoint of theoretical socialism, implicit in Marx's slogan drawn from the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875): "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." In the religious and political atmosphere of Peoples Temple, attachment to one's money was perhaps the greatest crime of all and regarded as entirely incommensurate with the goals of the movement. "The love of money which is the root of all evil. Even the Bible says that's the anti-Christ," Jones explained in 1977, "So you love that profit, you're the antichrist."[480]

As Jones made explicit in a sermon dated 1972 at Redwood Valley, the responsibility to act properly fell on congregants to depart from the evil of the American system:

> You're already responsible. You're in the presence of truth today. And when truth comes your way and you don't respond to it, you'll be held in guilt for the rest of your days, and in condemnation… I know that some of you here

[477] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 120.
[478] Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, p. 99.
[479] FBI Audiotape Q964.
[480] FBI Audiotape Q1028A.

> love God and will give as you have been prospered. Now if you don't give as you're prospered, don't bother to give at all. Don't just shove a little offering in there and think it's finished.[481]

In a later sermon delivered in July 1975, Jones further outlined the relationship between guilt and commitment to the cause. Guilt accumulated by one's participation in the capitalist system could be alleviated by generous giving to the Temple's mission:

> The young ruler said, "I've done – I've kept the commandments from the youth up, I've obeyed all church laws," Jesus said, "One thing thou lackest. Sell everything." … And that way you can do it is to give freely, and I want everyone to take an envelope under my voice now, because you're in holy ground now. Do it, find a way to make that pledge or that commitment, or to give some extra money, because when you give more, you are being found free of the guilt of the sins of waste and money and capitalism that's all around us. You've got to work out your salvation with your money, child.[482]

In the above example, guilt is named and mobilised by Jones in order to encourage further participation within the community's redistributive economic structure. In this sense, the act of giving was not only an act of love. Within Peoples Temple, financial donations were an emotional practice framed as offering relief from guilt. Congregants could choose to navigate their guilt, therefore, by participating more completely in the economic structure of apostolic socialism.

Guilt features prominently in the Californian archive. In one example drawn from the journals of Edith Roller, Jones mobilised guilt within his congregation by pointing to their respective level of comfort in comparison to global starvation and abject poverty. As Roller recalled in an entry dated 24 August 1975:

> While he took the offering, Jim made a powerful statement, saying everyone had a choice between living with a feeling of resentment or a feeling of guilt. One could feel resentment over his misfortunes, what he didn't have, or guilt about having so much more than others who suffer through no fault of their own. Speaking of the African mother trying to feed her child with her dried-up breast, he cried, "Why should I live in comfort while she is starving?"[483]

In another entry dated 4 January 1977, Roller details an expository description given by Jones on the utility of guilt:

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[481] FBI Audiotape Q1020.
[482] FBI Audiotape Q1059-1.
[483] Edith Roller Journals (24 August 1975) *Alternative Considerations.*

> Keep yourself filled with guilt. It makes you do good. Think of the Chilean who saw his wife and children tortured and killed in front of his eyes. Think of Mrs. Allende… Some of you never practiced feeling guilt.[484]

In a more implicit use of guilt, Roller recorded how Jones had taken an offering before claiming the total to be inadequate. "He took another, having the names of those giving written down… Though the hour was late, he said people should come to the altar because the offering was so low."[485] Relying on feelings of guilt to motivate further donations, Jones was able to squeeze fiscal value from his congregation's coffers.

Between 1965 and 1977, guilt became an increasingly valued emotion within the framework for feeling constructed by the members of Peoples Temple, and it played an important role within the Temple's affective economic structures. In terms of donations, guilt could motivate generous giving where love failed to do so. Such a fact becomes clear when reviewing a selection of newsletters, pamphlets, and solicitation materials produced in California. Thus, one pamphlet bore on its cover an image of a young boy head-in-hand, whilst the title beneath read "Do you know that 100,000,000 people will die of starvation in 1975?" On the inside of the pamphlet, two images flank an appeal for financial assistance: on the left an image of Jim Jones stood amidst towering corn crops, whilst on the right an image of a starving African mother and her two emaciated children.[486] Linking the world-transforming image of Peoples Temple with the very real plights of famine and starvation around the world, Temple pamphlets could mobilise guilt as well as love in their quest for cash.

In Audiotape Q1024, dated in the Autumn of 1974, Jones delivers a sermon to a "small" crowd of three hundred at Redwood Valley where guilt is the primary theme of the service. The topic arises as Jones discusses defections from the Temple: "The best thing people could do, if you don't want to live right, go on and do your thing on the peaks or the caves, wherever you want to, but get way off from us. Then at least you can go on and have your guilt complex after you're gone… 'Cause these folks all gonna have a guilt complex, if they go on living after we're gone."[487] After some broader discussion, Jones returns to guilt directly:

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[484] Edith Roller Journals (4 January 1977) *Alternative Considerations.*
[485] Edith Roller Journals, (19 July 1975) *Alternative Considerations.*
[486] "Do you know that 100,000,000 people will die," Direct Mail Pamphlet, CHS.
[487] FBI Audiotape Q1024.

> People can't live with guilt. I don't know anyone in this universe that lives with guilt and works well with it except me. I can live with guilt and function. Most people can't live with guilt.[488]

As the charismatic authority of Peoples Temple, here Jones both performs an idealised emotional state whilst also criticising those who fail to internalise their guilt as well as he. Jones then goes on to ask his audience, "Any questions about guilt? Maybe some of you don't ever feel guilt. If you don't, boy, look at yourself." One woman responds, inaudible to the microphone, but Jones picks up on her thread and repeats it to the crowd:

> So, Geraldine said we all ought to feel guilt [Shouts of "That's right! From the congregation], and if you don't feel guilt, you need to feel guilty about the fact that you don't feel guilt.[489]

Here we see another example of how the interaction between congregation and Jones helped shape the emotional framework of Peoples Temple, with members such as Geraldine reinforcing Jones' message and emphasising the role of congregational guilt.

Towards the tail-end of the service Jones asks the crowd, "Did you get the feeling of what I was trying to impart about guilt? You sure you don't have any questions? We don't get to talk very often. There's so many, many people." It is Edith Roller, introduced as Professor Roller, who raises her hand. With the microphone in hand, Roller asks:

> Well, on the question of feeling guilt – I was wondering if it might not be a good idea for all of us to analyse ourselves about this complaint that Father made, that we don't pay attention to him when he's trying to teach us in a solemn mood. It's not his fault, so it must be our fault…[490]

Here, Roller suggests that everyone take Jones' message to heart and explore within themselves why they lack attention for Jones' message. Roller's message to the crowd here represents her acceptance of the emotional standard of guilt as delineated by Jones, and her chastising of the inattentive crowd itself reflects the importance of guilt in this context.

Other congregants, too, accepted the utility of guilt as a tool of emotional navigation and correction. In a letter sent to her family shortly after joining the Temple in 1973, Annie Moore discussed feelings of guilt in relation to the American capitalist system and global inequality:

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[488] FBI Audiotape Q1024.
[489] FBI Audiotape Q1024.
[490] FBI Audiotape Q1024.

> I don't believe anyone can enjoy life or really be happy with so much pain and suffering in the world. They would have to be totally unfeeling if they did. It's not fair for me to have more "things" than someone else, or more money to spend on personal pleasures than others… I want to be in on changing the world to be a better place and I would give my life for it.[491]

Similarly, in *Six Years with God* Jeannie Mills recalled an episode where feelings of guilt prompted her increased involvement with Peoples Temple. At a service in 1974, Jones asked for childminders to accompany Temple members on a vacation to Oregon. After initially ignoring the request, Mills volunteered herself in an effort to alleviate guilt for her lack of commitment:

> Nita nudged me and whispered, "I'd love to go along and watch our kids, wouldn't you?" I was filled with guilt about my selfish desire to be alone, so I raised my hand.[492]

Counselling in Peoples Temple was not only limited to catharsis sessions, however, but instead relied on a supporting web of textual practices that included questionnaires, essays, and notes produced by congregants to be read by Jones and the counselling cadre. Mike Prokes' (1949-1979) response to a personality questionnaire provided by the Temple in 1975 is a prime example. Question two asks who Prokes may harbour feelings of jealousy towards, whilst question six asks "What fears do you think you need to overcome?" Other questions, such as number thirteen, ask "What are your sexual feelings and attractions to the pastor?" whilst number sixteen asked about hostile feelings towards Jones. Importantly, question nineteen instructs respondents to "Tell about any feelings of guilt you have and what the guilt is about," to which Prokes' response reads "I feel guilty about not always using the cause's time to the best advantage."[493]

Other methods used to mobilise guilt among Peoples Temple congregants could include imagery in communal areas. At a community meeting in Sacramento, Mike Prokes and Jean Brown discussed the ways in which the Temple's food programmes work, particularly within the Temple's dining hall. Prokes explained that "We have a picture up in our dining hall that shows a woman who is starving, her breasts are deflated, and her child is trying to get nourishment from them. And the child is obviously starving. His stomach is distended and it's amazing how the plates are clean at the

[491] Annie Moore Letter, cited in Moore, *A Sympathetic History of Jonestown*, pp. 159-160.
[492] Mills, *Six Years with God,* p. 160.
[493] Mike Prokes' Response to Personality Questionnaire. *Alternative Considerations*.

end of a meal."[494] Emphasising *how* the imagery worked to prevent food waste, Prokes' explanation is worth quoting at length:

> When you look at that – I mean, you don't want to waste food, when you know there are people like that, who – they didn't do anything to bring themselves into that situation, they were born into it, and there are millions of them. And, you know, how can we justify wasting food? *We don't put it up there to make people feel guilty, but I'm not so sure they shouldn't feel guilt.* It may not be their responsibility, or their fault, that that person is hungry, but it seems to me that you know – how can we not – if we care about people and, you know, we claim love as Jesus taught, then, you know, that love should reach out to everyone, including those who are hungry, so when we take a bite of food, know that there are so many who cannot, *that I think a person who has any conscience would feel some guilt, and want to do something about such conditions in their own small way* [emphasis added]…[495]

Food waste was a particularly prominent issue within Peoples Temple's redistributive scheme. In FBI Audiotape Q1029, recorded at the Temple's Los Angeles church in 1972, Jones admonishes those within the congregation who live cooperatively for wasting food:

> Lot of food being wasted, they say. This isn't done. Now you better read the signs, and the neighbour is responsible for neighbour… They need to be told about it – don't tell me about it – you tell the person when you pick up food in front of them. Say, "Don't you read that sign? Right up there? Don't you read that sign, darling? Can you read – if you can't read, I'll read it for you: Take as much as you like, and we request that you please eat all you take."[496]

To underline this point, Jones simply states that there are "Too many hungry people" for Temple members to be wasting food, before concluding his admonishment as follows: "You better learn to quit wasting food and put your money with people that will help."[497] With the use of imagery, and Jones' direct corrective oratory, the members of Peoples Temple were encouraged to feel guilt about food waste within the broader context of the Temple's world-transforming mission. Guilt, it seems, played an important role in the emotional framework which developed in the Temple's Californian sojourn.

[494] FBI Audiotape Q630.
[495] FBI Audiotape Q630.
[496] FBI Audiotape Q1029.
[497] FBI Audiotape Q1029.

The Conspiracy: Fear and Loathing in Los Angeles.

Although love remained at the heart of Temple life throughout the California period, the community simultaneously became more fearful and paranoid over time. In sermon after sermon, Jones repeated conspiracy theories and told half-truths to encourage the development of a communal fear: fear of the United States government and fear of racist groups, in particular.

Earlier in the seventies, Jones had decried the use of fear within religious institutions, particularly those who preached a hellfire gospel. For example in FBI Audiotape Q1056-3, intended for dissemination among the remnants of Mother Divine's International Peace Mission Movement in 1972, Jones explicitly denies the role and use of fear within his ministry:

> I find it incredible today that in the 20th century, many religious groups are still preaching a fear gospel… A religion whose central principle is fear cannot make the soul happy and does not bear the seal and impress of divinity or the Christ teaching. In fact, it is an anti-Christ religion. Perfect love casts out fear.[498]

Reading directly from Warren Felt Evan's 1884 work *The Divine Law of Cure*, Jones' castigation of religious fear at once seems ironic, given the importance of his 1961 nuclear prophecy in motivating his Hoosier congregation to flee west to California for sanctuary. Even in 1972, with the Temple moving towards a more syncretic blend of religion and politics, Jones' disavowal of fear retained a scriptural basis. As 1 John 4:18 reads, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that that feareth is not made perfect in love."[499]

Fear became a notable aspect of the emotional framework found in Peoples Temple even outside of the disciplinary context. Congregants were encouraged to fear a variety of conspiracies relating to racial oppression and violence across the United States. In sermon, service, and meeting, Jones often proclaimed the existence of numerous related conspiracies intended to harness and intensify the fear of the predominantly black congregation. Perhaps the most notable example of this is Jones' repeated use of the King Alfred Plan – a fictional scheme purportedly ran by the Central Intelligence Agency which would see black Americans rounded up and placed in concentration camps in the light of a major racial conflict. Invented by author John Alfred Williams (1925-2015) for his

[498] FBI Audiotape Q1056-3.
[499] 1 John 4:18.

book *The Man Who Cried I Am* (1967), the King Alfred Plan blended just enough truth with its fiction that many among America's politically informed black communities accepted it to be entirely factual – or at least, as close to fact as fiction could get.[500]

Whether Jim Jones believed in the King Alfred Plan or not is something of a moot point. What is important was that Jones utilised this conspiracy in his Californian sermons to promote greater involvement and commitment on the part of his congregants. In a material sense, Jones increasingly relied on fear to build and strengthen his congregation. In a sermon dated August 1973, Jones impressed upon his congregation the importance of Peoples Temple as an ark of survival in the event of such a plan:

> Now I want every one of you to get a project and get on with these promotion campaigns to raise funds so that I can protect you, because they're going to come from the high seat of power. Spiritual wickedness in high places is going to come to take people and put them in jails. Right now, they're trying to get an executive order passed that will empower the president of the United States to put people in concentration camps without one consultation with Congress. Now it won't happen to you, but you've got to cooperate with me. You want to be free? Then cooperate with me.[501]

In another service held in 1973, Jones once again evoked the spectre of the King Alfred myth.

> You go home and read Executive Order… 11490 and 11647. You go home and read it. Right now, they're preparing to set up a dictatorship – it's already written into law – that will give the president power to move people wherever he wants to, to put them in concentration camps, to take over every street car line, over every transportation, over every farm, over every office, over every factory. He'll put serial numbers and a mark of the beast right on you. You'll not be a person anymore; you'll be a number. And every black and brown and poor white will be done away with. It's already in law. What've you got to lose? You say, I've got so much to lose. You've got nothing to lose but your chains.[502]

The King Alfred Conspiracy remained a prominent part of Jones' fear discourse throughout the California period, although other inventions and conspiracies were also utilised in the plea for members and commitment.

In an undated service recorded on FBI Audiotape Q1056-4, Jones describes the development of a weapon allegedly developed by the United States Military which could have the capacity to kill

[500] Robert E. Fleming, "The Nightmare Level of 'The Man Who Cried I Am,'" *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 14 No. 2 (Spring, 1973) pp. 186-196.
[501] FBI Audiotape Q972.
[502] FBI Audiotape Q962.

certain ethnicities. “It blows your mind,” Jones claimed, “But it was on the front pages of your newspaper this week.” Continuing, Jones explained:

> They have perfected a biological chemical that can kill all black people sitting in this room and every white person will be sitting up. They can do it to white too, but they’re not studying how to do it to white. Said they’d only studied how to do it to black, Indians, and Mexicans. Something to think about. It’s in the newspaper.[503]

Although the exact article Jones is referring to is unknown, it is likely that he was referencing the Swedish geneticist Carl Larson’s article in the November 1970 edition of *Military Review,* entitled “Ethnic Weapons.”[504] Positing the theoretical development of such weapons, but not confirming their availability, Larson’s article was instead appropriated by Jones and characterised as absolute fact; further evidence of the evils of the United States government within the Temple milieu.

In 1976, Jones and a number of Temple members attended a rally in opposition to the recent Supreme Court ruling in the Allan Bakke case. The rally was also attended by Dennis Banks (1937-2017), famous Native American activist and leader of the American Indian Movement, and Reverend Cecil Williams (1929-) of the Glide Memorial United Methodist Church in San Francisco. Unsurprisingly, only Jones’ remarks were recorded by Temple members, preserved on Audiotape Q735. Drawing a link between the Bakke decision, which upheld a lower court decision which ruled that racialised selection quotas in the University of California were unconstitutional, Jones stated:

> So, when we look at the Bakke decision… We have to look at the context of what is happening all over the nation, as unemployment mounts, as busing protest turns into racist violence, as the Klan gains thousands of recruits, as migrant workers are brutalized and denied their rights, as Native Americans are left to die in squalor in concentration camps and the wastelands of America… and its blacks are entrapped in the concentration camps of our inner cities… I say we have to look at this decision as yet another signpost on the road to tyranny.[505]

In the Temple environment rulings such as the Bakke decision appeared to confirm Jones’ fearmongering as he wove the threads of fiction and fact together. What is important, however, is that many Temple members took these notions to heart. Jonestown survivor Jordan Vilchez recalled in 2013 that

[503] FBI Audiotape Q1056-4.
[504] Carl Larson, “Ethnic Weapons,” *Military Review* (November 1970) pp. 3-9.
[505] FBI Audiotape Q735.

> When I joined PT at the age of 12, I quickly learned that the biggest threat to us and to society was a nuclear bomb. For the next five years it was drummed into our brains that nuclear war was inevitable, and that – whatever day the bomb dropped – it would happen at 3:09am… By the time I was 18 and living in the [San Francisco] Temple, the focus of fear was on a different sort of catastrophe. It was the seventies, and the global political scene was hot.[506]

Within Peoples Temple, fear became an increasingly prominent part of the emotional culture that suffused and united the community – but the fears of Peoples Temple were fears shared by other sections of American society. Drawing on community fears relating to racism and oppression, alongside conspiracy theories prevalent in the African American community, Jones and Peoples Temple acted as a mirror in which the fears of black Americans were reflected and, to a large degree, magnified.

The amplification of these fears and their repeated mobilization by Jones was even noted by individuals who were not members of Peoples Temple. The cover story of the *Peoples Forum* January 1977 edition, for example, was an "Open Letter to Local Nazis." This article reprinted a piece of hate mail received at the Temple's San Francisco offices and provided a response which dominated the front page.[507] What is interesting here, however, is not the hate-letter nor the Temple's published response; but rather the written response of one lady who wrote to Temple administrators specifically to complain about the emotional tenor of the *Peoples Forum*. Having found a copy of the *Forum* in her doctor's office whilst awaiting an appointment, Mrs. Suzanne B. Nugent complained to the Temple's mail address that:

> Although I think the public should be well-informed as to what is taking place, I question the propriety of using such bold headlines and photographs which, it appears to me, may have just the opposite effect your paper is attempting to do. … I think, in conclusion, that your paper should be so filled with Good News and the marvelous courage and hope shining out of dedicated Christian lives, as to have little room left for stories of brutality. If tortures must be displayed, to enlighten dedicated Christians, we are poor indeed.[508]

By 1977 a tangible shift had occurred within Peoples Temple. The emotional atmosphere of love which had characterised the collective activities of the community was increasingly

[506] Jordan Vilchez, "Insight and Compassion: Vestiges of Peoples Temple," *Alternative Considerations.*
[507] Peoples Temple, "Open Letter to Local Nazis," *Peoples Forum* Vol. 1 No. 14 (1 January 1977). CHS, *Ephemera and Publications*, MS4124 Box 2 Folder 14.
[508] Suzanne B. Nugent, "Letter to Peoples Temple," (8 February 1977). CHS, *Peoples Temple Records,* Box 77 Folder 1199.

complemented by an atmosphere of fear and paranoia. Despite such emotional mixtures being contained behind closed doors, the defection of disaffected members from the movement led to the publication of news stories which publicised the otherwise private world of Temple life.

