PEOPLES TEMPLE

OF THE
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

Jim Jones,
Pastor

"For I was an hungered
and ye gave me meat;
I was thirsty
and ye gave me drink;
I was a stranger
and ye took me in;
Naked, and ye clothed me;
I was sick and ye visited me;
I was in prison,
and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous
Answer him, saying,

When saw we thee an hungered
And fed thee?
Or thirsty,
And gave thee drink?
When saw we thee a stranger
And took thee in?
Or naked, and clothed thee
Or when saw we thee sick?
Or in prison,
And came unto thee?

"Verily I say unto you,
Inasmuch as ye have done it
Unto one of the least of these...
...Ye have done it unto me"

Matthew 25:35-40

National Council of Churches
Committee on Church and Civil Rights
475 Riverside Drive
New York, N.Y.
Attention: Mr. Dean Kelley

Dear Mr. Kelley:

I am writing to you on the recommendation of Mr. Daniel Sheehan who has recently been appointed to the Commission on Church and Civil Rights. Mr. Sheehan is someone with whom members of our church have conversed on numerous occasions in relation to the harassment we have received most recently at the hand of the IRS.

Peoples Temple Christian Church, Disciples of Christ denomination, is pastored by Rev. James Jones. Our headquarters are in San Francisco, California, though the church was founded in Indianapolis, Indiana. From 1967 to approximately 1976 our church headquarters were in Redwood Valley, a rural town in California's Redwood Region just north of Ukiah. Currently there are 1500 members of Peoples Temple living and working in Guyana, South America, at our Temple Agricultural and Medical Mission in the jungle interior.

In recent months the outlines of a massive conspiracy against Jim Jones and Peoples Temple have begun to emerge. The efforts involve U.S. Treasury Department informers, Interpol, paid-off government officials, a host of individuals who have been coerced (and in some cases, blackmailed) into supplying false testimony to various print and electronic media, and now the IRS.

These are some of the concerns we wish to being to your attention. Peoples Temple is no ordinary church, and its minister is no ordinary minister. In our fellowship we have tried to actualize the old Christian ideal of caritas—a kind of living, compassionate force that reaches out from one individual to another, binding people into a community, overcoming the separatenss and egocentricity that are the disease of human society. Through such a basic principle is sought a realization of our collective identity, our essential oneness beyond all seeming differences of race, creed, educational background, culture, individualisms and idiosyncracies that create division, antagonism, fear, mistrust, hatred. Jim Jones has seen the critical factor in this idea of self-overcoming as human service. He has emphasized that the highest service to God or any concept of Diety one may hold can only be measured and determined by one's service to one's fellow human beings. These thoughts are perhaps most eloquently spoken in Matthew 25:35–40, where Jesus makes a judgement of his disciples, finding them guilty of not serving Him because they neglected to serve people who were in desperate need.

Rev. Jones and a large number of our membership have adopted children of all races, lived very modestly, and devoted our lives to breaking down racial barriers and helping poor and destitute persons, youth misdirected into lives of crime and drugs,

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senior citizens who have been discarded and forgotten.

Thousands of people have joined this church, with its enthusiasm, unity, activism, and its emphasis on practical humanitarian concern. Rev. Jones has consistently taught and lived the principles of the earliest Christians, capsulized in the Acts of the Apostles, where it is written that, on the day of Pentecost. "all that believed were together and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need," (Acts 2:44, 45).

Peoples Temple has for years been active in the support of liberation struggles here in the U.S. and abroad. We have assisted Chilean refugees and Native Americans and taken an active part against treatment of the Pendleton 14 and Rev. Chavis. The Temple congregation raised the money in one night ($20,000 bail) for Ka-mook Banks, wife of American Indian Movement leader Dennis Banks, and her child. Our Temple newspaper, the Peoples Forum, has run articles about corruption, injustice, and abuse in practically every area of American society, as well as on the international scene.