In the 1 August 1977 release of *New West* Magazine, journalists Marshall Kilduff and Phil Tracy interviewed several former Temple members including Deanna and Elmer Mertle, Grace Stoen, and Mickey Touchette. Summarising the content of these interviews, Kilduff and Tracy described life in Peoples Temple as "a mixture of Spartan regimentation, fear and self-imposed humiliation."[509] Although the Temple would flee to Guyana before this article was officially published, it was clear that the tide of public opinion had turned.

[509] Marshall Kilduff and Phil Tracy, "Inside Peoples Temple," *New West* Magazine (1 August 1977) pp. 30-38. *Alternative Considerations*. Also found at CHS, *Moore Family Papers*, MS 3802,

Part Three: Guyana, 1974-1978.

Chapter Six: Building Utopia.

The Peoples Temple Agricultural Project, more commonly known as Jonestown, did not emerge in the jungles of Guyana overnight. It was a project which reflected remarkable levels of planning and years of labour on behalf of committed, pioneering settlers who worked laboriously to construct what they believed to be paradise. The following chapter explores the emotional foundations of Jonestown as a potential utopia for the congregants of Peoples Temple. Even before Jonestown had been built, when the proposed site in Guyana's Northwest District was little more than felled trees and overgrowth, Pastor Jones was already describing the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project as a Promised Land. In doing so, he imbued the Agricultural Project with a vast amount of symbolic currency, drawing upon a longstanding and deeply evocative religious narrative tradition.

The Promised Land

> Some of you are seeking a reward, you are seeking heaven, you are seeking a Promised Land. And because your Father loves you, he provides what you have to have… And so, you have been provided a beautiful city, a substitutionary heaven across the sea, a heaven that is greater even in degree than the heaven that you dreamed about that never existed, for there never was any heaven, there never was any hell, but that which man with his own hands made.[510]

In the Book of Genesis the story is told of God's initial promise to Abraham of a sovereign land for he and his descendants.[511] In the narrative which follows, the conditions of God's promise are met when Moses leads the Israelites in exodus from Biblical Egypt, thereby setting in motion the conquest and settlement of Canaan: the Promised Land.[512] The Exodus narrative is one laden with powerful emotions, evoking the pain of the Israelites under slavery, and the hopeful striving of a people in pursuit of freedom and peace. As a story which addresses the "human longing for freedom in

[510] FBI Audiotape Q1059-4 (1974).
[511] Genesis 12:1-2 "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing."
[512] This narrative forms the main body of the Biblical Book of Exodus.

general," the Exodus narrative and the related concept of the Promised Land have been retold by religious groups escaping persecution throughout history.[513]

For example, when John Cotton bode farewell to John Winthrop's fleet of eleven ships bound for New England at Southampton Port in 1630, he did so with a sermon titled *Gods Promise to His Plantation*, justifying the Puritan experiment in the New World in light of a new covenant with God.[514] Two centuries later at his Second Inaugural Address in 1805, President Thomas Jefferson would similar evoke the motif of the Promised Land by drawing a link between America's earliest settlers and the Biblical Israelites. Jefferson declared to the American nation that he "shall need, too, the favour of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our forefathers, as Israel of old, from their native land, and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessaries and comforts of life."[515] A further two centuries into the history of the American nation, President Barrack Obama would title his memoirs *A Promised Land* (2020), evoking a central part of America's foundational mythos and reflecting in that narrative his own desire to lead the American people, like Joshua of the Bible, to a Promised Land defined by harmony, peace, and equality.[516]

Obama's evocation of the Promised Land reflects the importance of the concept to the African American tradition. Whilst the Pilgrims and Puritans may have described America as a Promised Land, the victims of the transatlantic slave trade who were forcefully brought to America did not consider the New World to be paradise. In 1903 W.E.B. Du Bois had noted as much when he wrote that America's enslaved persons envisioned emancipation as the first step in their pursuit of a Promised Land: "To him, so far as he thought and dreamed, slavery was indeed the sum of all villainies, the cause of all sorrow, the root of all prejudice; Emancipation was the key to a promised land of sweeter beauty than ever stretched before the eyes of the wearier Israelites."[517] Yet even after

[513] Heike Paul, "Pilgrims and Puritans and the Myth of the Promised Land", The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies (Transcript Verlag, 2014) p. 172 [pp. 137-96].
[514] John Cotton and Reiner Smolinski (ed.), "Gods Promise to His Plantation (1630)". *Electronic Texts in American Studies*, 22. digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/22
[515] Thomas Jefferson, Second Inaugural Address (March 4, 1805). Lillian Goldman Law Library. Avalon Project - Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy. United States, 2009. Web Archive. https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0004875/.
[516] Barack Obama, *A Promised Land* (London, Viking: 2020); Daniel Snowman, review of *A Promised Land*, (review no. 2439), *Institute of Historical Research,* February 2021.
[517] W.E.B. Du Bois and Brent Hayes Edwards (ed.), *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford University Press, 2007)

legal emancipation, black Americans still found themselves living under new systems of oppression and deprivation under the name of Jim Crow.

In *Bound for the Promised Land,* Milton C. Sernett has explored the prominence of this evocative religious concept in the African American Great Migrations of the twentieth century. In Sernett's analysis, the migration of black Americans from Southern to Northern states represented an "Exodus from the South that was their Egypt," which "promised change and liberation to individual migrants."[518] Further work by Rhondda Robinson Thomas has clarified the importance of a conceptual Promised Land and the related Exodus narrative as central to the writings of dozens of early African American authors and activists, and the importance of these narratives as expressions (and explorations) of black identity.[519]

In the final speech of his life, Martin Luther King Jr. explicitly drew a parallel between the African American pursuit of Civil Rights and the realisation of the Promised Land. Delivered on 3 April 1968 – less than twenty-four hours before his assassination by James Earl Ray – King spoke to his audience in Memphis, Tennessee and proclaimed:

> We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop… I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land.[520]

In King's optimistic vision of the future, the Promised Land was not a place reached after exodus but rather a state of life and governance reached through true liberation and equality. It lay within America, but a new America as envisioned by the activists of the Civil Rights Movement. Much like Moses, who in the Biblical narrative was granted death atop Mount Nebo within sight of the Promised Land, King too would die after glimpsing a new world for his people.

As outlined above, the concept of the Promised Land and the exodus narrative have formed central aspects of the African American religious identity. As a powerfully emotive symbolic web, the notion of a Promised Land has referred to a physical space of liberty as much as a conceptual feeling

[518] Milton C. Sernett, *Bound For the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration* (Duke University Press, 1997) p. 241.
[519] Rhondda Robinson Thomas, *Claiming Exodus: A Cultural History of Afro-Atlantic Identity*, 1774-1903 (Baylor University Press, 2013).
[520] Martin Luther King Jr., "I've Been to the Mountain Top", 3 April 1968, delivered in Memphis, Tennessee.

of freedom, peace, and happiness. For Peoples Temple, it was no different. Much like Antebellum slaves and the "freemen" who lived under Jim Crow, the members Peoples Temple conceptualised their Promised Land as not only an escape from a lived reality of oppression and discrimination but also as a kind of destined utopia, which when achieved would eliminate all sorrows, villainies, and prejudices. For many members of Peoples Temple, the Promised Land was defined as much by what it *was* as what it *was not*: it reflected the African American Dream, whilst simultaneously rejecting the American Dream. Jonestown, therefore, should be regarded with historical importance not only for the tragedy which has come to define it, but as a popular expression of the Long Civil Rights Movement which continues to challenge traditional chronologies and narratives.[521]

Less than five years after King had orated his vision of the Promised Land to the crowd in Memphis, Peoples Temple would set in motion plans for the realisation of a Promised Land of their own. Motivated by a sense of radical utopianism, Peoples Temple located their Canaan outside of the American polity; it would be a society unto itself, purportedly built and administrated on the principle of love. In this sense, the pursuit of love drew the members of Peoples Temple to Guyana, with Jonestown expected to be the culmination of the Temple's utopian mission, "the cause."

A handwritten document produced in 1973 details the conclusions of an administrative meeting in which the practicalities of such a task were outlined, including the sale of assets, arrangement of transportation, and the purchase of required materials. Titled simply as "Exodus", the document demonstrates the immediate religious signification of the Temple's emigratory plans, drawing a clear link between the Israelite flight from Egypt and the Temple's flight from America. Although the document lists a consensus in selecting a Caribbean island as the location of the Temple's Agricultural Project, the location would soon change to Guyana and within a single year land had been purchased, pioneers sent, and the process of building the Promised Land had begun.[522] Guyana was an attractive option for the Temple's leadership for several reasons. As former British colony which had gained independence in 1966, the Guyanese spoke English; they were a multiethnic

[521] Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement,"; see also Timothy J. Minchin, "Beyond the Dominant Narrative: The Ongoing Struggle for Civil Rights in the U.S. South, 1968-1980," *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 25 No. 1 (July, 2006) pp. 65-86.
[522] Peoples Temple, "Exodus," (1973). RYMUR 89-4286-C-7-h-20a – h-20k. *Alternative Considerations*, jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=122002

nation with a significant African demographic, "One land of six peoples" as described in their national anthem; and since 1970 the Guyanese Government led by Prime Minister Forbes Burnham had embarked on a wide-ranging policy of socio-economic rejuvenation under the name of "Cooperative Socialism".[523] The location of the proposed Agricultural Project was also beneficial to the Guyanese government for two reasons: first, in the spirit of cooperative socialism, Guyana's inland jungles required development by cooperatives in order to grow the economy; and second, the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project would be located on land at the centre of a long standing territorial dispute between the Guyanese and Venezuelan governments.[524]

The Symbolic Construction of Paradise.

Almost immediately the work of building utopia was begun on a symbolic level by Jones. Whilst the Temple pioneers navigated the difficult task of building an entire village amidst the Guyanese jungle, Temple administrators in California were involved in a related process of symbolic construction. As the determined location of the Temple's final exodus, Jonestown had to be marketed and advertised to potential migrants and financial donors. Although much of Jonestown's symbolic capital was drawn from African American conceptualisations of the Promised Land, it was ultimately the product of a sophisticated campaign of rhetoric and marketing undertaking by Temple administrators. Through the sermons of Jones and the efforts of the Temple's Publications Department, a specific vision of the Promised Land was enunciated and communicated to the large body of Temple congregants in both San Francisco and Los Angeles. As a symbolic notion as much as a physical location, Jonestown operated as a concept within the Temple's emotional framework intended to inspire powerful emotions of love, hope, and pride.

As a symbolic concept, Jonestown was defined in several ways. It was commonly referred to as the Promised Land by congregants and Temple leaders alike, the persistence of such a naming convention owing itself to Hall's choice of title for his monographic study, *Gone From the Promised*

[523] Fielding McGehee III, "Jim Jones and the Guyana Government: A Symbiotic Relationship," (2017) *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=70275; Naraine Persaud "A Study of Cooperativism and Change in Guyanese Society," *International Review of Modern Sociology*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1986) pp. 51–67.
[524] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 192.

Land. It was further referred to varyingly as a paradise on Earth, as a place of eventual refuge and safety, and a utopia free from racism, economic inequality, and oppression. And just as the Israelites reached the Promised Land through their covenant with God in the Biblical narrative, the congregants of Peoples Temple were told that only through covenant with Jim Jones could their Guyanese Canaan similarly be reached.

Several tapes of Jones' sermons have survived which include reference to the Promised Land. Included as the epigraph to this chapter, FBI Audiotape Q1059-4 preserves an audio recording of a sermon delivered in 1974 in which Jones stressed the importance of Jonestown as a real, tangible, and reachable manifestation of the Promised Land.[525] FBI Audiotape Q965 contains a recording of a later sermon delivered in California in 1976, in which Jones describes the Guyanese Agricultural Project as, among other things, "the best place in the world to be."[526] As the sermon progresses, Jones critiques the materiality of other religious congregations who finance cars, suits, and other expressions of wealth for their pastors; Jones implores his audience instead to focus their energies and donations on the realisation of a Promised Land:

> Why don't we develop this beautiful Promised Land that you've seen in the movies that we've shown you? And Brother Ijames is back here as a living witness to tell you what exists.[527]

Referencing a variety of movies which Temple leaders have played to congregations of the years, Jones demonstrates the way the Temple's vision of a Promised Land drew its symbolic capital from a variety of sources including film and visual media as well as religious and political narratives. After pausing the tape to solicit donations, Jones returns to a discussion of the Promised Land in an effort to criticise those congregants who remain hesitant with full financial involvement. In this section, Jones defines the Promised Land in explicitly political terms:

> We're working for materialisation, all right honey, but it's not money materialisation. It's a materialisation of society where there are no classes, where there are no racists, where there is no money whatsoever.[528]

[525] FBI Audiotape Q1059-4.
[526] FBI Audiotape Q965.
[527] FBI Audiotape Q965.
[528] FBI Audiotape Q965.

As was shown in the previous chapter, by 1976 Jim Jones' sermons varied in their political and religious content often depending on the location of the sermon and the congregation to whom it was delivered, often syncretising political and religious rhetoric within the same service. The sermon recorded in Q965 is no different, as the socio-political description provided above is followed shortly thereafter by more explicitly religious discourse. Jones evokes Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and subsequently Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charity" by proclaiming to his congregation that

> I've got a Promised Land. It's a city set on a hill that cannot be moved. I've got a place where there's refuge on 27,000 acres with every kind of berry and fruit and vegetable growing, and all the wild beasts of the field so that no one ever will go hungry. So if you want what I've got, line up baby.[529]

As a utopian construction, Jones symbolically defined Jonestown as a refuge from racism, inequality, oppression, hunger, and strife. The syncretism of political and religious utopian concepts remained a prominent and definitive aspect of Jones' rhetoric regarding the Promised Land.

FBI Audiotape Q972, recorded on August 31, 1973, contains an example of a sermon delivered by Jones in which the Biblical narrative of Exodus the concept of a Promised Land are specifically evoked, and reframed in such a way as to offer a definitive religious lens for congregants to understand their role as a part of Peoples Temple in modern America:

> So we'll be careful because we're walking through a strange land. We're looking like Abraham did, we're looking for a city whose builder and maker is God or goodness. We have left the city of the Ur of Chaldees because it had nothing good in it, its foundations were poor… So we're leaving the Ur of Chaldees and we've got to move on to the Promised Land…[530]

In drawing the parallel between Abrahams decision to leave the Ur of Chaldees and the Temple's decision to leave America, Jones framed the Temple's eventual exodus in explicitly Biblical terms. In this way, the Promised Land was defined as much by what it was, as what it was not: America. Where Guyana symbolically represented freedom and liberty, America represented oppression and persecution; where Jonestown was the Promised Land, America was Biblical Egypt; where God had chosen the Israelites, Jones had chosen the members of Peoples Temple. Yet if the

[529] FBI Audiotape Q965.
[530] FBI Audiotape Q972 (1973). *Alternative Considerations*. jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=60712

Israelites were escaping in exodus from slavery in Biblical Egypt, what were the members of Peoples Temple fleeing from?

FBI Audiotape Q953 contains a recording of a sermon delivered by Jones to members of the Temple's Los Angeles congregation in May 1974, not long after the Symbionese Liberation Army (considered America's first far-left terrorist group) had engaged in a shootout with the Los Angeles Police Department which resulted in six dead. In this sermon, Jones explicitly frames the Promised Land as an escape from American racism and institutional violence. He begins by welcoming new attendees, before introducing the Temple as follows:

> Peoples Temple is a nation that constitutes children's homes, senior citizen's homes, convalescent sanitoriums, Promised Land of 25,000 acres, preparation for concentration camps. We are ready for everything that oppressors want to bring our way.[531]

This is immediately followed by the request for an offering, during which Jones' rhetoric evokes fear of oppression as a motivating reason to offer a substantial donation:

> You know the Promised Land has to be developed, and we need a lot of supplies over there. You know the danger of concentration camps? It's in every newspaper. You know the danger of depression? It's all around. So we've got a lot of food to buy, a lot of equipment to get, to be prepared for every emergency.[532]

Jones goes on to criticise the LAPD's handling of the shootout with the Symbionese Liberation Army in nearby Compton, by telling a story of an elderly black woman who lived next to the building and was injured by what Jones describes as a lack of care and an expression of racism by the officers in attendance. True or not, the moral of the story is soon made clear:

> Double standard, but we who are the poor, whites, and blacks, they'd just as soon shoot us down as they would the SLA. It was not only a war against SLA, it was a war against the black community.[533]

Returning to the effort to solicit donations for the construction of Jonestown, Jones continues to describe the project by contrasting the Temple's material Promised Land in the here-and-now with the immaterial promise of heaven in the Christian tradition:

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[531] FBI Audiotape Q953 (1974). *Alternative Considerations*. jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=27625
[532] FBI Audiotape Q953.
[533] FBI Audiotape Q953.

> All the white people say it's got streets of gold. If it has, you know who'll be polishing them. We ain't going no streets of gold, but we've got 25,000 acres of beautiful grasslands, beautiful virgin territory, lovely fruit that grows wild, every kind of vegetable that grows wild… Two out of three babies are going to bed hungry, God's chosen people, the Jews, were all killed in concentration camps, blacks and poor whites are being mistreated in every city of America, [and you] say, "I know God loves me."[534]

In the rhetorical practice of Jones, the Promised Land was a symbolic and material refuge which offered the members of Peoples Temple a vision of a utopian future which was defined as much by the hopes of the community as well as their fears. Building a community based upon love was predicated by a desire to escape fear: fear of persecution, oppression, racism, and violence.

While Jones worked to construct a specific vision of the Promised Land which appealed to a broad cross-section of Temple congregants through a syncretic religious and political discourse, it is clear that the members of Peoples Temple held a variety of opinions about Jonestown as a project. In her diary entry for 16 July 1975, Edith Roller made notes on a service held at the San Francisco Temple that evening:

> Jim asked how many are looking forward to living in the promised land. Only a scattered few say they aren't. One young person said she felt it was for the old and the very young; the young should stay here. Jim answered that if there was a need, we all must go.[535]

In a later entry dated 24 August 1975, Roller summarised a conversation she had with a woman named Kaye Gibbs during a ride to a Temple evening service:

> Kaye said she doesn't want to go to the promised land. She wants to give her life for the revolution, as she doesn't want to live anyway. I indicated that we should all do what is decided is most useful, and those who weren't especially trained might be a handicap if they stayed here. She said in that case she would commit suicide.[536]

Clearly, the members of Peoples Temple responded to the concept of the Promised Land in a variety of ways. Whilst utopian idealism may have been the most characteristic aspect of this vision, it was not a vision shared by all. As Edith Roller's journal entries suggest, the members of Peoples Temple actively discussed the concept and, in some cases, rejected it as suitable for them.