And, predictably, the same pattern of persecution against Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X and other outspoken leaders who have cried out against American injustices, is being pursued in the case of Rev. Jones and the Temple congregation. Over the years, Rev. Jones has been made to pay a heavy price for being an apostle of outrage at injustice, and a proponent of thoroughgoing change to bring about a society based on the common good and not just the profit of a few. He has been shot, knifed, poisoned, threatened with death innumerable times. His family members, children and even aged congregants, have been terrorized, beaten up, run off the road, and the church firebombed and on two occasions in San Francisco, burned to the ground by arson. Our church has been infiltrated with informers, provocateurs, and subjected to severe McCarthyistic harassment, bogus investigations, yellow journalism, and malicious and highly publicized lies.

The attacks against Peoples Temple and Rev. Jones have intensified. In 1977, a very well-planned and carefully orchestrated campaign was mounted, using yellow journalism as its front line attack, to attempt to discredit and ultimately terminate the work of Rev. Jones. For the sake of brevity, I will outline the instances of harassment which we have faced over the past 18 months:

- November, 1976: When Mrs. Unita Blackwell Wright (black woman Mayor of Meyersville, Mississippi and fellow traveler with Shirley MacLaine to Peoples Republic of China), came to speak at Peoples Temple, two men were caught spying on the meeting. They were found standing in the narrow corridor beside the Temple with large briefcases, and they fled when they were approached by a curious Temple member. Their license plate traced them to Biloxi, Mississippi, and then to Keesler Air Force Base, where they were confirmed to be high-ranking government employees and electronics experts. Letters from Congressmen got only vague answers from the Department of the Air Force—"The alleged activities are not within the Air Force's investigative jurisdiction. We understand your concern and regret we cannot be of more assistance."
- May, 1977: AIM leader Dennis Banks was offered a "deal", by an individual who stated he was working together with agents of the U.S. Treasury. As verified by Banks' own statement, David Conn tried to blackmail him by suggesting that a serious matter of extradition hanging over his head would go better for him if he would sign a public statement denouncing Jim Jones
- July, 1977: A media attack broke on Rev. Jones and the Temple. We have learned that the barrage of yellow journalism was corroborated by David Conn and George Klineman who approached "various police and governmental agencies as early as November, 1976, offering them witnesses and documents with which to attack the Temple." David Conn,

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in addition, was a close friend of ex-Temple members Deanna and Elmer Mertle who were key figures in the media smear campaign.

- Joseph Mazor, a private investigator, was hired by an undisclosed source to spearhead the attack against the Temple and hired the prestigious public relations firm in San Francisco, Lowry, Russom and Leeper, to help promote his anti-Temple activity by fronting material to the media. Joseph Mazor has a lengthy criminal record including at least eight arrests in three states for bogus checks and fraud charges, six convictions, and several jail and prison terms. The California Adult Authority described him as a "menace to the community." *We have also learned more recently that Mr. Mazor is affiliated with an International Police Congress, many of whose members are in turn affiliated with the infamous International Criminal Police organization, the Nazi-infested INTERPOL.*
- June, 1977: Peoples Temple was implicated by print and electronic media stories of a break-in of the New West magazine office. Rev. Jones called for a full police investigation and it was concluded by the San Francisco Police Department that no break-in ever occured. Yet it was portrayed by the media that Temple members, concerned about an upcoming New West article on the church, had "disturbed the files."
- September, 1977: Temple officials learned from our freight forwarder in Miami that agents of the U.S. Customs Service (U.S. Treasury) had held up a shipment of cargo bound for South America and pulled crates at random for inspection. Temple attorney Charles Garry wrote Customs for at least a statement of fair cause for this action. The response was that the Customs Service did not have to answer inquiries.
- Late in 1977: The Social Security (green) checks of hundreds of senior citizens living in the Temple's Guyana mission were suspended. A document was received by Temple officials which was an interoffice memorandum of the U.S. Postal Service declaring that all SSA checks with a forwarding address of Guyana were to be returned to the Department of H.E.W. After protest letters to H.E.W., Congressmen, and street demonstrations, the Social Security Administration finally rectified the situation and restored the forwarding of checks to their rightful senior recipients.
- November, 1977: Several Temple members were given access to a lengthy document which had originated at INTERPOL. The cover letter to the document carried the name of Louis B. Sims, who is with INTERPOL. The document discussed the same false allegations which the contrived media smears carried against Rev. Jones and the Temple. It stated that no investigations of any allegations made in the press had lead to any convictions, and it confirmed that special observers had been stationed in Houston, New Orleans, and Miami to watch shipments leaving the country for the Temple mission. The "report" also alleges that Jim Jones took part in some sort of demonstration in Guyana during a time period when he was not even in the country. Rev. Jones was pictured as a friend of "black power" organizations who had somehow to be stopped. Louis Sims, incidentally, is the INTERPOL agent who has been largely responsible for campaigns waged against the Church of Scientology in recent years.
- The harassment has been stepped up on Guyana, since the Rev. Jones and a large number of Temple members have gone there to further the agricultural and medical mission. Events include:
  1. Bogus calls to the U.S. and Guyanese ambassadors from the "D.A.", saying the Temple had abducted children.
  2. Other bogus calls went to the Ambassador and several Guyanese officials from the