[534] FBI Audiotape Q953.
[535] Edith Roller Journals (16 July 1975).
[536] Edith Roller Journals (24 August 1975).

In *Six Years with God*, Jeannie Mills recalled some memories about how the Promised Land was characterised in Jones' services. Her recollections are entirely congruent with the primary data explored above, but from her position of administrative leadership she reflected on the reality of Guyana in contrast to the way it was rhetorised in service. She wrote that "the prospect of a jungle paradise was exciting", but that interpretations of the Agricultural Project's location in Guyana were twofold. In the main interpretation espoused by Jim, Guyana was a veritable paradise; but this ignored the reports from Jonestown's pioneers which highlighted "the heat, the bugs, the diarrhoea… or the extreme poverty of the people in Guyana." Selectively portraying Jonestown outside of these concerns, Mills wrote that the members of Peoples Temple had no reason to disbelieve Jones' claims:

> The poor members in the congregation, who had never been able to look forward to a time of plenty and prosperity, suddenly envisioned themselves walking the roads lined with tropical fruit trees. They were assured their jungle paradise would provide them with food and happiness for the rest of their lives. Now that they knew the Promised Land actually existed, members began to turn in money at an even faster pace.[537]

Mills also noted an interesting development throughout 1974, wherein discussions of the Promised Land were increasingly accompanied by discussions of American oppression; rather, it was defined by what it was as much as it was defined by what it was not:

> As Jim explained week after week about the Promised Land, he also began to talk more about the oppression of black people in our country.[538]

A similar trend can be seen when examining archival materials originally produced by the Peoples Temple Publications Department between 1974 and 1977. After the defection of Jeannie and Al Mills in 1974, Tim Clancey would take charge of the Publications Department and in 2010 Clancey and his wife, Jean, would donate thousands of documents and other materials to the California Historical Society. What is striking about these materials is their lack of utopian language; the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project is described varyingly as an Agricultural Mission and a charity project, but never as a Promised Land.

[537] Mills, *Six Years with God*, pp. 250-51.
[538] Mills, *Six Years with God*, p. 251.

For example, an early pamphlet bearing the title "Operation Bread Basket" appears to be one of the first solicitation materials produced for raising funds for Jonestown, and it once more characterises the project not as a Promised Land but as a Christian Mission. The text beneath the title stated that

> Peoples Temple is beginning a Mission Program to help provide food in an underdeveloped country. A beautiful potential site has been found across the sea in a jungle where the land is rich and fertile. In times ahead Pastor Jones will be able to keep people from going hungry.[539]

Other materials preserve a similar charitable focus in the presentation of Jonestown to potential donors outside of the main Temple body. In an undated pamphlet produced in late 1975, a sketch of a child covers the front page whilst beneath this image, in bold red font, the title reads: "Do you know that 100,000,000 people will die of starvation in 1975?". The internal article contained overleaf describes the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project as a Christian Agricultural Mission, posturing the settlement as a curative, charitable community intended to produce and distribute food to those in need around the world:

> You ask, "What can I do to help?" There is so much to do! Because of the increasing shortage of food around the world, the congregation of Peoples Temple Christian Church of Redwood Valley, California, has initiated a program of direct action which will make food available in the time of need… At this very moment acres of jungle are being cleared by church volunteers. Farm equipment has been sent, fields have been planted, and plans are being formulated to plant soybean and other protein crops which can be used to feed the hungry.[540]

Flanking this central article are two images: on the left, a photograph of Jim Jones surrounded by Jonestown's first harvest of large, planted corn; and on the right, a sketch of a starving Ethiopian mother and her dying children made infamous following the 1973 Ethiopian Famine.

A similar message is conveyed in an article printed within the June 1977 edition of *Peoples Forum*. Titled "Food For A Hungry World," the editorial presents Jonestown as a charitable, Christian Mission. The article itself is flanked by several others of a remarkably different tenor, including editorials titled as "Arms Race or Human Race: Time is Running Out," "Nazi Children on TV," and "Church Exodus From City – Why?" It is important to remember that, when presented together, these

[539] "Operation Bread Basket" Direct Mail Pamphlet, CHS.
[540] "Do you know?" Direct Mail Pamphlet, CHS.

articles construct an image of Jonestown which is defined by its mission and juxtaposed by its removal from the material conditions of life in the United States. "The highly successful Guyana agricultural project of Peoples Temple is developing farming techniques that could have a major impact in the struggle against world hunger," the article begins, before proceeding to detail the difficulties and achievements of tropical agriculture. Interestingly, the article also describes Jonestown in a utopian fashion, albeit in a more muted manner than the sermons of Jones:

> Besides being an experimental station for developing tropical agricultural techniques, and testing out scores of varieties of new foodstuffs, the Peoples Temple Agricultural Mission is a lovely place to live. The combination of balmy sunshine, and gentle trade winds that blow all the time, makes the atmosphere very refreshing and ideal for year-round living. The tranquil setting there is something only able to be imagined… Many of the senior citizens at the Temple look forward to retiring over there (some already have), and the youth who have visited there enjoy it so much that they simply do not want to come home![541]

In the above editorial, Jonestown is defined as much by its stated mission-goal as by the feelings it inspired: peace, tranquillity, happiness, hope, and joy. Before Jonestown was even functional as a large-scale settlement, it was already being described in paradisical terms; ad Jonestown's pioneers were hard at work in their attempt to manifest utopia.

Doing Utopia: Jonestown's Pioneers.

Beginning in 1974, small teams of able-bodied and skilled Temple members were sent from California to Guyana to begin the process of building Jonestown. Among the early pioneers, Hall counts Jones' assistant minister since Indianapolis Archie Ijames, Paula Adams who acted as liaison from Georgetown, Chris Lewis, Pop and Luvenia Jackson, Lester Matheson, Mike Touchette, Tim Swinney, Anthony Simon, Greg Frost, Philip Blakey, and Don Beck.[542] The ultimate goal of the Temple's early settlers was to lay the foundations for utopia in a tropical refuge free from racism, inequality, inequity and oppression; a veritable heaven of their own making. Although the labour was arduous and the hours gruelling, between 1974 and 1977 the Temple's pioneers set about this seemingly quixotic venture with impressive results. Mary McCormick Maaga described Jonestown as

[541]Peoples Temple, *Peoples Forum,* Vol. 2 No. 2 (1 June 1977) CHS, *Peoples Temple Ephemera and Publication 1959-1979*, MS4124.
[542] Donald Beck, "A Peoples Temple Life" (2005), *Alternative Considerations*. jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=32367

a "miracle of construction and dedication, a fact that is not widely appreciated when one only sees it in photographs with dead bodies strewn about."[543] In a more recent analysis of the Temple's organisational practices, Heather Shearer attributed the successes of building Jonestown to "member contributions (labour and money), timing, and -significantly- texts."[544] In many ways the bureaucratic practices facilitating the construction of Jonestown remain just as impressive as the physical site itself.

Answering the question of "what was pioneer life like?" is a difficult one because so few of Jonestown's early settlers survived beyond 1978, and fewer of that number have written or spoken in detail about their personal stories. An explicit consensus exists, however, that the pioneers were bound by a tight sense of camaraderie and pride which is evident in the testimonies that do remain. In *Gone From the Promised Land*, Hall described Jonestown's early pioneers as being "guided by an esprit de corps based on serving people back in the United States," which motivated them to participate in hard labour over long hours, ennobling their task.[545] Literally translating to the "spirit of the body," an esprit de corps refers to a shared sense of morale and motivation suffusing the members of a discrete social group. In one traditional definition, Durkheim described an esprit de corps as a

> moral power capable of containing individual egoisms, of maintaining in the workers' hearts a stronger feeling of their common solidarity… to associate, to no longer feel lost in the midst of adversaries, to feel the pleasure of communion, to form a unity out of many… to lead the same moral existence [emphasis added].[546]

In a more recent transnational analysis of the history and use of the term, Luis de Miranda similarly identified the basis of an esprit de corps as rooted in particular feelings such as pride and love. These emotions combine and manifest as a "supercilious attachment to a collective, to a task that develops individual self-importance," a notion which de Miranda explicitly links to Bourdieu's "love of self in others, and in the entire group." On this basis, De Miranda poses an insightful question by asking his reader:

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[543] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices of Jonestown*, p. 6.
[544] Heather Shearer, "'Verbal Orders Don't Go – Write It!': Building and Maintaining the Promised Land*, Nova Religio* Vol. 22 No. 2 (2018), pp. 65-92.
[545] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 194.
[546] Émile Durkheim, preface to the second edition, *De la division du travail social* (Paris, 1897), in Luis de Miranda, *Ensemblance: The Transnational Genealogy of Esprit de Corps* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020) p. p. 10.

> Is esprit de corps about love or *agape* among insiders? If so, it might also be said that hate or indifference for outsiders is never too far away.[547]

The esprit de corps manifested among Jonestown's early pioneers was a reflection of the broader emotional framework which suffused Temple life in the United States, resituated in the specific context of "doing utopia."[548] Within this framework arduous labour was transmuted into an emotional practice of self-exploration and reinvention, forming a constituent part of what Shearer described as the Temple's belief in the Promised Land as a "place to reinvent oneself in a community that valued, above all, one's contribution to the cause".[549] As such, Jonestown was a liminal space, one which separated "participants from preexisting structural constraints" and gave them "the freedom and power to remould themselves and society."[550]

In his study of the liminal effects of China's Red Guard Movement (1966-68), Guobin Yang identified a "threshold effect" of participation in a liminal moment or space: "for those involved… the experience becomes a dividing line in personal histories with immediate and long-term consequences."[551] It seems, when exploring the importance of this concept for the Jonestown project, that liminal *affects* may be just as central to the personal experiences of participants as Yang's more general liminal *effects*. This is because emotions operate as "the catalyst through which individual transformations emerge, new ideas are embraced, and actions are undertaken that [may be] against one's own self-interest."[552] In the personal reflective testimonies of those Temple pioneers who survived beyond November, 1978, Jonestown is described as place of self-transformation and utopian praxis, often fondly remembered as a dividing line between Temple life in California, and life in Jonestown following the permanent relocation of Jones to the commune.

Mike Touchette was 21 years old when he made the trip to Guyana with his fellow pioneers. A self-trained bulldozer operator who became responsible for clearing trees, building roads, and

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[547] De Miranda, *Ensemblance*, p. 7.
[548] Robert Kramm, "Doing Utopia: Radical Utopian Communities, Mobility, and the Body in the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of Global History* (2023) pp. 1-20.
[549] Shearer, "*Verbal Orders Don't Go- Write it!"*, p. 83.
[550] Guobin Yang, "The Liminal Effects of Social Movements: Red Guards and the Transformation of Identity," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 15 No. 3 (September 2000) pp. 379-406 [380].
[551] Yang, "Liminal Effects", p. 380.
[552] Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 34; cited in Yang, "Liminal Effects," p. 382.

setting the foundations for Jonestown's structures, Touchette recalled the difficulty of his productive labour fondly:

> Mainly, we worked. From sun up till dark, rain or shine, we worked hard to build what we thought was going to be a better way of life for the family members back here in the States.[553]

To Touchette, hard labour was justified by the Temple's mission statement of building a refuge for its members, but it was a way of life which required a specific emotional and cognitive outlook: "You had to have a pioneering spirit to survive," he recalled. Describing his satisfaction and pride in constructing utopia, Touchette stressed his love not only for the project but for the way of life it necessitated, but also clarified the individuality of his experience:

> It has been 35 years since we all lost family, friends and – for me – a way of life that I loved. That's right. I loved building and living in Jonestown, in the years before Jim and the mass of people came down. I understand that way of life was and is not for everyone. But for me, it was everything.[554]

For Touchette, the experience of building Jonestown was inseparable from the relationships which developed and matured among his fellow pioneers. "My memories from 1974 till the beginning of '78 are many and full of love, and to this day they still bring tears to my eyes. Not only the memories of building Jonestown, but the friendships and camaraderie we had before 1978 is beyond words."[555] Articulating an esprit de corps as well as love for the lifestyle of daily pioneer labour which Jonestown required, Touchette's reflections suggest the power of Jonestown as a spatial nexus of doing utopia and self-exploration.

Donald Beck's retrospective on building Jonestown touches upon many of the same points as Touchette's. Having visited the site in December 1973 with Jones and other Temple administrators, Beck returned in the summer of 1974 to assist with Jonestown's crops. For Beck, learning to farm was a powerful avenue of self-exploration and identity management: "I had always been interested in planting and growing things – I had felt a special connection to farming, to working the land to grow your own food – and it all seemed like getting back to where I'd come from", he later recalled.[556]

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[553] Mike Touchette, "A Place Like No Other: Jonestown's Early Years," (2013). *Alternative Considerations*. jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=40182
[554] Touchette, "A Place Like No Other."
[555] Touchette, "A Place Like No Other."
[556] Beck, "A Peoples Temple Life."

After a short period back in America, Beck returned to Guyana in the summer of 1976. He recounted being impressed by the work which had been accomplished, whilst also emphasising the natural beauty of Guyana's climate. "The setting was beautiful, the weather amazing," he wrote. Just as in Touchette's reflections, Beck remembered the pioneer spirit which seemed to possess Jonestown's early architects:

> I remember the camaraderie was real… There were none of the distracters of urban living most of the pioneers had come from, none of the pressures from the size of the community that Jonestown would eventually become. At that point, with fewer people and less paranoia, the Mission project was almost a paradise. Peaceful, beautiful, a place of equality and mutual respect and support. Building to provide what we defined as necessary… Just working for yourself and community. A good feeling. Safe. Safer in the tropical jungle than the urban jungle."[557]

For Beck, the practice of constructing utopia was almost a paradise in and of itself. In a later article, he similarly recalled that:

> For me, those Guyana summers held a very strong sense of camaraderie and cooperation. We were working to build a community we all believed in. Life in a jungle was a contrast to the hustle-bustle of Temple life in the states where we had no time to appreciate our *community*. To me, the cooperation and work of a *small group* of people in the natural beauty of the rain forest were a welcome beginning of a reality we wanted to build. I could see what we were building![558]

In their memories of "doing utopia," both Touchette and Beck emphasise the emotional importance of their labour and the powerful bonds this inspired among their fellow pioneers. As part of an Oral History Interview series, Beck recounted his relationship with fellow pioneer Anthony Simon (1954-1978), a young African American man from Los Angeles who appeared to reinvent himself as Jonestown's resident chicken expert:

> He had gone down because he was having problems – I'm not sure what exactly – but he became interested in growing chickens, so he worked in the chickenry and we had some college texts about animal husbandry, and he would read them, even though he was a poor reader… And in fact, when you asked him questions, he would tell you what page and what book whatever information he was quoting was from. He just became almost obsessed with doing it, and very focused and a total change from what he had been in the States.[559]

[557] Beck, "A Peoples Temple Life."
[558] Donald Beck, "A World Unto Itself: Life in the States after Jim Jones Moved to Guyana," (2013) *Alternative Considerations*. jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=34222
[559] Laura Johnston Kohl, "Oral History Interview: Donald Beck," (July 2013) *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=64983.

In line with Shearer's suggestion that Jonestown created a space and structure for creative self-exploration and identity management, it is clear that labour was perhaps the most important way this process was enacted and realised in the daily lives of Jonestown's pioneers.

Philip Blakey shared similar reflections on the Temple's pioneer period. A skilled worker, Blakey assisted in the construction of the Agricultural Project's initial buildings and the ferrying of building materials and labourers by truck and boat to the slowly expanding village. Offering a unique insight into how the pioneers spent their recreational time, Blakey fondly recalled that:

> In the early days, we often spent the dark evenings watching films, which we rented from Georgetown including *Hello Dolly, Paint Your Wagon, On a Clear Day, Super Cops and West World.*. We watched them so often, to this day, I can remember most of the words and sing the songs. Whenever they come on TV, it takes me back to the early, happy days of Jonestown. [560]

One of the most prominent similarities found in the reflections of Touchette, Beck, and Blakey is that in each case the positive emotional reflections of life as a pioneer are immediately qualified by a temporal location: prior to the arrival of Jones and the exodus of summer, 1977. Don Beck recounted that until this turning point:

> The whole area did seem like a Promised Land… With only 50 people there, and Jim Jones wasn't there at the time, and there were no meetings, meetings, meetings. There were no meetings. Only a communal, collaborative effort. We were building a place for our community, we all had this common goal in mind, so there was a very unifying effect.[561]

Stephan Jones (Jim and Marceline's only biological son) moved to Jonestown in February 1977. Despite his late arrival compared to other pioneers, Jones described a similar sense of camaraderie and pride which was sharply juxtaposed by the systemisation of labour, monopolisation of free time, and heavy regimentation following the arrival of his father and the Temple's inner circle in summer 1977.[562] In Jones' and Beck's recollections, the freedom of building Jonestown was not only a refuge being built for the Temple's main body, but it also offered a refuge for the pioneers themselves. Away

[560] Philip Blakey, "Snapshots from a Jonestown Life," (2018). *Alternative Considerations*. jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=81310
[561] Kohl, "Oral History Interview: Donald Beck."
[562] Stephan Jones Interview, 11 Dec. 1992 cited in Maaga, *Hearing the Voices of Jonestown*, p. 7.

from the regimentation of Temple life in California, the pioneer effort in Jonestown revealed what life *could* be like in Guyana.

Whilst one might be tempted to accept these romantic vignettes of daily life in Jonestown based on the sheer similarities of survivor's testimonies alone, a return to the primary materials of the project's early phase modifies this image in important ways. Whilst Jones, Beck, Touchette, and Blakey each affirm the emotional tenor of pioneer life in positive ways, de Miranda's suggestion that the centrality of love as a functional expression of an esprit de corps suggests the close proximity of hate or indifference directed to those considered outside of the group is particularly prescient. Not all of Jonestown's pioneers participated in this community spirit, and the example of Lester Matheson provides an important corrective critique which modifies these romantic vignettes without explicitly contradicting them. Matheson was one of Jonestown's first pioneers, arriving in Guyana in April 1974. Matheson did not find Jonestown to be the construction site of utopia that many of the other pioneers considered it to be, and his desire to return to the United States resulted in a confrontation session led by Jim and Marceline Jones. To be sure, Matheson's complaints indicate a prominent lack of the camaraderie described in other sources.

FBI Audiotape Q573 was recorded during one of Jim and Marceline's visits to Jonestown in late 1976. Matheson is being confronted by his peers and Jim and Marceline Jones for his expressed desire to return to the United States. The tape begins with Marceline and Jones asking him why he wants to leave rather than fix things, to which Matheson can be heard responding "I can't speak up. Everyone explodes." Asking for other perspectives, one woman does support Matheson's claims. "Charlie just really exploded on him," she tells Jim and Marceline, "Philip has exploded on him. I know I have exploded on him. Uh, Jim Bogue has."[563] Far from expressions of camaraderie, Matheson complaints suggest he was the target of repeated expressions of hostility among his peers. Marceline can subsequently be heard asking Matheson if these explosions indicate a genuine hostility, or rather a feeling of frustration misplaced toward him. Matheson responds by suggesting that the

[563] FBI Audiotape Q573 (1976). *Alternative Considerations*.jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=77970

frequency of these expressions and the subsequent minimalization of his own feelings do in fact suggest hostility as an operating motive among his peers:

> Well, it's just that these explosions carry on. These explosions carry on, and I get branded [as an] anarchist and [that] I love my body. When Charlie threatened me, he says, you know, "the only real reason it bothers you, that I threaten you, put a knife in your stomach, is it's because you love your body." … And then the other day when I cut my finger and wanted sufficient band aids so I wouldn't get an infection, Karen got all mad and says, "You just love your body." And she's the nurse! [564]

From Matheson's perspective, the concerns he has expressed about his treatment by his fellow pioneers have been refuted on two counts: anarchism, and a selfish love-of-body. Both of these charges suggest that Matheson's pioneers are explicitly accusing him of operating outside of the behavioural and emotional frameworks expected of him through his participation in Temple life, which demonstrates the persistence of the Temple's Californian emotional framework even as it was transplanted into Guyana. Clearly not a recipient of in-group camaraderie, Matheson's complaints instead reveal social interactions which have done more to isolate him from his peers, rather than integrate him among them.

Throughout the remainder of the confrontation, unidentified male voices belonging to the other pioneers can be heard intervening in the argument, challenging Matheson. One accuses him of aggravating his peers by mimicking their voices as if in a pantomime, which is supported by several others. There is an evident tension separating Matheson from the body of pioneers, and the conduct of the session itself confirms his reported experience of hostility and isolation. For example, when Matheson attempts to defend himself on the charge of mockery via impersonation, Marceline assertively challenges him for being defensive. "If I'm accused on it, what am I supposed to do?" Matheson can be heard pleading. In response, Jim Jones finalises the confrontation with an authoritative conclusion:

> Now how can so many people be wrong? And I don't hear you analysing yourself in this. I don't hear you saying what kind of a horses' ass you are, because everybody [else] is… You're giving me a bullshit case, trying to take

[564] FBI Audiotape Q573.

> me for some kind of a damned dumb fool, and let you get out of here. No one's gonna stop you. If you haven't got the stamina to take it, I'm not gonna stop you from going.[565]

Matheson's complaints of explosive tempers, bullying, disregard of personal feeling and general hostility are ironically reflected in Jones' concluding remarks. Reflecting not only an emotional framework in which collective feeling is regarded as more important than personal sentiment, Jones' words manifest the very complaints Matheson levelled at his peers. As such, the confrontation on this tape emphasises the varieties of pioneer experience which were not always as romantic or positive as surviving testimonies alone suggest.

Audiotape Q573 offers an important microsocial insight into how a pioneer who was not entirely sold on constructing utopia experienced Jonestown. As a glimpse into a specific social interaction, the tape reflects a microcosm of Matheson's wider experiences as well as demonstrating the longevity of emotional practices used within the Temple to motivate congruent personal feeling in line with the broader emotional framework of the Temple. Just as Matheson argued that his complaints resulted in minimalization and guilt through accusations of anarchy and a love-of-self over others, we also hear Jones utilising similar confrontational practices intended to mobilise feelings of guilt. One expression of this practice as used by Jones is also particularly revealing when we seek to understand why pioneer labour was regarded as so vital to Jonestown as an operation. Although around fifty pioneers were involved in the construction of Jonestown, their work was supported by hundreds of hired Guyanese labourers. "If you really care that much, you stay here and build compost," Jones tells Matheson, "instead of us having to deal with people we don't know, their work performance… who don't have [it] in their heart to do it."[566] Clearly Jones held the voluntary labour of the pioneers in far higher regard than the paid labour of local Guyanese, no doubt in part a financial calculation rooted in the pragmatism of keeping costs down. Whilst payment could motivate local labourers, Temple pioneers relied upon deeper motivations inspired by the esprit de corps of building utopia. Where camaraderie failed, guilt proved to be a powerful tool.

[565] FBI Audiotape Q573.
[566] FBI Audiotape Q573.

Q573 is a unique tape from the pioneer period in that it was not produced as a marketing material. Many of the other tapes surviving Jonestown's construction era were produced for public dissemination, and as such must be considered as marketing materials which do not necessarily reflect the reality of pioneer life. For example, Tape Q570 (recorded in November 1975) contains a series of audio messages recorded by the pioneers to be taken back to America and played for Temple congregations. Lester Matheson dutifully reported as follows:

> Hello, everybody, this is Les Matheson from the Promised Land, and I'd just like to tell everyone up there in North America how much I miss the meetings, and how beautiful it is down here, and how we're preparing a place for all of you, and the beauty of nature down here, plus the freedom that we have that we're even make our shelter, our houses out of the materials down here which are good enough for anyone to live in.[567]

Another audio message, spoken by Tim Swinney, played out similarly to Matheson's:

> This is Tim Swinney. I just want to tell you how beautiful this place is down here, and what a pleasure it is to work down here to make a home for the people, to keep them out of concentration camps and, uh, and jail and what all.[568]

Joyce Touchette's message home touched upon many of the same notes:

> Hello, this is Joyce Touchette. I want you to know how much we have appreciated Mother's and Father's visit down here, and how much we do miss them, and the ones back there that get the opportunity to go to the meetings: you should not take advantage of it. It's beautiful here, and we are looking forward to our family joining us.[569]

Whilst these messages may, in varying amounts, reflect a genuine emotional appraisal of life among the pioneers, their procedural nature and recognisable formula suggest that an element of scripted curation is at play. As such, Q570 better reflects the normative expectations inherent in the building of the Promised Land rather than a genuine tally of individual sentiments, presenting a refined and selective vision of pioneer life intended to market the settlement as a place of emotional liberty and joy.

Other sources – namely video recordings – were also produced throughout Jonestown's pioneer period for marketing purposes. Three videos recorded prior to the mass-migration of 1977

[567] FBI Audiotape Q570 (1975). *Alternative Considerations*. jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=28173
[568] FBI Audiotape Q570.
[569] FBI Audiotape Q570.

depict a parade of Jonestown's children marching through the impressive commune. Youth of all ages in a variety of costumes follow the parade route through Jonestown's main road unto its central pavilion. They are recorded laughing, smiling, singing, cheering, and playing in the Agricultural Project's impressive playground in a wholesome demonstration of youthful joy.[570] The intention behind these videos as marketing materials does not necessarily refute their use, but the conclusions which can be drawn from them are limited. Whilst the emotional expressions preserved in the grainy footage preserve a genuine snapshot of a vibrant, celebratory moment in Jonestown's life, clips such as these were selectively utilised in order to present an image of Jonestown which emphasised joy, happiness, liberty, and celebration as definitive characteristics of daily life. The reality, as we have seen, was more complicated than that.

The initial construction of Jonestown was clearly a remarkable accomplishment, regardless of how this experiment in utopian living would end. Skilled pioneers ventured to Guyana to realise a specific vision their Promised Land, clearing impressive swathes of jungle and erecting structures for housing, storage, work, and recreational activities. They hand crafted furniture, solved mechanical problems with inventive solutions, created and operated long-range logistical networks, grew food produce, butchered animals, and bartered their goods in pursuit of s shared utopian goal. These remarkable accomplishments cannot be understood outside of the emotional framework which motivated such a pursuit; and it is clear that the very success of Jonestown's pioneers relied on the powerful feelings motivated by the practices involved in "doing utopia." This framework offered Jonestown's pioneers an avenue for imagining not only a better future for their community, but also a different identity for themselves within this idealistic vision. In transmuting daily labour into an emotional practice of its own kind, the emotional framework of Jonestown's pioneers was central to their success.

[570] Jonestown Children's Parade (1974/1978). CHS, *Peoples Temple Records*. MS 3800; Film reels 28, 29, and 36. Digitised by the California Audiovisual Preservation Project (CAVPP) accessible through *California Revealed* web archive.

Chapter Seven: Paradise Undone.

Although the initial construction of Jonestown appeared promising, the rapid relocation of a thousand Temple members from California to Guyana in late 1977 and early 1978 provided the material context in which this utopian project began to unravel. Whilst the early pioneers formed a community of skilled labourers, young, able-bodied workers, and their families, the influx of one thousand members within a few months dramatically altered Jonestown's demographics and, along with this demographic shift, the capability of the settlement for self-sufficiency. As Moore has noted, "About one-third of the residents living in Jonestown were under the age of twenty, and half of all residents were under age thirty… there was also a sizable population of senior citizens, with about one-fourth being age fifty or older."[571] Resulting from this demographic shift, the "non-productive workforce" present in Jonestown multiplied to – as a conservative estimate – nearly half of the total population.[572]

The material contexts of overcrowding and underproduction that plagued Jonestown in its final year of operation, however, were not insurmountable. These issues were, however, compounded and intensified by the atmosphere of crisis that increasingly came to dominate life within the community. On the one hand, external crises arising from the conflict between Jonestown's leadership and the Concerned Relatives increasingly plagued the community as the Relatives' campaign to remove their family members intensified. On the other, internal pressure was mounting as Jonestown's leaders struggled to manage dissent and dissatisfaction within the community, opting for a system of discipline and punishment that would create more problems than it solved. With external crises exacerbating internal pressures, any potential for Jonestown to become the paradise it had once been envisioned as was rapidly undone.

The following chapter explores the varieties of fear which became increasingly pronounced throughout Jonestown's final year as a community. As Rebecca Moore described in her work *Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple*, "People in Jonestown lived under a cloud of fear: they were afraid their relationship with Guyanese officials would deteriorate; they were afraid they

[571] Moore, *Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple*, p. 47.
[572] Moore, "An Update on the Demographics of Jonestown," (2017). *Alternative Consideration.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=70495

would lose children and adults if they left the country; they were afraid Jim Jones would be arrested; and they were afraid of invasions by hostile relatives, the Guyana Defense Force, or the CIA."[573] Writing specifically in regard to Jones, Hall observed that "By the fall of 1977 any psychological tendency toward paranoia in Jim Jones was nurtured by valid fears. Jones was the object of a network of opposition that included defectors, reporters, and government agencies."[574]

Love and Hate in the Promised Land.

The most notable shift in the community's emotional milieu is observable in the ways in which love and hate were discussed and practiced in Jonestown. Love continued to provide the dominant rhetoric and orientation for the community's internal aims, persisting as the "foundational motif" of the community as it had done in Indiana and California. Love, however, was shed of its traditional theological content. As Jones admonished Jonestown's residents in one meeting in April 1978, "You shouldn't be loving nothing but socialism. That's what you should be loving. Socialism."[575] Turning his attention to the residents of Jonestown who still retained religious belief, Jones then clarified: "Paul said, it's all right to give your body to be burned, but be sure you got charity, which means principle. What is pure love? Communism."[576]

To love was still a fundamental emotional standard in Jonestown and the highest expectation of community sentiment and behaviour. At regular points throughout 1978 this standard was made explicit. In a meeting recorded during September 1978, for example, Jones can be heard chastising those within Jonestown who wanted to engage in revolutionary activities. This chastisement, however, is framed in the language of love:

> So, this is not a time for me to listen to anyone talking about getting involved and doing various guerilla actions, until I can see you involved with the day-to-day process of feeding our babies, touching them, loving them, caring for our seniors, being warm to your companion. … So let us be realistic, and don't sound like you know more about internationalism than Jim Jones, when you can't even begin socialism on the level of taking care of your babies properly. … And don't talk about great theories that don't begin in little ways, if you can't love the people around you.[577]

[573]Moore, *Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple,* pp. 66-67.
[574] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 215.
[575] FBI Audiotape Q637 (1978). *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=27509
[576] FBI Audiotape Q637.
[577] FBI Audiotape Q351 (1978). *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=114166

The emphasis on loving one's fellow residents of Jonestown remained a fundamental emotional standard expected of the community. For example, in FBI Audiotape Q196, recorded in September 1978, Jones articulates the importance of actively loving the children of Jonestown:

> Love children. It's demanded. Adults should, when they pass children, pat them on the head, and they should give them hugs and constant attention. Like flowers, children grow by warmth and touching and loving.[578]

Within Jonestown, love remained an important standard of emotional conduct, with particular reference to the children of the community.

One of the distinguishing features of *agapeic* love is that it is unconditional. Yet as the community in Jonestown adopted a more outwardly atheistic, communistic character, love lost this divine, unconditional qualification. A turning point in this regard appears to have occurred at the end of 1977, during a lengthy period of crises stretching from September through to 25 December 1977. As the community "celebrated" Revolution Day as a replacement for Christmas, Jones rallied against the utility of love as an orienting, guiding principle; rejecting the Christian directive to "love thy enemy," Jones instead articulated a new emotional standard expected when dealing with the Temple's opponents:

> But don't never say hate is your enemy. Love has practice caused me to get you destroyed… Sure, you gotta love – principle – But don't say hate is my enemy…[579]

Continuing, Jones claims it was the Temple's commitment to love that has caused the problems arising from defections and legal challenges plaguing the community:

> No, how much they fucked us over with that love shit. And don't you ever fall for that again. Watch. Look. Observe. Be fair. Be just. Be loving. When you see principle – be loving. But don't ever say hate's your enemy. 'Cause hate'll keep you on the line.[580]

That hate was replacing love as the standard of emotional expression expected of Jonestown's residents and directed at the community's opponents became a consistent theme of Jones' emotional rhetoric. In FBI Audiotape Q955, recorded in late August 1978, Jones once again articulates this sweeping change in emotional standards:

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[578] FBI Audiotape Q196 (1978). *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=27367
[579] FBI Audiotape Q948 (1977). *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=118318
[580] FBI Audiotape Q948.

> I heard him say hate is our enemy. Oh no, it's not our enemy. Love and self-indulgence is our enemy. Hate's not our enemy. If we don't hate that system, they'll kill us.[581]

The shift in the emotional framework of the Jonestown community was noticed by some visitors. During late August and early September 1978, the playwright, novelist, and actor Donald Freed (1932-) visited Jonestown. In an interview recorded on FBI Audiotape Q291, Freed described the relationship of love and hate as he understood it within Jonestown's emotional milieu.

During this interview, Jonestown resident Mike Prokes asked Freed how he would "account for the change in peoples lives" following their move to Jonestown. Freed's response is instructive, and presents an appraisal of the emotional energies found in Jonestown as observed by an outsider of the community:

> These people feel – I think you'd have to use the word "love" as a catalyst. There seems to be a context here of energy that draws upon work and love, and I would say, also a chance to express through work and through a kind of ideology, a growing and changing ideology, of negative feelings and aggressive feelings, hostile feelings towards conditions of oppression, which were expressed in the past through self-destructive acts in the United States. … In this sense, its impossible to talk about "love" and "hate" because what starts out as hate quickly urns over into work and into energy and into constructive building, which in turn is love...[582]

As Freed observed, the emotional milieu of Jonestown was characterized by a tension between love and hate, which were both employed as constructive forces.

It seems that outside of Jones' rhetoric, however, love remained an important aspect of the emotional framework found in Jonestown which continued to resonate with the rank-and-file. For example, FBI Audiotape Q442 preserves a recording of a performance by Jonestown's in-house band, the Jonestown Express. Musical performances remained important aspects of the emotional and evocative culture of Peoples Temple in Jonestown, and the selection of songs indicates the continuing importance of love as a fundamental motif and orienting value within the community. The fourth song recorded on the audiotape is an adaptation of Stevie Wonder's "Love's in Need of Love Today":

> Love's in need of love today,
>
> don't delay, send yours in right away,

[581] FBI Audiotape Q995 (1978). *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=110034
[582] FBI Audiotape Q291 (1978). *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=27412

hate's going round, breaking many hearts,

stop it please, before its gone too far.[583]

Later in the recording, the Express moves on to a performance of "The Greatest Love," a song written by Michael Masser and released in 1977:

Because the greatest love of all was happening to me,

I found that greatest love of all inside of me,

The greatest love of all,

Oh, it's easy to achieve,

Learning to love yourself,

It's the greatest love of all.[584]

Love still characterized the musical culture of Peoples Temple. The Jonestown Express sang love songs, even while Jones decried the validity of love in his speeches and rants.

Disloyalty and Dissent: Peoples Rallies.

Within Jonestown, Wednesday nights at Redwood Valley were replaced by Peoples Rallies which could occur on any day of the week. These events represented occasions of collective organization, discipline, and conflict resolution. As Moore explains, "Because people living in Jonestown were trying to learn an unselfish and cooperative way of life, problems that hurt the welfare and survival of the project were identified and brought up at the Peoples Rallies weekly town meetings held in Jonestown."[585] Whilst the Peoples Rallies always discussed community milestones, goals, failures, and other material concerns, they equally became the arenas in which Jonestown's increasingly strict system of discipline and punishment was meted out under Jones' direct supervision.

Crimes in Jonestown could include a wide variety of offences, ranging from petty theft or failure to work through to more serious offenses including physical assaults and sexual abuse. The

[583] FBI Audiotape Q442 (1978). *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=108344
[584] FBI Audiotape Q442.
[585] Moore, *Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple*, p. 48.

punishments meted out were often, but not always, proportional to the crime. An individual who purposefully avoided work, for example, could be placed onto the Learning Crew – a team of manual laborers who were assigned longer hours, shorter breaks, and instructed to perform the tasks other residents would have rather avoided. However, as the environment in Jonestown continued to deteriorate and the community placed an increasing emphasis on loyalty, the list of crimes expanded to include voicing dissatisfaction, expressing disaffection, or otherwise expressing individual feelings.

The system of discipline and punishment that developed during Jonestown's Peoples Rallies represented the development and intensification of the cathartic practices developed in California. Boxing matches still occurred regularly, although on some occasions – as will be discussed – these moments of physical correction often turned into shocking episodes of crowd violence. Other novel forms of punishment were soon developed amid the isolation of the jungle, such as an underground isolation chamber dug into the earth and referred to simply as "the box." In FBI Audiotape Q743, for example, the Jonestown community can be heard debating the fate of one woman currently held beneath ground, with her muffled responses barely audible. As one of Jonestown's disciplinarians, Tom Grubbs, explains to the woman:

> But I'm concerned about your hostility level, 'cause I think you're still hostile as hell. As long as you're hostile as hell, and haven't come to grips with this, and found a better way to channel it, I don't think you're safe outside that box.[586]

During this same recording, the community also addresses the discipline of Jerry Baisy who had been caught committing the rape of a young girl. Not constrained to the box, Baisy is the recipient of harsh physical discipline that approaches mob violence. Baisy is stripped and beaten, with the tape recorder capturing Jones' explicit directions to his attackers. Instructing the crowd to "Hit him in the balls! Hit him in the balls!" Jones soon clarifies the importance of this public disciplinary display:

> All you better look that decide you want to rape a child. You better look real well. We'll gladly stand up to face anybody about this… Think about her – we're doing you a curative process now. You think about how you held her down, think what you were doing while she was screaming – hit him again – and you think about it.[587]

[586] FBI Audiotape Q734 (10 April 1978). *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=28273
[587] FBI Audiotape Q734.

Baisy's punishment goes on for several minutes with repeated incidents of beatings as different members of the crowd, including the young girl he had raped, take turns delivering the punishment. In the above quote, Jones reveals two important dimensions to the disciplinary beating: first, that it serves as a warning to other potential child rapists within Jonestown; and second, that it is a "curative" process intended to ensure Baisy would never commit such an act again.