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"Attorney General". These calls were regarded by the Guyanese government as intrusion into the affairs of a sovereign nation.

3. In August, 1977, a Caucasian man appeared on the Jonestown project who identified himself only as "Guyanese", though his accent wore off as his conversation and questions continued. The nature and content of his questions demonstrated a great deal of knowledge about Temple members and activities, though not one person at Jonestown had ever seen him.
4. Throughout provoking calls and incidents, the name Joseph Mazor has been traced.

– The FCC has just recently decided to pursue a very minor complaint that was registered a year ago against our amateur radio operator. It appears another obvious attempt to cut off our lifeline to the mission. There are no telephones into Jonestown, and the radio is the only means of communication available to carry on the work and support for the people there.

Finally, I wish to bring to your attention the matter of Timothy Stoen, a former member of Peoples Temple and legal counsel for more than 8 years. He has left the Temple fellowship and is now pressuring State Department and Congressional officials in an effort to lay claim to a child that is not his, disrupt the activities of the Temple in Guyana, and instigate—as he said he would do on many occasions if the Temple would not go along with his Trotskyite schemes—and IRS investigation of our church.

The custody issue revolves around a 6-year-old child, John, the son of Rev. Jones and Grace Stoen, Tim's estranged wife. The media have, as expected, glommed onto this story in the delight of misrepresentation and one-sided, malicious gossip. Tim is claiming to the media to be John's father, which he is not. The truth is that he virtually implored Rev. Jones to relate to his wife because she was on the verge of suicide and threatening to divulge her husband's particular personality aberration. Tim, as Grace's own note states, (see enclosed) could not emotionally cope with the discovery of her husband's proclivity to dress in public with women's clothing. Tim was at that time Assistant D.A. of Mendocino County, and Grace threatened to divorce him and publicly state the grounds rather than be made a fool of when she feared he would be discovered. Rev. Jones' counselling for both of them went on for months and months, but Tim was bitterly insistent that the only solution for his intense personal dilemma would be for Rev. Jones, on whom Grace had made repeated sexual demands, to relate to her.

The paternity of John is by no means Rev. Jones' proudest accomplishment, but he is deeply devoted to his son now that he is here. He had the full word and commitment of both Grace and Tim that he would be able to raise his son as the father, which in fact he has. The Jones family has accepted John since infancy as their son and little brother. The child is a virtual duplicate copy of his dad, Jim Jones. It should be noted that in the Treasury approach to Dennis Banks, David Conn informed Dennis that Grace Stoen's child was fathered by Jim Jones.