Whilst physical punishments had been utilized in California, the Temple's migration to Guyana and the isolation afforded by the Agricultural Project's location meant that disciplinary measures otherwise unacceptable in America became commonplace in Jonestown. For example, some deemed too hostile or too much of a risk to the community were typically sedated and kept in Jonestown's Extended Care Unit. Barbara Walker, the subject inside the box on FBI Audiotape Q743, was sedated on 25 August 1978 following an attack on Jones' son, Stephan.[588] Shanda James, another young woman, was also drugged and housed in the Extended Care Unit for a prolonged period of time with her crime unknown to history; although it is suspected that she was charged with rejecting Jones' sexual advances.[589] Several other individuals were subject to chemical correction in Jonestown, with Bonnie Yates providing a short list of at least 7 confirmed cases.[590]

White Nights: Fear and Paranoia in Paradise.

In Jonestown's final year, fear formed a dominant aspect of the community's emotional framework. The community collectively practiced fear in events which came to be known as White Nights – emergency meetings which could stretch long into the early hours of the morning, and which carried with them the explicit threat of death in the form of "Revolutionary Suicide."[591] These meetings typically involved lengthy exposition by Jones regarding the cause of the emergency, loyalty tests, and the cross examination of potentially disloyal elements in the audience. White Nights involved new and specific emotional standards which the residents of Jonestown – young and old alike – were expected to adhere to and practice rigidly, lest they be identified as traitors, subversives, or worse.

[588] Edith Roller Journals (25 August 1978). *Alternative Considerations.*
[589] Reiterman, *Raven,* p. 452; Layton, *Seductive Poison,* p. 300.
[590] Bonnie Yates, "Murder by Thorazine: A Look at the Use of Sedatives in Jonestown," (2013) *Alternative Considerations.* jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=40232
[591] Moore, Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple, p. 76.

White Nights encouraged both a fear of external enemies and an internal sense of paranoia, owing to the simple fact that the Temple's most dangerous opponents were those who had defected from the movement from positions of intimate authority. The enemy within and the enemy without were closely related, represented in reality by the Concerned Relatives themselves.

The Concerned Relatives were composed primarily of Temple defectors who had left the group prior to 1977. They included among their number several individuals who had previously held positions of importance within the group, such as Grace Stoen who defected in July 1976, followed a year later by her husband, Tim Stoen.

Other pressures both confirmed and intensified the growing paranoia in Jonestown. On September 9, 1977, the US Postal Service issued an order halting the delivery of Social Security cheques to forwarding addresses in Guyana.[592] Around this same time, an attorney representing Tim and Grace Stoen travelled to Guyana to encourage the government to intervene in the custody battle centred around John Victor Stoen (1972-1978), who Jones claimed to be the biological father of.[593] Towards the end of September, former Temple member Steven Katsaris travelled to Guyana to speak with, and in his mind rescue, his daughter Maria Katsaris from Jonestown. Refused access, and instead given a transcribed statement made by Maria declaring her desire to remain in Guyana and a direct accusation that Steven, her father, had molested her, Katsaris returned to California and joined forces with the Temple's emerging opposition, the Concerned Relatives.[594] A further pressure, and perhaps a turning point, came precisely one year before the tragedy of 1978. On November 18, 1977, a California court ruled in Grace and Tim Stoen's favour in the custody dispute for John Victor. This meant that if Jones travelled to California without returning John Victor, he would face arrest and trial.[595] Later, on December 19 of that year, former members Howard and Beverly Oliver travelled to Guyana with their own attorney in an effort to see – and hopefully recover – their children, Bruce Howard (1958-1978) and William Sheldon (1959-1978).[596] Although Temple leaders postponed,

592 US Postal Service order on Social Security Checks. RYMUR 89-4286-MM-3-9. *Alternative Considerations.*
593 On February 6, 1972, Tim Stoen signed an affidavit declaring Jones as the biological father of John Victor Stoen. "Tim Stoen Affidavit of February 6, 1972." RYMUR 89-4286-BB-31-a-24. *Alternative Considerations.*
594 Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 225.
595 Moore, *Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple*, p. 61.
596 Moore, *Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple,* p. 62; Reiterman with Jacobs, *Raven*, p. 389.

deflected, and eventually rejected the Olivers' request, as they did with other requests made by similarly concerned relatives, the constant pressures of external opponents throughout late 1977 resulted in a siege like environment for Jonestown's residents.

In Jonestown, the composition of the Concerned Relatives had a direct and causal relationship on the internal pressures intensifying within the community. Because former members had defected and shared their stories with the press, the Temple's leadership became increasingly concerned about the potential for present Jonestown residents to defect and join forces with the Concerned Relatives, with an equal willingness to "tell on" the community. In May 1978, the fear of defectors became a hysteric paranoia when inner-circle member and close confidant of Jones, Deborah Layton Blakey, fled Jonestown. As Edith Roller noted in her journal entry for the 26th of May, "Jim suddenly announced that he was giving out the name of the traitor who had left our ranks. It was Debbie Blakey. She had been proven to have taken an active roll [sic] in the conspiracy."[597] The defection of leaders resulted in what Moore has described as an obsession with loyalty, which "became manifested in increasing demands for loyalty coupled with increasing suppression of dissent."[598]

These crises and pressures were understood by the leadership of Peoples Temple as direct and impending threats to the existence of the very community in Jonestown. Already dealing with overcrowding, underproduction, the financial drain of lawsuits, appeals, affidavits, and other public relations costs made an already bad economic situation worse. In an undated memo to Jones with specific reference to Steven Katsaris' legal filing in late 1977, Temple attorney Eugene Chaikin warned that fighting these cases will "cost a whole lot of money." This affected the prospects of the entire Agricultural Project, as Chaikin clarified:

> Of course, this leaves us in a severe financial predicament here. The predicament will increase as our population increases. We do not feel that as the community is now structured it can ever be financially self-sufficient… It seems that we spend so much time dealing with day-to-day tactics, staving off one situation and in the process creating the next, that we do not confront the basic, ultimate problems of our community. In a nutshell they are that our financial reserves are insufficient to operate on in the long run… So long as we have to cover our ass, so long

[597] Edith Roller Journals, May 1978 (26 May). *Alternative Considerations.*
[598] Moore, *Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple,* p. 72.

> as P.R. [public relations] has priority over production, so long as we are not free to invest and use our money in town, we will not make it here.[599]

Interestingly, Chaikin directly notes the repeated crises arising from the Temple's external relations as the primary factor preventing the community from addressing the material issues within Jonestown.

As much damage as the repeated crisis environment was doing to Jonestown's prospects, allowing able-bodied individuals to return to the United States was considered to be something of a death sentence. In a memo to Jones, Carolyn Layton discussed the ramifications of allowing anyone to return to America in the present context. "What about the stories the ones who leave would tell," she cautioned Jones, listing three narratives she might expect to see in the press: "1. Held against their will," "2. Money taken," and "3. Forms of discipline." More importantly, in Layton's estimation, the economic impact of mass departures would be ruinous for the community:

> Gene [Chaikin] thinks we should just [let] everyone that wants to go back go and that would solve our financial problems. It is obviously not that simple for seniors are an economic base we need and the youth are a labour force we need. [Though] a good number would I think stay – the breakdown in the structure [would] have terrible consequences for the discipline of the group as a whole. This does not include possible PR and legal problems…[600]

The growing atmosphere of fear and paranoia, directed both at external opponents and internal suspects, became manifest in a number of ways in Jonestown. Determined to prevent defection and promote solidarity, the Temple's leadership employed various practices of fear intended to dissuade disaffected residents from returning to the United States. Within this developing context, with the external pressures of the Concerned Relatives catalysing with the increasing pressure of internal dissatisfaction, dissent, and potential defection, loyalty to the cause and to the community became Jonestown's most important communal value.

Historians do not know when the first White Night occurred in Jonestown, but the most likely candidate is an event referred to as the Seven Day Siege in the archival record. This first White Night came with the arrival of Grace and Tim Stoen's attorney, Jeff Haas, in Georgetown in September 1977. In response to a Guyanese arrest warrant for Jones, the residents of Jonestown took up machetes, cutlasses, and other improvised weapons and stood vigilant around the perimeter of

[599] Eugene Chaikin/Sarah Tropp Memo on Stoen Lawsuits. RYMUR 89-4286-BB-10-J. *Alternative Considerations.*
[600] Carolyn Layton, "Analysis of Future Prospects," Undated. *Alternative Considerations.*

Jonestown for six days and seven nights. Although no audiotape of the event has surfaced from the archive, outside of a brief recording made by Jones and Temple leaders aboard Jonestown's boat, the *Cudjoe*, it is clear that the event quickly became mythologised into Jonestown lore.[601] Shortly after the "Six-Day Siege," at a rally dated October 3, 1977, Jones continually referenced the events of that September week:

> I saw us with a battle cry, I saw us when the camp was encircled. I saw you willingly put up your hands, and say, "I will defend Dennis Banks, even though it means more trouble. I will protect this child, even though it may mean our life." I shan't forget that many willingly and enthusiastically voted and tearfully mixed their tears with mine, full well not believing that tomorrow would ever come. Some of you, it was play, but to some of us, it was goddamn real…[602]

A year later, Jones would recount "that terrible awesome seven-day siege in September, when we were surrounded. Every man, woman and child and seniors, sit in the rain, laid down, ready for the final attack to come on us… That was a brave people," he orated.[603]

A poem recovered from Jonestown similarly memorialised the event. Written by Jonestown resident Barbara Walker (1952-1978) and titled "The Front Line," the poem captures the excitement, fear, and intensity the Seven Day Siege aroused for its author.

> It wasn't so long ago, in the heat of day
>
> That our enemies came to take our freedom away
>
> Shots were fired, so we ran to the forest and formed a line
>
> From right to left, and all around, as far as the eyes could see
>
> With cut-lesses in our hand, there we stood,
>
> Watching and waiting to greet our enemies.[604]

Of course, there were no enemies in the jungle surrounding Jonestown. What the residents of Jonestown believed to be a valiant stand of defiance against a violent oppressor, was actually a manifestation of intense paranoia which began with Jim Jones and spread through the community.

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[601] FBI Audiotape Q135.
[602] FBI Audiotape Q943.
[603] FBI Audiotape Q182.
[604] Barbara Walker, "The Front Line in Ballad and Thought," *Alternative Considerations.*

Although the Six-Day Siege marked the first series of White Nights in Jonestown, dozens more would occur throughout late 1977 and 1978. Several were recorded by Temple leadership on audiocassette, including the White Nights of February 16, 1978 (Q641, Q642, Q643, and Q644), March 20 (Q833, Q051), and April 12 (Q635, Q636, Q637, Q638, and Q639). These three White Nights were each noted by Edith Roller in her journals, and when the audiotapes are considered in line with Roller's notations, we can see the production and reproduction of fear as the central collective feeling of these emergency, community occasions.

In her journal entry for March 20, Edith Roller noted that "Just before I left for dinner at 6.00, Jim announced over the public address system that an alert might have to be called… I was preparing to make an announcement preliminary to holding my class, when the alert was called at 7.00 o'clock." Describing an atmosphere of urgency, Roller recalled that

> People hurried into the pavilion, benches were set up rapidly, the guards were equipped with weapons and a system of checking attendance was put into effect.[605]

The emergency situation which precipitated the March 20 White Night was that Jonestown's doctor, Lawrence Schacht (1948-1978), had not received certification to practice medicine in Guyana. Other fears and concerns are expressed by Jones throughout the session, ranging from the belief that the CIA has both infiltrated the Guyanese government as well as the most recent batch of Temple arrivals to Jonestown. Spread across Audiotape Q833 and Q051 sequentially, the atmosphere of fear and paranoia is tangible: "There's an element in the country that is under the control of the CIA," Jones explains at the beginning of Q833. "We are positive of that because a friend in the US embassy has told us that. We were attacked again by that element."[606]

Comparing Jonestown's White Nights with the situation in Fidel Castro's Cuba during the Missile Crisis of 1962, Jones declares to the crowd that: "Cuba had its White Nights, and plenty of them. And anything that's won, anything worth having is worth fighting for… If you don't have something you're prepared to die for, you have nothing worth living for."[607] The White Night

[605] Edith Roller Journals (20 March 1978). *Alternative Considerations.*
[606] FBI Audiotape Q833.
[607] FBI Audiotape Q833.

continues with Jones framing this emergency as a moment of revolutionary action, comparing the Temple's present situation with of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Jones chastises those who thought Jonestown would be the Promised Land they had been sold in America: "I think some people expected to step down here, never have to worry, never have to defend anything, never have to concern yourself about any problems… It's not a reasonable expectation, when right now nuclear war could break out any moment."[608] Describing the recent South Lebanon Conflict (March 1978) as a precursor to nuclear war, Jones draws a parallel between the state of emergency that Jonestown has endured for several months to the siege of Leningrad (1941-1944): "the brave Soviet people fought and resisted fascism for three years and they didn't get the choice of having a White Night come and go."[609]

The fear of external enemies, however, was complimented by paranoia of internal elements: "So we stay up tonight pondering that there is CIA here. Maybe sitting here."[610] Individuals in the crowd respond enthusiastically to this suggestion, with calls of "Right, right," general applause, and an unknown male individual shouting "True!" Jones goes on describes how potential infiltrators can be spotted: "I don't look when you're talking to me. I study faces and expressions, and you learn a lot by doing so. All of you ought to study your neighbour when certain comments are made."[611] For Jones, loyalty was revealed on the face: emotional expressions of disagreement were evidence of disloyalty and a direct challenge to his authority. The fear of infiltration by individuals acting against the community was both an outward terror and an inward paranoia, something Jones clarifies later in the tape: "I'm really nervous about you, and I think that's what brings on White Nights to some degree."[612]

That White Nights came with their own expected behavioural and emotional norms is increasingly made clear throughout Q833 and Q051. Irritated at members of the audience not paying attention, talking amongst themselves, joking, or otherwise not giving him their rapt attention, Jones explains: "Shut your goddamn mouth. I do mean shut your mouth. We're in a state of emergency

[608] FBI Audiotape Q833.
[609] FBI Audiotape Q833.
[610] FBI Audiotape Q833.
[611] FBI Audiotape Q833.
[612] FBI Audiotape Q833.

now. 'Till we get out of it, these are emergency sessions and you do behave a little differently in emergency sessions."[613] This is a theme Jones returns to repeatedly throughout the session, explicitly demanding the attention and behavioural congruence of all in attendance:

> Will you wake up? Now standup if you can't. Now listen folks… Goddamn it, I'm serious about this. Now, I want people to stay alert during a war situation. Now White Nights, we're going to have to stay alert. It is a democracy, and everybody has to participate in what the hell's going on. You got to think. You have a privilege to have land to fight for. You got a privilege to have a cause to live for.[614]

Jones' anger at those residents who aren't paying attention reaches breaking point towards the end of Q833, where he fires a gun over the heads of the crowd:

> Who's going around without clearance? I didn't give nobody no clearance. Hold it! Stand up please, stand up, stand up, stand up… Now you people going to take notice that we're in a war emergency room?[615]

In the FBI's review of this tape, the transcribing Special Agent noted: "At this point a sound similar to that of a shot from a shotgun is heard and followed by the sound of a shotgun being racked and an empty shell casing hitting the floor of the room."[616] FBI Audiotape Q051 continues where Q833 left off, after Jones has fired a shotgun into the air. "Now we've got firepower here," Jones explains to the community, "and that firepower will protect us against our enemies, whoever they are, foreign or domestic."[617] The message for Jonestown's residents was clear: disloyalty will be met with violence.

The White Night of March 20, 1978, lasted until 5:00am according to Edith Roller's diary.[618] Other White Nights were just as long and just as gruelling, each precipitated by a conflict or minor crisis which invariably drew in the entire community, with increasing frequency throughout the spring and summer of 1978.

The Visit of Congressman Ryan.

As the Crimmins Report (the State Departments internal investigation in the wake of Ryan's murder) similarly made clear, Ryan's visit was necessitated by the escalating emotionality and volatility of the

[613] FBI Audiotape Q833.
[614] FBI Audiotape Q833.
[615] FBI Audiotape Q833.
[616] FBI Summary, Audiotape Q833, *Alternative Considerations.*
[617] FBI Audiotape Q051. *Alternative Considerations.*
[618] Edith Roller Journals, March 1978 (20 March). *Alternative Considerations.*

conflict between the Concerned Relatives and Jonestown's leadership. Published in May 1979, the Report stated that:

> Because of the starkly conflicting, emotional and, in some respects, bizarre nature of the information provided by the Concerned Relatives and the Temple, and because of the deep bitterness and suspicion that the two groups exhibited toward each other, doubts inevitably arose about the motives and credibility of either side.[619]

Wading into an emotionally volatile situation, Congressman Ryan arrived in Guyana during Thanksgiving Week of November 1978. In doing so, the conflict between the Temple and the Concerned Relatives was brough to the community's doorstep, and the stage was set for Jonestown's final, tragic action.

This chapter has explored the "undoing" of Jonestown as a utopian venture by highlighting the prominence of fear within the community's emotional milieu in the eighteen months following Jones' arrival alongside the mass of Jonestown's residents.

[619] U.S. Department of States, *The Performance of the Department of State and the American Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana, in the People's Temple Case (The Crimmins Report)*, Washington D.C., May 1979, p. 22. *Alternative Considerations.* Also available from the California Historical Society, MS3802, Moore Family Papers.

Chapter Eight: Revolutionary Suicide.

The visit of Congressman Ryan on the evening of 17 November 1978 set the stage for the tragedy that would unfold the following day. On the morning of 18 November, emboldened by Vern Gosney and Monica Bagby's letter to the Congressman's party, two family units also approached Ryan with a request to leave Jonestown – the Parks' and Bogues' families. Although the number of defectors now numbered just over a dozen compared to the thousand that would remain in Jonestown, the Parks' and the Bogues' were both families who had joined Peoples Temple in Indianapolis and their defection represented a "devasting blow for Jim and Marceline Jones." Jim Bogue, the Bogue family patriarch, was the agricultural manager of Jonestown and one of the community's original pioneers, whilst the Parks family "practically ran the medical clinic."[620] As much as the defection of two long-standing Hoosier families was a powerful symbolic blow to Jonestown's leadership, they equally represented the loss of desperately needed expertise and skills.

The defection of the Parks' and Bogues' families finalised the collapse of Jonestown's Potemkin façade on the morning of the 18th. As the defectors loaded themselves into the tractor that would take them to Port Kaituma with the Congressman, Jones and the leadership team were already setting in motion the plan for revolutionary suicide which, by nightfall, would see the majority of Jonestown's residents dead. Shortly after the defectors and the Congressman had left, a second tractor departed Jonestown carrying the community's self-described Red Brigade – young men on the security team – armed with rifles and other firearms. Acting under Jones' orders, the Red Brigade would assassinate Congressman Ryan and four others at Port Kaituma as they attempted to board the small twin-engine aircraft to return them to Georgetown. With the death of Congressman Ryan, Patricia Parks, Bob Brown, Don Harris, and Greg Robinson at Port Kaituma, Jones had precipitated the precise conditions required for Jonestown's final act: revolutionary suicide.

The following chapter explores the emotional foundations of revolutionary suicide, analysing the emotional standards both implicit and explicitly involved in such an act. It traces the development

[620] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices*, p. 128.

of the concept from its originator, the Black Panther Huey P. Newton, through to Jones' own appropriation of the term and highlighting where Newton and Jones diverged. It highlights the importance of practice – both ritual and mundane – to the instantiation of the emotional standards required of revolutionary suicide, before exploring the ways in which standards and experience diverged. The chapter concludes with an analysis of Jonestown's final tape – FBI Audiotape Q042, infamously known as the Death Tape – in an attempt to demonstrate the centrality of feeling to the tragedy.

The Emotional Foundations of (Revolutionary) Suicide.

The concept of revolutionary suicide was not original to Jim Jones or Peoples Temple, but instead had its roots in the Black Power Movement which emerged in the wake of the urban riots of 1964-65 and the assassination of Malcolm X on 21 February 1965. As a concept, revolutionary suicide was first articulated by Huey P. Newton, one of the Black Panther Party's founders and the movement's "most forceful, best-known and most ambitious theorist practitioner."[621] In 1973 Newton published his autobiography, titled *Revolutionary Suicide*, which he had begun writing whilst in prison for the voluntary homicide of an Oakland Police Department Officer, John Frey, in 1968. Whilst the work is largely autobiographical, it is also an experiment in the genre blending Newton's personal story with a political manifesto and a philosophical exercise. Building upon his earlier writings and collating them into a powerful critique of America's racial economy, Newton's *Revolutionary Suicide* articulated the attitude of a black American who was prepared to face death.

Newton's concept of revolutionary suicide is "premised on the belief that one's life chances will not improve without an assault on the Establishment."[622] As he wrote in his 1973 autobiography,

> Revolutionary suicide does not mean that I and my comrades have a death wish; it means just the opposite. We have such a strong desire to live with hope and human dignity that existence without them is impossible. When reactionary forces crush us, we must move against these forces, even at the risk of death.[623]

[621] John T. McCartney *Black Power Ideologies: An Essay in African American Political Thought* (Temple University Press, 1992) p. 133; cited in Joshua Anderson, "A Tension in the Political Thought of Huey P. Newton," Journal of African American Studies, Vol. 16 No. 2 (June 2012) p. 249 [pp. 249-267].
[622] Judson L. Jeffries, *Huey P. Newton: The Radical Theorist* (University Press of Mississippi, 2002) p. 43.
[623] Huey P. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973) p. 5.

Whilst appropriating the term "suicide," Newton was careful to emphasise that revolutionary suicide did not involve the wilful taking of one's own life. This Newton described instead as a "reactionary suicide: the reaction of a man who takes his own life in response to social conditions that overwhelm him and condemn him to helplessness."[624] Newton's indebtedness to Durkheim here is evident, a fact which Newton explains in the introduction to his work: "To Durkheim all types of suicide are related to social conditions. He maintains the primary cause of suicide is not individual temperament but forces in the social environment. In other words, suicide is caused primarily by external factors, not internal ones."[625]

But, argued Newton, there was another kind of "death" more painful and more degrading than the Durkheimian notion of socially caused suicide outlined above. This was a "spiritual death" that

> has been experienced by millions of Black people in the United States. This death is found everywhere today in the Black community. Its victims have ceased to fight the forms of oppression that drink their blood… Many Blacks have been driven to a death of the spirit rather than of the flesh, lapsing into lives of quiet desperation.[626]

For Newton, revolutionary suicide encompassed an explicit rejection of hopelessness and desperation, of despair and degradation, instead proposing that revolutionary action – even if it brought with it the risk of death – promised a dignified death alongside the hope and optimism that the sacrifice of revolutionary bodies could bring about real change in the world. As Newton wrote, "the concept of revolutionary suicide is not defeatist or fatalistic. On the contrary, it conveys an awareness of reality in combination with the possibility of hope."[627]

In the words of Judson L. Jeffries, professor of African American and African studies at Ohio State University, "embedded in Revolutionary Suicide are courage, self-respect, and dignity, which arouse revolutionary enthusiasm. For Newton, it is far better to oppose the forces that drive one to self-murder than to succumb to these forces."[628] Implicit in Newton's concept of revolutionary suicide, therefore, is an affective or emotional element: a rejection of despair and hopelessness, and the articulation of a new orientation, attitude, or approach instilling pride, courage, bravery, and

[624] Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide,* p. 4.
[625] Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, p. 4.
[626] Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide,* p. 4.
[627] Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, p. 7.
[628] Jeffries, *Huey P. Newton*, p. 43.

revolutionary enthusiasm among its practitioners in the Black Power movement and Black Panther Party. As Lisa M. Corrigan noted in *Black Feelings*, Newton's assessment of black suicide rates viewed them as a reaction to "persistent feelings of fear, despair, and hopelessness in the face of economic and social poverty."[629] In this sense, we might regard revolutionary suicide in part as an emotionological text, a work conveying a new attitude or standard that "a definable group within a society" (in this case, the Panthers) "maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression."[630]

For Newton, the appropriate reaction to black despair in the era after the assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. was to reject such feelings and to channel them instead into revolutionary action. More than just a theorist, however, Newton's theory involved practical application. As he explained in *Revolutionary Suicide*,

> To recruit any sizable number of street brothers, we would obviously have to do more than *talk*. We needed to give practical applications of our theory, show them that we were not afraid of weapons and not afraid of death. The way we finally won the brothers over was by patrolling the police with arms.[631]

Here, Newton played an important role in modelling the appropriate emotional standards for his community, the most important of which was overcoming the fear of violence and the fear of death.

In February 1977, Jim Jones travelled to Havana, Cuba, where he met Huey Newton, discussing Newton's flight from the United States, the broader political scene, and the work of Peoples Temple in Guyana. Photographs of the occasion were reprinted in the March 1977 edition of *Peoples Forum,* with those photographs still available today in the California Historical Society's archive.[632] Despite this opportunity for intellectual exchange between the two men, Jones left Cuba with a very different idea of revolutionary suicide than Newton had originally posited. As Duchess Harriss and Adam John Waterman have argued,

> For Jim Jones, "revolutionary suicide" meant any one of a number of things: dying while fighting for a cause …. Committing suicide so the Temple's enemies wouldn't get them and torture their babies and return the seniors to live in unspeakable conditions in the United States; committing suicide so they wouldn't have to fight their black

[629] Corrigan, *Black Feelings*, p. 171.
[630] Peter N. Stearns with Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *The American Historical Review,* Vol. 90 No. 4 (October 1985) p. 813 [pp. 813-836].
[631] Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, p. 115.
[632] Peoples Temple, *Peoples Forum* Vol. 1 No. 17 (March 1977); Jim Jones with Huey Newton (1977), *CHS, Peoples Temple Publications Department Records, MS 3791.*

> brothers in the Guyana Defence Force; committing suicide rather than bring dishonor to the concept of socialism; committing suicide as an alternative to "goi[ing] out and start[ing] a fucking war"; or, as he said on the final minute of the death tape, "protesting the conditions of an inhumane world."[633]

With Jones' interpretation of revolutionary suicide multivalent and highly situational, it is even more difficult to describe precisely what this term meant to any one of Jonestown's thousand inhabitants. Although David Chidester's *Salvation and Suicide* worked to reconstruct the worldview and theology of suicide that developed within Peoples Temple, his analysis is focused on Jones as opposed to the residents of Jonestown.[634] Nevertheless, it is important to determine how Jones characterised revolutionary suicide so as to situate it within the broader emotional framework of Peoples Temple and Jonestown by exploring what emotional standards were associated with the concept.

Although revolutionary suicide could also include death through revolutionary action, as in Newton's original conception, in Jonestown it almost exclusively referred to the act of collective suicide as a form of protest and revenge. Although White Night crises often facilitated the discussion of a siege situation in which violent conflict with an invader was a possibility, this was often discredited by Jones because of the likelihood that such a conflict would be between Jonestown's residents and the black soldiers of the Guyanese Defence Force. This would, Jones argued, discredit the movement and bring shame to international socialism:

> So, you got our will to fight as long as there is anything to fight. But if it's going to cause dishonour to socialism, it'd be best just to lay down our lives, and what's that called? … Revolutionary suicide.[635]

An individual suicide, according to Jones, was immoral and selfish; a collective act of revolutionary suicide, by contrast, was the honourable thing to do in a siege environment. Furthermore, however, Jones' vision of revolutionary suicide also included beneath its umbrella the intentional murder of Jonestown's dependents and vulnerable residents (seniors and children), as Jones made explicit in the same speech:

> Any suicide for selfish reasons, which are always hostile reasons, is always going to bring you immorality, and your history will be cursed. Furthermore, you'll come back again in some other form, for sure. … But that's not

[633] Duchess Harris and John Waterman, "To Die for the Peoples Temple: Religion and Revolution after Black Power," in Moore, Pinn, and Sawyer (eds.) *Peoples Temple and Black Religion*, p. 112 [pp.103-122].
[634] This critique was levelled in Moore, "Review Essay: Peoples Temple Revisited," *Nova Religio*, Vol. 10 No. 1 (August 2006) p. 113 [pp. 111-118].
[635] FBI Audiotape Q637.

> the point. The morality of it is – suicide is unacceptable. Except for revolutionary reasons. … They're not going to make mockery of our babies and torture our old people, right?[636]

But revolutionary suicide was also an important bargaining tool, a concept which could be deployed in the Temple's brinksmanship negotiations with the Concerned Relatives and those in the Guyanese government.[637] A month earlier, in March 1978, Jones had also stressed the value of revolutionary suicide in this sense:

> … that's the only guarantee you've got, is a graveyard, and I like that guarantee, because it makes a very good bargaining platform. I would hate to be doomed with the curse of immortality – then you couldn't bargain so freely. But we are equipped, if we had to, to commit revolutionary suicide, and that's the only way to ever do it.[638]

For Jones, revolutionary suicide was a collective action of self-destruction which could be used as a strategic threat, but – perhaps more importantly – was perceived of as an honourable action that would underscore the Temple's rejection of and resistance to modern capitalism.

During White Night crises in Jonestown, Jones would define the emotional standards expected of the community in reference to the notion of revolutionary suicide and death more broadly. Above all, revolutionary suicide carried with it the expectation that one does not fear death; as such, the fear of death itself was a subject of increasing emotional regulation within Jonestown's affective framework. In some cases, this would result in discipline or catharsis for those expressing fear, whilst in other occasions counselling was suggested. In December 1977, for example, Jones orated to the residents gathered beneath the pavilion on the subject of death, asking those who felt fear to raise their hands:

> Now, you shouldn't be afraid to die. … How many still have fear with death, 'cause we want to help you. … That's right, we'll take the name down so we can help them – no, no discipline. … Death is easy. … Oh Lord, its just easier.[639]

The regulation of the fear of death was an important emotional practice in Jonestown and this standard was emphasised repeatedly. "We who are Marxist-Leninist should know this," Jones said in September 1978, "that the one thing that often causes people to lose their courage is fear of loss of

[636] FBI Audiotape Q637.
[637] "Suicide was posed as a threat that could have strategic value against the enemies of the community." Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, p. 132.
[638] FBI Audiotape Q833.
[639] FBI Audiotape Q944.

reputation, or fear of death. Everyone dies at some point or another."[640] As Jones emphasised in FBI Audiotape Q220, the fear of death was a specific and conscious target of Jonestown's regulatory emotional practices:

> That's why you must be prepared in Jonestown for revolutionary death. Life should not be held onto at such a price. … There should be no fear of death here, and I am very impatient with you that still fear death, which is the last enemy that we've overcome in many White Nights.[641]

The regular occurrence of White Night situations provided Jones with the opportunity to regulate the fear of death that was present among the community, and provided the situations in which the correct emotional standards could be instantiated. In FBI Audiotape Q939, Jones reflected upon the example given by Bruce Oliver during the Seven Day Siege in September 1977:

> That's what made Bruce able to say, "Don't make no difference to me. First I was afraid of dying, hours later I wish I could die. And then some more hours it got me so steeled and so ready and so I look at life and how it was and how the enemies are and what life really represents, and I didn't give a shit one way or the other." And that's what happened to me. Too many times I went round that circle, too many times before then… Shit, when you get through dying like that, I'm ready for anything.[642]

Encouraging the residents of Jonestown to consider their own deaths was a powerful rhetorical strategy used by Jones on a number of occasions. In FBI Audiotape Q998, Jones asks his audience directly

> How many plan your death? … Do you ever plan your death? There's a number of you that do not lift your hand and say you plan your death. You don't ever plan your death? You're gonna die. Don't you think you should plan about such an important event?[643]

Further into the discussion, Jones makes clear to the audience the importance and value of a revolutionary suicide over a selfish, individual act of suicide. Jones framed a collective revolutionary death as an ideal, a positive end to life described in romantic terms whilst an individual's suicide for selfish reasons as an immoral act:

> Talking about death. Sweet death, sweet death – when you die a revolutionary death, it's sweet death. When you throw your life away for nothing, that's counter-revolutionary, that's a suicide that you pay a price for, you sure as

[640] FBI Audiotape Q887.
[641] FBI Audiotape Q220.
[642] FBI Audiotape Q939.
[643] FBI Audiotape Q998.

> hell will come back. When you give your life for a cause, and know that you've done all you can to live and you have to die and you give it right and think it through well – that's sweet death.[644]

On other occasions, including the White Night of 12 April 1978, Jones would request that the residents of the agricultural project turn in written reports on their feelings about death, interspersing this request with an explicit emotional standard:

> All security must give your reports in, of how you feel about death and other questions that were asked. In fact, I would like such a response from every person in socialist class. Anyone that has fear of death should write it. You will not be brought up for any discussion. … We just simply wish to help you, because death, when it is done through revolutionary means, for a cause, a principle, no problem. No problem at all. And it can be helpful for you to see that death can be used as a great conqueror. When you eliminate that, all worries, the bulk of your worries, will be lifted from you and you'll good health and be free from a lot of the aggravations physically that you have now.[645]

In a sense, the above quote is reminiscent of Jones' dalliance with New Thought theology earlier during his ministry, and it might be regarded as a rhetorical attempt to underscore the importance of regulating fear for the older members of Jonestown's community.

The reframing of emotional standards around death was further enunciated by Jones outside of the White Night context, and even found expression in the numerous news-reading sessions recorded by Jones and played throughout Jonestown's loudspeaker system. Reading the news for 3 September 1978, Jones discusses a variety of topics including Nicaraguan strike action which allows him to discuss the importance of bravery in the face of death:

> Even the business people and the only trade unions – all three – are in cooperation in a nationwide general strike, even though they face imprisonment for life or death by Somoza's secret police, by a firing squad. That shows some bravery. *And nobody is capable of being a socialist until they're not afraid of death*. It's just a quiet rest. We cannot take our lives because as certain as I am talking to you, you just have to come back and face it all over again. But it's good for people not to be afraid to die for what they believe [emphasis added].[646]

It is important to note that here Jones is once again discussing the immorality of an individual ("selfish") suicide which would result in karmic reincarnation. At the heart of this message, however, is an emphasis on the regulation of fear as a hallmark of a true socialists emotional character, which provided a strong foundation from which negotiation and conflict with external forces could be

[644] FBI Audiotape Q998.
[645] FBI Audiotape Q606.
[646] FBI Audiotape Q255.

managed. As Jones would be recorded saying in a tape dated mid-November 1978, shortly before the tragedy on the 18th, "There's one advantage we have. We are not afraid, some of us, to die."[647]

As the primary architect of revolutionary suicide in Jonestown, Jim Jones played a fundamental role in communicating the idealised emotional standards surrounding death to the community. Above all, death was not to be feared; expressions of fear were closely monitored and could result in discipline, catharsis, or counselling. Alongside the regulation of the fear of death, Jones utilised his position as rhetor and charismatic leader to reframe feelings about death to include positive estimations. As Jones made clear, regulating fear of death provided the community with a foundation from which negotiations could be pursued with opponents. Although Jones clarified these standards in a pedagogic fashion, the instantiation and adoption of these standards by the wider community required more than description: revolutionary suicide, and the requisite emotions, required practice.

Revolutionary Suicide in Practice.

Following the Seven Day Siege in 1977, discussions of death in Jonestown proliferated with increasing regularity primarily during the community's White Nights. In some cases, revolutionary suicide itself was both ritualised and practiced to a degree that foreshadowed the events of November 1978. For some of Jonestown's adult population, these rehearsals might have been considered exhilarating; for others, they likely contributed to increasing dissatisfaction and dissonance. For Deborah Layton Blakey, who defected on 12 May 1978, it was the practice of ritual collective suicide that caused her to finally defect from her position in leadership and leave Peoples Temple entirely. In a short, written statement given to United States Embassy Consul Richard McCoy in Jonestown, Layton testified that the threat of mass suicide would become a reality in Jonestown if the child custody case regarding John Victor Stoen be decided in Grace Stoen's favour.[648]

In a legal affidavit filed after her defection, Blakey testified that suicide rehearsals had already occurred in Jonestown characterised as loyalty tests. In Blakey's words,

[647] FBI Audiotape Q161.
[648] Statement of Deborah Layton Blakey (12 May 1978). *Alternative Considerations.*

> During one "white night," we were informed that our situation had become hopeless and that the only course of action open to us was a mass suicide for the glory of socialism. We were told that we would be tortured by mercenaries if we were taken alive. Everyone, including the children, was told to line up. As we passed through the line, we were given a small glass of red liquid to drink. We were told that the liquid contained poison and that we would die within 45 minutes. … When the time came when we should have dropped dead, Rev. Jones explained that the poison was not real and that we had just been through a loyalty test. … Life at Jonestown was so miserable and the physical pain of exhaustion was so great that this event was not traumatic for me.[649]

This particular event was also recorded by Edith Roller in her journals, under an entry dated 16 February 1978. Roller's journal entry is a particularly poignant and personal reflection on the matter, but also illustrates the way such a rehearsal was carried out in practice.

> Jim stated that the political situation showed no signs of clearing up and that we had no alternative but revolutionary suicide. … Lines were formed as a container with the potion in it with cups was brought in by the medical staff. … At the beginning those who had reservations were allowed to express them, but those who did were required to be first. As far as I could see once the procession started, very, very few made any protest.[650]

Furthermore, Roller's entry provides fascinating insight into the complicated feelings that revolutionary suicide inspired within her and how she, at 62 years old, navigated these emotions among the expectations of her community:

> I shuddered. I regretted dying as I feel I have years of work and experience ahead of me, not least of which is the writing I wish to do about this whole remarkable story. … Nevertheless, I am 62 and I think of those who are younger, especially the children, with all their potential. I looked around me. Many had glowing eyes. It was awesome. Even the children were very quiet. I looked at the beautiful sky surrounding us.[651]

Although Roller did not desire to die, her journal entry reveals a complicated picture that communicates the emotional weight of the situation above all. In an atmosphere described as "awesome," Roller clearly contemplated what good her death would bring. Nevertheless, she drank the inert potion.