We thought in the beginning there was something amiss with Tim, not only because of dress patterns; there have been other inconsistencies in his behavior as well. From a painful analysis of events over a period of time, it has become evident that he was using his association with Peoples Temple to foster Trotskyist views, which are by no means an uncommon phenomenon on the landscape of social activism. He recently made a great "to-do" about his supposed "ouster" from Guyana when, in fact, there was no issue about his leaving Guyana at all. But his actions leave us on a sour note when we discovered that several years ago in East Berlin he pulled the same act, making a very loud noise about something that was not even an issue to embarrass the government there. Interestingly enough, all the years he was with the Temple he posed as a "radical" and was always the advocate of extremist measures and solutions to the

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social problems Rev. Jones has consistently dealt with as a committed pacifist. He even stated to us that he had never been in that part of the world (near East Berlin). It pains us to think that this "outraged American" act is a standard part of his repertoire. The vast majority of our members come from deprived circumstances and the bitterness of inner city life; and countless young people who have been rehabilitated from lives of crime, violence and militant views have found in Peoples Temple for the first time an accomodation to the system and a desire to work through it for change. Encouraging constructive direction out of their disillusionment in life has not always been easy. Tim Stoen and some others would have made our people the "pawns" of their terrorist schemes, but their orientation was totally unacceptable to us. He was always wanting to do grandiose things, to tear things down rather than work for constructive development and peaceful social change. We have always believed that human potential can be oriented for good, and have achieved remarkable results; if we have erred it has been on the side of utopian idealism and perhaps been too tolerant of those in our midst like Tim Stoen, who, unlike Rev. Jones and the vast majority of the congregation, would rather curse the darkness than try to light candles of redemption and hope.

Now we see the harassment of various agencies augmented by the IRS inquiry. This is exactly what Tim Stoen threatened he would have done, whip up an IRS investigation of Peoples Temple. We took the initiative ourselves of checking with the IRS, under the Freedom of Information Act, when we learned of Stoen's threats. We asked if the agency had any issue with us, which of course they did not. We have always been very careful and meticulously honest. Members of the congregation, for instance, have never taken more than 10% deduction, though they may have given much more. As a matter of fact, Temple programs for delinquent youth and for the care of senior citizens over the years have saved the taxpayers in SSI, MediCal, Medicare, and law enforcement costs for youths formerly into crime, drugs, and lives either already in or bound for prison. Yet, suddenly, we have received a notice of IRS investigation. The purpose can only be further harassment.

Our Jonestown Project is a model community where we can put into practice the values and principles we cherish. It has burgeoned into a remarkable cooperative where poverty and chronic ill-health, slums and unemployment—all earmarks of urban deterioration—are fading memories for people who were largely veterans of the inner cities here. The Project recently gave a warm welcome to leading officials in our State Department, including American Ambassador Richard McCoy, who came to see the work firsthand and has been most helpful. Officials from the Guyanese government, the U.S. and all over the world come to the Project constantly and have penned glowing entries into the guest book. The most recent visitor, Chairman of the Board of Guyana Livestock Corporation and a world traveler, called it the best model community he's ever seen purest in its fellowship and remarkable in productivity—no crime, excellent sanitation, superb medical care, educational and recreational facilities. As the enclosed information details for you, Jonestown is an exceptional community en every respect, cast into a setting of great natural beauty and peace.

We can only begin to describe for you this extraordinary community of love, sharing and cooperation. This, for all of us, is the manifestation of Christ's teachings—a way of life that transcends dogma, doctrine, and empty theory or theological abstractions, and meets human needs. We welcome you to visit, and would look forward to introducing you to this beautiful way of life, this peaceful path of humanitarian service where we have been able to bring great benefits to the whole area—food, medical assistance, and even training in all kinds of academic subjects. The World Council of Churches recently covered the Jonestown project in its monthly publication, <u>One World</u>.

Thank you for your time. We hope that you will investigate for yourselves, as the Committee

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for Church and Social Justice, the sources of the harassment we have outlined for you. We hope also that, especially in view of the IRS probes which are looming on the horizon, you will be able to give us support against an investigation which is deliberately provoked. There can be little doubt, given the all-too-coincidental nature of the harassment we have suffered month after month at the hand of various government agencies, that this too, is being conducted under highly questionable and improper purposes. We feel confident that these concerns are being delivered into the most competent hands.

Sincerely,

L. G. Johnston

L. G. Johnston

cc: Disciples of Christ National Headquarters
Christian Church, Northern California + Nevada

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