Following the defection of Deborah Layton Blakey, another White Night was held in Jonestown on 13 May 1978. During this White Night, Jonestown's residents were encouraged to provide recorded statements testifying to their commitment to revolutionary suicide. Many share similar features: the harassment they have experienced at the hands of the Concerned Relatives, their lack of further options, and their desire to make a stand against further concessions. Take, for

[649] Affidavit of Deborah Layton Blakey, RYMUR 89-4286-B-2-d-3. *Alternative Considerations.*
[650] Edith Roller Journals (16 February 1978). *Alternative Considerations.*
[651] Edith Roller Journals, (16 February 1978). *Alternative Considerations.*

example, the statement of Hue Fortson – Associate Pastor of Peoples Temple's Los Angeles church, who had been summoned to Jonestown in March 1978 to be disciplined for an extramarital affair he had conducted in the Bay Area. Speaking directly into the microphone, Fortson explained:

> … we've come to a decision that we would rather die than to live on this earth because there is nowhere else we can go. There is nowhere else that would suit the purposes of the beautiful teachings and the life that we have that we built here in Jonestown. So, we would rather commit a revolutionary suicide, and if the world's in question about why we took our lives or why we took our babies' or our seniors' lives, this is why: We don't want to be involved with the mess that's going on in this world…[652]

Or, as Helen Swinney testified:

> We've debated this suicide for many, many hours here tonight and I have made up my mind that this is the way I prefer going, because I have been in this group for twenty years now and … we finally came to this country hoping that we'd have a beautiful life for our children and our seniors, and our relatives will not leave us alone, and I am sick and tired of it.[653]

And in the words of Temple lawyer Gene Chaikin, who had defected and subsequently returned to the community in early 1978,

> And rather than see ourselves destroyed, rather than see our movement cut up piecemeal, rather than seeing those goals that we all cherish fall before our eyes, we have – and myself, I have – decided that it would be better for us to take our own lives as an illustration and a thought for others, so that they might know of our commitment and our deep belief in our ideals.[654]

Edith Roller's statement is particularly interesting, because whilst her statement is preserved on tape, so too are her reflections on the evening preserved in her journals. First introducing herself, Roller describes her distress at the "poverty and the discrimination" faced by "people in the underdeveloped areas of the world, and among the black people of our own nation and other minorities." Having joined Peoples Temple to participate in a "real society of egalitarian justice and love," she explains, the community has been impeded by

> … the powerful capitalist society around us, and I want to particularly mention the press which never gives us our – our words are not heard… I'm glad that my death will mean something. I hope it will be an inspiration to all people that fight for freedom all over the world.[655]

[652] FBI Audiotape Q245 (13 May 1978).
[653] FBI Audiotape Q245.
[654] FBI Audiotape Q245.
[655] FBI Audiotape Q245.

Although Roller's words are concise and confident, her journal entry reveals a far more complicated internal picture than the Tape alone suggests. "Statements were made on tape so as to attempt to reach the world's press as to the reasons we resorted to suicide. I participated in this because I intended to assent to whatever decision was made, and I felt it important to encourage other anti-fascists throughout the world, although I did not approve of the action."[656] For Roller, solidarity was more important than her personal feelings regarding an act of collective suicide – but the repeated White Night crisis situations seemed to influence her feelings toward death itself as she ruminated and considered the situation she found herself within. In her entry for 16 May 1978, Roller recorded that

> I had done much thinking during the night. Serious world events and our own threatened situation, added to the danger that we may lose Jim, made me do much pondering. I decided to base class activities on what I felt. Emphasis was on both plight of the oppressed and on death.[657]

For Jonestown's residents, the concept of revolutionary suicide was increasingly practiced even outside of White Night scenarios, and residents were encouraged to reflect on the concept both in pensive thought and through writing. A large body of documents recovered by the FBI also attest to the importance of textual practices in instantiating the correct disposition among residents and allowing for these written responses to be analysed by those in positions of leadership. One such series of documents collected by the FBI and collated into a folder entitled "Statements of Commitment to Death," contain over four hundred responses to the proposition "What I Would Do If There Was a Final White Night."[658] As Mary M. Maaga noted in her analysis of these documents, "Willingness to die fighting for Jonestown or by 'revolutionary suicide' or by exacting revenge against 'the traitors' was affirmed over and over again by the writers."[659] Taken as instances of written emotives, it is entirely plausible that – more than simple loyalty tests – these written exams helped to mobilise the correct emotional orientation through the very act of writing itself.

The larger document within this collection contains four hundred responses to the prompt, which were seemingly handwritten by respondents and then typed up by one Rita Jeanette Tupper (1933-1978), a 45-year-old Temple member from Iowa who, in Jonestown, began going by the name

[656] Edith Roller Journals (13 May 1978). *Alternative Considerations.*
[657] Edith Roller Journals, 16 May 1978). *Alternative Considerations.*
[658] Statements of Commitment to Death, FBI RYMUR 89-4286-C-5.
[659] Maaga, *Hearing the Voices*, p. 108.

Rita Lenin. The first answer provided by Helen Snell simply read, "I want to die a revolutionary death." Another answer written by one Lucille Taylor (1898-1978), who at this point was 80 years old, reads

> I don't mind dying. I want to fight for this land and also die for it. I sure don't want to go alone. I want to take some of the traitors with me as many as possible. Tie a bomb on me and let me walk or run into them, or revolutionary suicide.[660]

Whilst many answers affirm an absolute commitment to revolutionary suicide, there are a number that suggest alternative courses of action instead. Take, for example, the response of Edith Roller:

> Would like to teach, and write. Write about people I have known in our country, and cause… Want to do more to give children the love they need. Want to plant rows of vegetables. I would like to raise a kitten.
> I am willing to die if this can't be. If the future is to be denied to us or if it is necessary to save us, I'd be glad to give my life. If there is some way I can better serve dying than by living, please tell me and I will go.[661]

Roller's first commitment is to life, but only if that life becomes impossible does she accept the necessity of death. Roller's response is entirely untypical in the array of answers given by the respondents, with the exception of very few. Carl Hall, a 74-year-old resident from Los Angeles, simply wrote "I have not made any plans as far as dying." His response was earmarked by rows of asterisks on either side, indicating that Tupper saw this response as requiring special attention.[662]

Of course, these statements should not be taken at face value. Residents in Jonestown were aware what the "correct" responses were, and they were equally aware of the discipline or catharsis that an incorrect response would bring. With that said, these documents might better be viewed as opportunities for emotional practice through the use of textual emotives; encouraging residents to navigate the complex feelings they had around death and, on the one hand, potentially "deep act" the correct repertoire, or, on the other, "surface act" the expected emotions with the related emotives.[663] As with other emotional practices and the use of emotives both written and verbal, the most common outcome of emotion claims tend to be confirmation and intensification, although they can just as easily result in disconfirmation or attenuation of one's emotional understanding.[664]

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[660] What I Would Do If There Was a Final White Night, RYMUR 89-4286-C-5-a-6. *Alternative Considerations.*
[661] What I Would Do, RYMUR 89-4286-C-5-a-8. *Alternative Considerations.*
[662] What I Would Do, RYMUR 89-4285-C-5-a-13. *Alternative Considerations.*
[663] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart.*
[664] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, p. 116.

Other textual documents recovered in the wake of November 1978 also testify to the complex emotions revolutionary suicide inspired even among its most eager participants in the leadership. Pamela Bradshaw, in an undated letter written to Jones, expressed her dissatisfaction at a prior White Night that did not result in a revolutionary, suicidal action:

> I'd like to express my feeling toward our decision last night. Frankly, I was very disappointed that we decided to live. I know I'm very selfish but I was getting very impatient at the debate over the whole thing. I wanted to do it right away. Especially when a blood bath is a certain reality – I voted to die now and will not have the responsibility of seeing our children go through the hell of battle or hear their screams. Again I'm being selfish but it's not death that I fear … its living … I do not want to live anymore![665]

Or, in an undated memo written by Annie Moore, Jones' personal nurse and confidant, and sister to Carolyn Moore, Jonestown's second-in-command, the practicalities of revolutionary suicide are discussed in a troubling manner:

> I started out for revolutionary suicide, almost switched to fighting but stick to suicide now. One main reason is that even though we have made arrangements for the children if we fight there is no guarantee that at the last hour to destruct, it would not be so late that the enemy would not be parading amongst our buildings searching for anyone left and find us with few of our children dead. … I never thought people would line up to be killed but actually think a select group would have to kill the majority of the people secretly without the people knowing it. … So I am basically cynical about how far you can trust our people. The main reason for suicide – to assure safety to the children and from the others standpoint of history – it would go down better and might stir others to become socialists or more active – such a drastic action as suicide. … Also I think what a slap in the face to fascists it would be to take our own lives before they could have the pleasure of it.[666]

Annie's pragmatic discussion of revolutionary suicide, including the murder of children and the value of the action as revenge against the Temple's enemies, reveals the level of thought and consideration that revolutionary suicide was given by certain leaders within the community.

A further memo written by Phyllis Chaikin, a 39-year-old woman, contains a similar discussion of revolutionary suicide and a proposal to Jones for how such an event could actually be arranged. Arguing that affirming words of revolutionaries of the past be read to Jonestown's residents, Chaikin suggests that the community gather "in the pavilion surrounded with highly trusted security with guns. … People will be escorted to a place of dying by a strong personality … who is loving, support[ive], but not sympathetic." Following this, Chaikin discusses how the individuals would have

[665] Pamela Bradshaw Statement of Commitment to Death, RYMUR C-5-a-3 – 3a. *Alternative Considerations.*
[666] Annie Moore Memo to Jim Jones, RYMUR 89-4286-EE-1-M-77 – EE-1-M-80. *Alternative Considerations.*

to be shot in the head, and subsequently have their throats slit to ensure death. Perhaps most hauntingly, however, Chaikin concludes her memo with the following admission:

> The idea sickens me. When I've been on the line in the past and thought I would be fighting I felt exhilarated. Though I [am] nothing great with a cutlass, I knew I could do something to divert the enemy or add some jobs, or give medical help to a fellow fighter ... There is nothing exhilarating about this plan. It is horrible, but it is safe.[667]

Admitting that her plan for revolutionary suicide aroused feelings of disgust within her, and how alternative plans – such as a final stand against potential invaders – were far more exhilarating, Chaikin finally concedes that the notion of revolutionary suicide is horrible but safe. From Chaikin's perspective, the negative emotions aroused by such a plan were navigated by a pragmatic approach to what was increasingly being discussed as an inevitability – the collective death of the community, by their own hands or those of the enemy.

The depth of planning Jonestown's final act is both haunting and remarkable, with numerous individuals within the leadership team directly contributing to its realisation. A memo written in the spring of 1978 by Jonestown's doctor, Lawrence Schacht, details his attempts to find a suitable poison. The memo begins with his finding that "Cyanide is one of the most rapidly acting poisons," and thus seems suitable for the act of revolutionary suicide. Somewhat devoid of personal feeling, the memo largely restricts itself to a discussion of the viability of cyanide as the tool through which revolutionary suicide could be enacted.[668] In a letter written to Jones by Carolyn Moore Layton, Layton concedes that there are a number of difficulties faced by Jonestown regarding an act of revolutionary suicide:

> I think we concluded before that (1) there is no good, sure way to do this, (2) a number of people would rather sell out and denounce us than die, (3) some young people who would not mind dying for some tangible ideal cannot reconcile themselves to planning their demise.[669]

As Layton noted, however,

> Perhaps planning is the answer to all this – maybe there is a practical way all this can be arranged. I wish I knew because there are things I would and should burn and things which should be kept if we do choose death. I guess I

[667] Phyllis Chaikin Argues for Revolutionary Suicide, RYMUR 89-4286-EE-1-C-28b – EE-1-C-28e. *Alternative Considerations.*
[668] Larry Schacht on Cyanide, RYMUR 89-4286-EE-1-S-55 – EE-1-S-56. *Alternative Considerations.*
[669] Analysis of Future Prospects, a Memo from Carolyn Moore Layton (n.d.) RYMUR-89-4286-X-e-32a – X-3-32e. *Alternative Considerations.*

> am so anal that I would like to have everything all organised before I die including what I would like people to come along and find about you and the organization after we are gone.[670]

That death was a very real possibility – indeed a forthcoming reality – that required planning and consideration among Jonestown's leadership provides us with a glimpse into the emotional weight such a decision was given. Throughout the winter of 1977 and into the autumn of 1978, revolutionary suicide was becoming a very real possibility; and as the conflict between the Temple and the Concerned Relatives developed, that possibility became increasingly likely.

When was the decision to commit revolutionary suicide taken? No simple answer to that question exists; but the answer would likely fall somewhere around the time that serious planning began, including the ordering of poisonous materials. This would indicate that from the Spring of 1978, revolutionary suicide was becoming less a matter of *if* and more a matter of *when*. The parameters of *when* were decided by two key events in November 1978: the visit of Congressman Ryan on 17 November, and his assassination the following day.

18 November 1978: The Last Day of Peoples Temple.

Although the concept of revolutionary suicide had been discussed, practiced, planned, and envisioned for some months before November 1978, the visit of Congressman Ryan provided the context for such an act to finally occur and his assassination by members of Jonestown's security team provided the catalyst. With the Congressman and four others laying dead at the nearby airstrip at Port Kaituma, Jonestown began its final, haunting act. With the death of the congressman, Jonestown's leadership had ensured that the community could no longer continue to function; it would be dismantled one way or another. As Hall has noted, "the strong likelihood that Jones ordered the murders at the airstrip serves as an index of how far the leaders of Jonestown were willing to go to stage the circumstances wherein they would choose death."[671]

Beginning at about 5:00pm on 18 November 1978, the residents of Jonestown were gathered beneath the community's central wooden pavilion whilst Jones began orating to the crowd. Informing his audience that there was now no other option and that the Congressman would soon be dead, large

[670] Analysis of Future Prospects. *Alternative Considerations.*
[671] Hall, *Gone From the Promised Land*, p. 301.

vats of potassium cyanide and tranquilisers were brought to the pavilion and mixed with a cheap fruit punch powder (not Kool Aid, as typically reported, but Flavor Aid). First the potion was given to the community's three hundred children, to ensure the participation of their parents, who went next. Seniors were either given the deadly mixture or injected in their beds, whilst Jonestown's willing adult population formed an orderly queue and said their goodbyes to one another. Those who resisted were held down by security members and either forced to ingest the poison or injected via syringe. Jonestown's leaders were the last to die.

Much of what we know about the final hours of the Jonestown community have been gleamed from the last Tape produced by the community, FBI Audiotape Q042 or the "Death Tape." In part, this tape was a collective suicide note, the final oratory of Jim Jones replete with the testimony of members and the cries of the children. What this tape reveals, however, is that the events of 18 November 1978 were anything but homogenous. Whilst some residents eagerly testified their commitment to revolutionary suicide, others resisted; whilst some rejoiced and gave gratitudes and thanks to Jones, others cried, sobbed, and fought back. The emotional standards laid out by Jones and the leadership over the previous year in Jonestown were met by some, but not by others; the practices that Jones relied on to maintain emotional congruence were deployed with a faltering success rate.

The tape begins with Jones appealing to the one key emotion that had united Peoples Temple in their collective efforts: love. "How I have loved you," Jones orated to the crowd, "How very much I have tried my best to give you the good life. In spite of all that I've tried, a handful of our people, with their lies, have made our life impossible."[672] Jones' rhetoric is replete with expressions of urgency, and from the outset he informs the community that they were "sitting here waiting on a powder keg." Informing the congregation that the Congressman will shortly be dead, Jones suggests that the community will soon be facing a violent invasion as revenge for the assassination of Leo J. Ryan: "we better now have any of our children left when it's over, 'cause they'll parachute in here on us." The final solution, Jones suggests, is revolutionary suicide:

[672] FBI Audiotape Q042.

> My opinion is that we be kind to children and be kind to seniors and take the potion like they used to take in ancient Greece, and step over quietly because we are not committing suicide – it's a revolutionary act.[673]

Jones' analogy of the Ancient Greek potion here is an interesting one. By comparing the collective suicides of Jonestown's community to the poisons drank by condemned prisoners – most famously, as drank by the philosopher Socrates – Jones frames this final act as a judge passing down a sentence upon the charged. Each member of the Temple, by extension, had been judged on the basis of their membership in the community, and like Socrates, they were handed a poison to remove them from the world.

The first casualties in Jonestown were the children – 304 young minds beneath the age of 18. Whilst the killing of children had been considered as a way to ensure the complicity of their parents, Jones frames the deaths of the children as an act of kindness, compassion, or love. Chidester describes the murder of children from the Temple's perspective as a "a redemptive act," reliant upon love as a primary frame. In Chidester's words,

> Jim Jones insisted that truly loving people would kill their children before allowing them to be taken back to America to be tortured, brainwashed, or even killed by a society he regarded as fascist.[674]

Many of Jonestown's parents took this message to heart. It was a message which had been drilled and practiced over the preceding year across dozens of White Night crises, a message which encouraged parents to kill their children as a final act of love, rather than allow them to be tortured or brainwashed by agents of American capitalism.

Survivor Odell Rhodes was sat in the front row of the pavilion when the deaths began. He noted that some parents were eager to sacrifice their children with unflinching commitment:

> Without being asked a young mother, Ruletta Paul, sitting in the front row with her infant child, stands up and walks up to the table. … "She just poured it down the baby's throat. And then she took the rest herself. It didn't take them right away. She had time to walk outside. I watched her go, and then the next woman, Michelle Wilson, she came up with her baby and did the same thing." [675]

[673] FBI Audiotape Q042.
[674] Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, p. xxii.
[675] Feinsod, *Awake in a Nightmare,* p. 195.

Alongside the commitment and determination demonstrated by these two mothers in this horrifying act were a number of testimonies given by other adult members of the community, who each expressed agreement with Jones that the murder of children was an act of mercy:

> I'd rather see them lay like that than to see them have to die like to the Jews did… and I appreciate the way our children our going because, like Dad said, when they came in, what they're going to do to our children, they're going to massacre our children. And also, the ones they take captive, they're gonna just let them grow up and be dummies, just like they want them to be, and not grow up to be a person like the one and only Jim Jones.[676]

Or, in the words of another unidentified man,

> I think you people out here should think about how your relatives was and be glad about – that the children are being to rest and all I can say is that I thank Dad for making me strong to stand with it all and make me ready for it.[677]

In the final interpretation of an unidentified woman toward the end of the tape,

> Everything we could have ever done – most loving thing all of us could have done, and it's been a pleasure walking with all of you in this revolutionary struggle.[678]

Although it is difficult to conceptualise the murder of children as a redemptive act, as an act of love, or a kind of compassionate murder, this is how willing individuals on 18 November understand their actions.

Once the children began to die, however, it is clear that many beneath the pavilion struggled to understand the horror that was unfolding before them. Amidst the screams of the children heard on Tape Q042 are the repeated calls of Jones and those in the leadership team attempting to regulate the increasingly chaotic emotions of those in attendance. At one point in the tape, Jones can be heard pleading with an unidentified mother:

> Mother, mother, mother, mother, mother please, mother, please, please, please – don't, don't do this, don't do this. Lay down your life with your child, but don't do this.[679]

It was not only Jones involved in the regulation of divergent emotions, however. One woman, Irene Edwards, a 57-year-old grandmother from Alabama, took it upon herself to chastise those beneath the pavilion who were crying, sobbing, or otherwise hysterical:

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[676] FBI Audiotape Q042.
[677] FBI Audiotape Q042..
[678] FBI Audiotape Q042.
[679] FBI Audiotape Q042.

> I just want to say something for everyone that I see that is standing around or crying. This is nothing to cry about. This is something we could all rejoice about. We could be happy about this. They always told us that we could cry when you're coming into this world. So, we're leaving it, and we're leaving it peaceful. I think we should be happy about this. … I'm looking at so many people crying. I wish you would not cry. And just thank Father.[680]

Edwards' comments were met with applause from the crowd, the willing among Jonestown's revolutionaries supporting her statement. At the final hour, revolutionary suicide was something that people within Jonestown genuinely believed to be a kindness, something to be happy about. Above all, it signalled release and departure from a cold, cruel world and the hysteria and daily crises that characterised Jonestown's final months.

Although revolutionary suicide found many eager participants among Jonestown's residents, the final act found also found resistance. Many of Jonestown's older children resisted the poison as best they could. For example, in the eyewitness testimony of survivor Stanley Clayton, Clayton described the death of twelve-year-old Julie Ann Runnels

> Who, he said, "downright refused to take the poison." She was grabbed and held by Paulette Jackson, her court-appointed guardian, who pulled her head back while Nurse Moore tried to pour the potion into her mouth. The girl spat it out five times. The two women then beat her and again attempted to get the cyanide into her. This time they covered her mouth and nose with their hands so that she could not breathe, forcing her at least to swallow the liquid.[681]

Furthermore, in FBI Audiotape Q042, we can hear Jones imploring the adults in the crowd to stop "exciting" the children, begging for the Jonestown's adults to meet the emotional standards of the community so as to quell the mounting hysteria of the final act:

> If you quit telling them they're dying – if you adults would stop some of this nonsense. Adults, adults, adults. I call on you to stop this nonsense. I call on you to quit exciting your children when all they're doing is going to a quiet rest. I call on you to stop this now if you have any respect at all. Are we black, proud, and socialist, or what are we? Now stop this nonsense. Don't carry this on anymore. You're exciting your children.[682]

Throughout the Tape, only one adult directly challenges Jones' authority and decision on the matter: Christine Miller. A 60-year-old mother and grandmother from Brownsville, Texas, Miller asks Jones if it was "too late for Russia" – an alternative that Jones had poised in earlier White Nights. Jones allows Miller to talk, but clarifies that Russia is no longer an option: "They've gone out with the

[680] FBI Audiotape Q042.
[681] Kenneth Wooden, *The Children of Jonestown*, p. 190.
[682] FBI Audiotape Q042.

guns and it's too late. And once we kill anybody, at least." Miller does not accept this answer, instead arguing that an attempt at airlifting to Russia should be made, a suggestion which Jones once again rejects. "Do you think Russia's going to want us with all this stigma?" Jones can be heard asking Miller, to which the stoic grandmother replied: "Well, I don't see it like that. I mean, I feel like as long as there's life, there's hope. That's my faith."[683] Citing Ecclesiastes 9:3-5, Miller retained her religious convictions under the very end.

The example of Christine Miller is particularly poignant because it reveals the ways in which one individual attempted to avert disaster whilst remaining in congruence with the emotional framework that had developed in Jonestown over the previous year. Asserting the importance of hope, Miller was evoking an emotion that had always been central to Peoples Temple and had become even more fundamental in Jonestown as the situation within the community had deteriorated. Yet as Miller continues to argue, the crowd grows increasingly hostile towards her: individuals can be heard shouting at her and chastising her. Whilst operating within the established framework for feeling that had bound Peoples Temple together, that same framework was turning against her in the form of a vicious crowd. Navigating her personal desire to live and her personal feelings amidst the expectations and standards of the community, Miller is careful to emphasise that she was not afraid of death:

> Miller: I said I'm not afraid to die.
>
> Jones: I don't think you are.
>
> Miller: But I look at the babies and I think they deserve to live, you know?
>
> Jones: I agree. But they also deserve much more; they deserve peace.[684]

Even as Miller attempted to avert the oncoming disaster, she was careful to conform with the emotional standards expected of the community. Despite her cautious use of emotives, her careful deployment of hope and her disavowal of fear in the face of death, other individuals within the crowd can be heard shouting at Miller and attempting to quiet her. Miller can be heard asking Jones to ensure that a different woman be made to sit and listen to Miller talking: "Would you make her sit down and

[683] FBI Audiotape Q042.
[684] FBI Audiotape Q042.

let me talk while I'm on the floor or let her talk?" she asks Jones. Although we cannot be sure what exactly transpired here, the eyewitness account of survivor Odell Rhodes suggests that the woman in question was a senior who was, at this point, attempting to attack Christine Miller:

> People are screaming, shouting, some of them struggling to reach Christine Miller and pull her away from the microphone. One elderly woman Odell Rhodes remembers, in particular, clawing frantically at the air, as someone held her around the waist, trying to scratch out Christine Miller's eyes.[685]

Although Miller bravely attempted to spare the children, she was unable to convince Jones or those in the crowd. Shouted down by her peers and quietened into her chair Miller acquiesced, informing Jones that she had said all she had to say. Miller's body would be one of hundreds recovered from around Jonestown's pavilion in the coming days.

For some residents, however, resistance took the form of flight. Odell Rhodes remembered that when the children began to die, he made the decision to save his own life by escaping the horror:

> That's when I got up. Everybody's starting to line up, so they're all moving around and nobody's going to think about me moving too. … Well I'm not about to do it. I mean, I would have fought for Jonestown, no questions asked, but to kill myself -w hat good's that going to do? The truth is, if you get right down to it, as much as I loved Jones for taking me off the streets, at that moment, right then, I went back to the streets.[686]

For others, the decision to resist this moment had been in motion for some time. Earlier that morning, 11 individuals had fled Jonestown under the premise of going on a group picnic – an escape planned by one Richard Clark some months prior. This group included Leslie Wagner-Wilson and her 3-year-old son Jakari, who recalled that on the morning of the 18th "there was a strain in the air. Ther atmosphere had changed and it was charged with something different. A stillness accompanied by something else."[687] When told that the picnic-plan would be happening that morning, Wilson took the very first opportunity she had to escape into the jungle with her child.

For Hyacinth Thrash, the decision to resist occurred without her knowledge of what had actually transpired. Refusing the call to the pavilion, Thrash recalled that she had said to her sister that Jones would have to drag her to the pavilion himself. Later that evening, when she heard the first shooting (it is unknown which gunshot Thrash heard, but it was likely either a celebration shot or the

[685] Feinsod, *Awake in a Nightmare*, p. 193.
[686] Feinsod, *Awake in a Nightmare*, p. 196.
[687] Leslie Wagner-Wilson, *Slavery of Faith*, p. 98.

bullet that killed Jim Jones) she "hid under the bed."[688] Thrash, having no desire to die, hid rather than join the community in the act of revolutionary suicide.

In the wake of 18 November, only three suicide notes would be recovered from the scene of the tragedy. Two were written by individuals in leadership positions, Richard Tropp and Annie Moore, whilst the third was written by one Tish Leroy, whose note was found in the deceased Jones' breast pocket. All three letters reveal the depth and power of the conflicting emotions experienced by the authors, but each places a different emphasis on different kinds of feelings. As three individual examples, these letters speak to the variety of emotional responses the final act of revolutionary suicide inspired among those who willingly gave their lives in this tragic act.

Richard Tropp's suicide letter, titled "The Last Day of Peoples Temple," is a powerful and evocative exploration of feeling written as the suicides proceeded. Tropp began his letter with the following injunction to history,

> Collect all the tapes, all the writing, all the history. The story of this movement, this action, must be examined over and over. It must be understood in all of its incredible dimensions. Words fail. We have pledged our lives to this great cause. We are proud to have something to die for. We do not fear death. We hope that the world will someday realize the ideals of brotherhood, justice, and equality that Jim Jones has lived and died for. We have all chosen to die for this cause.[689]

In the above quote, as throughout the remainder of the letter, Tropp's use of emotives are all plural. It was not only his personal feelings that Tropp was writing about, but his perception of the feelings of the community. Evoking pride, rejecting fear, and naming hope, Tropp struck upon the core complex of emotions that were standardised as responses to revolutionary suicide, standards which had been practiced and instantiated on dozens of occasions throughout the preceding months.

For Tropp, however, the final act was not one that had been chosen voluntarily. Rather, the haunting act which unfolded around him was a response to the assassination of the Congressman, which was outside of the community's locus of control: "Their actions have left us no alternative, and rather than see this cause decimated, we have chosen to give our lives. We are proud of this choice." Once again rejecting the desire to die as a motivator for the act, Tropp goes on to describe how the

[688] Thrash, *Onliest One Alive*, p. 110.
[689] Richard Tropp, "Richard Tropp's Last Letter" (18 November 1978). RYMUR 89-4286-X-1-a-54. *Alternative Considerations.*

community "did not want this kind of ending – we wanted to live, to shine, to bring light to a world that was dying for a little bit of love."[690] Using this letter as a way of navigating the pain of the final moment, Tropp appealed to the dream that had united Peoples Temple in their shared quest for a better life – a dream which now lay dead with those who had dreamed it.

As an eyewitness account to the suicides, Tropp's final letter also describes his perception of the community's feelings. "These are a beautiful people, a brave people, not afraid," Tropp wrote,

> There is quiet as we leave this world. The sky is grey. People file slowly and take the somewhat bitter drink. Many more must drink. Our destiny. It is sad that we could not let our light shine in truth, unclouded by the demons of accident, circumstance, miscalculation, error that was not our intent, beyond our intent. … People hugging each other, embracing, we are hurrying – we do not want to be captured. We want to bear witness at once.[691]

What the above quotation reveals is not that the residents of Jonestown fearlessly faced death; rather, it suggests only that Tropp considered it important that they be described as such. Of course, Tropp does not mention crying, screaming, or the chaos that can be heard unfolding on FBI Audiotape Q042. Nor does Tropp make any mention of the children, who likely all lay dead by the time he began to write his note. What Tropp's letter represents is an attempt to finalise revolutionary suicide as a democratic, emotionally homogenous action.

The second suicide letter recovered from the scene was written by Annie Moore, personal nurse to Jones and sister to Carolyn Moore Layton, Jonestown's second-in-command.[692] Moore's suicide letter is starkly different in emotional tone than Tropp's. Where Tropp emphasised pride, hope, and pain, Moore's letter evokes anger and bitterness as the primary feelings described. "I am 24 years of age right now and don't expect to live through the end of this book," Moore penned, before going on to describe her feelings in no uncertain terms:

> I am at a point right now so embittered against the world that I don't know why I am writing this. Someone who finds it will believe I am crazy or believe in the barbed wire that does NOT exist in Jonestown.[693]

Going on to describe what Moore saw as the "truth" about Jonestown, she wrote:

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[690] Tropp, "Last Letter." *Alternative Considerations.*
[691] Tropp, "Last Letter." Alternative Considerations.
[692] Annie Moore, "Annie Moore's Last Letter" (18 November 1978). RYMUR 89-4286-1894. *Alternative Considerations.*
[693] Moore, "Last Letter." *Alternative Considerations.*

> Where can I begin – JONESTOWN – the most peaceful, loving community that ever existed, JIM JONES – the one who made this paradise possible, much to the contrary of the lies stated about Jim Jones being a power-hungry sadistic, mean person who thought he was God – of all things.[694]

Although much of the letter then speaks about the personal virtues of Jones, who by this point lay dead in the pavilion by single gunshot to the head, Moore goes on to describe the emotions that Jonestown inspired within her and among the believers in the community:

> What a beautiful place this was. The children loved the jungle, learned about animals and plants. There were no cars to run over them; no child-molesters to molest them; nobody to hurt them. They were the freest, most intelligent children I had ever known.
> Seniors had dignity. They had whatever they wanted – a plot of land for a garden. Seniors were treated with respect – something they never had in the United States. A rare few were sick, and when they were, they were given the best medical care.[695]

Whilst the vast majority of the note was written in blue ink, the final line was written with black ink, indicating that it had been added at a later point – likely shortly before Annie Moore shot herself in Jones' cabin, away from the main pavilion as one of the very last to die. The last line simply read, "We died because you would not let us live in peace! Annie Moore."[696]

In contrast to the final letter of Richard Tropp, Moore diagnosed the cause of death of the community as a reaction to the harassment that they perceived the Concerned Relatives, the media, and the United States government had subjected them to. For Annie Moore, death was a reactionary response to a life of constant harassment, the blame of which lay at the feet of Jonestown's defectors and the Concerned Relatives above all.

The final suicide letter recovered from Jonestown was written by Laetitia (Tish) LeRoy, a 48-year-old woman who was a member of Jonestown's inner circle and a close confidant of Jones. Short enough to recount in its entirety, Tish LeRoy's Last Words take the form of a eulogy written directly to Jones:

> Dad
>
> I see no way out – I agree with your decision – I fear only that without you the world may not make it to communism – Tish. For my part – I am more than tired of this wretched, merciless planet & the hell it holds for so many masses of beautiful people – Thank you for the only life I've known.[697]

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[694] Moore, "Last Letter." *Alternative Considerations*.
[695] Moore, "Last Letter." *Alternative Considerations*.
[696] Moore, "Last Letter." *Alternative Considerations.*
[697] Note from Tish Leroy, RYMUR 89-4286-484 – RYMUR 89-4286-998. *Alternative Considerations.*

In LeRoy's note, as in Moore's, death was articulated as a release from the bitter existence of life. Revolutionary suicide promised relief from the "wretched, merciless" earth, with the end of the note only touching upon gratitude for the life LeRoy had lived and her loyalty for Jones to the very end.

The suicide letters recovered from Jonestown reveal the diversity of feelings the final act of revolutionary suicide inspired among Jonestown's leaders. Where Tropp emphasised that the community did not want to die, both Moore and LeRoy express complete agreement to the final act, and both describe revolutionary suicide as a form of emotional release from the pains of existence in a hostile world. Considered as textual objects rooted in the practice of writing, these letters should be regarded as efforts of emotional navigation, written by these three individuals in an attempt to understand their feelings and communicate them to others.

The final act of revolutionary suicide that unfolded in Jonestown on 18 November 1978 was by no means an emotionally homogenous event. It inspired a wide variety of intense emotions among its participants, observers, and those who resisted, inspiring pride, relief, anger, grief, pain, hope, fear, and love in mixed amounts. Although recorded as an attempt to define the final legacy of the community, FBI Audiotape Q042 in fact reveals the tension between emotional standards and emotional experience that lay at the heart of revolutionary suicide; a tension that Jones and the leadership of Jonestown had attempted to overcome through repeated practice across dozens of White Nights over the preceding year.

The consensus among scholars today is that a variety of internal and external factors contributed to the outbreak of violence on 18 November 1978. Whilst scholars have argued for the role of charismatic authority, the conflict between the Temple and the Concerned Relatives, and the influence of isolation upon the community, this thesis represents the first effort in exploring how emotions contributed to the tragedy that unfolded in Jonestown, Guyana.

Conclusions

This thesis set out to produce an emotional history of Peoples Temple between 1955 and 1978, exploring the role and influence of emotions, feelings, and sentiments across the lifespan of this complicated and tragic movement. It has reconstructed a vision of the emotional framework that suffused Peoples Temple and the ways in which this framework changed and adapted over time, across different spaces, and in different contexts. It has argued that the history of Peoples Temple reflects a communal pursuit of love; a pursuit which attracted thousands of individuals from a diverse cross-section of American society into a unified and coherent movement dedicated to love.

The study began with the birth of Peoples Temple in Indianapolis in 1955. It traced the development of a distinctive theology of love as drawn from Biblical texts and Pentecostal traditions. It argued that the Temple's theology of love represented the emergence and negotiation of new emotional standards drawn from these sources and applied to the modern contexts of racism, segregation, and oppression as experienced by Temple members in Indiana and more broadly by African American citizens across the United States. It explored the emotional basis of the charismatic relationship as this relationship emerged in Indianapolis between Jones and his congregation, before providing a brief comparative analysis between Jim Jones and Father Divine. In doing so, it demonstrated the ways in which the Temple's emotional framework supported its authority structure by conferring upon Jones the authority to define and redefine the emotional standards and expectations of the community. Furthermore, this thesis presented an original line of analysis suggesting that the New Thought Movement was an emotionological movement; that is, it explicitly provided its practitioners with new standards of feeling and new practices to achieve these standards.

This thesis also provided an in-depth analysis of the Californian chapter of Peoples Temple's history, between 1965 and 1977. It demonstrated that Christian love underwent a redefinition within the Temple, moving from a purely religious emotional standard toward a standard with important political implications. It analysed Jones' concept of apostolic socialism as a reflection of this new emotional standard, and clarified the ways this love was expected to be mobilised through practice. It explored the intimate link between the Temple's emotional framework and its economic structures,

demonstrating the importance of love to the financial practices found within the organisation. This thesis also presented an analysis of the divergent public and private character of Peoples Temple by exploring the way the community's emotional framework was manifest in different spaces. It has explored the role of emotion within the worship setting as well as the disciplinary setting, underscoring the importance of emotional standards and practice across both environments.

Finally, this thesis explored the Temple's pursuit of love once the movement migrated to Jonestown, Guyana. It has highlighted the important emotional weight attributed to Jonestown as a "Promised Land" or paradise, and suggested the fundamental role played by emotional motivations in the efforts of Jonestown's early pioneers. In exploring the unravelling of Jonestown, this thesis has argued that what some perceived to be a paradise was undone following permanent relocation of Jones to the settlement along with a thousand other individuals. It has argued that Jonestown was undone by Jones, who deliberately manifest an atmosphere of crisis and hysteria in response to both internal pressures and external dynamics. In concluding with an analysis of the concept of revolutionary suicide and the events of 18 November 1978, this thesis makes the final argument that such an action as the mass murders and suicides of Peoples Temple members was not possible without an emotional framework which supported such an action, and the regular practice and instantiation of emotional standards that made it possible.

In doing so, this thesis has drawn attention to an aspect of Peoples Temple's controversial and complex history which has gone largely unexplored within the literature produced on the group: the role of emotions, emotional standards, and emotional practices. It has highlighted, for the first time, the way these emotional standards and practices were intimately related to the authoritative and economic structures of the community. It has provided an original analysis of the way the concept of love, in particular, developed and morphed throughout the Temple's history, being both an object of individual and collective pursuits.

In presenting this case study of the emotional history of Peoples Temple, this thesis has suggested the concept of *emotional frameworks* as a heuristic device and a tool which can prove useful in our analysis of other alternative religious movements. As Douglas Cowan reminds us, alternative religious groups will have different emotional standards and engage with different emotional

practices.[698] By employing emotional frameworks as an analytical device, historians and researchers can better understand the emotional dynamics and motivations that suffuse other alternative religious groups, whilst at the same time better understanding the link between such emotional structures and the authoritative, social, and economic structures found in these groups.

The study of emotions as relating to alternative religious movements appears fruitful, and this thesis has attempted to provide an original example of how such studies might develop in future research. With that said, there remains a great deal of work to be done with specific reference to Peoples Temple and Jonestown. For example, whilst this thesis has provided a qualitative demonstration of the shifting emotional framework of Peoples Temple, quantitative research may prove illuminating. What might an analysis of the frequency of emotion words in Jones' sermons reveal? The answer remains available to future scholars interested in religion, emotions, and Peoples Temple.

Whilst this thesis began as an investigation of a "brainwashed cult," it soon developed into a sympathetic reading of a contentious and complex religious community who attempted to envision a new world and a new order guided by the application of love to social and political organisation. Drawn together from a diverse range of backgrounds, and holding a diverse range of beliefs, the members of Peoples Temple pursued love from Indiana to California, and Guyana. Although this pursuit ended in tragedy, Peoples Temple remains a compelling example of a successful religious and social movement that crafted a remarkable emotional culture that attracted religious believers and political thinkers alike. Building a community around emotion as much as ideology or religion, the leaders of Peoples Temple were able to unite thousands of individuals in the pursuit of freedom, happiness, and love. Whilst this pursuit ended in tragedy, the lessons remain important for our understanding of new and alternative religious movements.

[698] Cowan, "New Religious Movements."

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