

Former City Preacher Feels Heat Of Publicity In West

By CAROLYN PICKERING
(First Of A Series)

At Redwood Valley, Calif., a hamlet 150 miles north of San Francisco, the People's Temple, founded by a self-styled "Prophet of God" who launched his career in Indianapolis selling monkey keys claims more than 4,000 followers.

His loyal worshippers insist the Rev. James W. Jones ("just call me Jim Jones") has raised "more than 40 from the dead."



Rev. Jones

THE handsome smooth 41-year-old preacher who recites his Gospel attired in turtle-neck sweaters and dark glasses, claims also to have cured cancer, made the blind see and the crippled walk.

Last fall, when he returned to Indianapolis briefly, several hundred people showed up at 975 North Delaware Street, the former People's Temple here, to watch The Rev. Mr. Jones "cure" a woman of cancer.

His congregation, mostly Negro, believes the Prophet capable of performing feats no less miraculous than the parting of the Red Sea.

SINCE 1965, when he and 145 faithful temple-ites from Indianapolis settled in the Mendocino County seat town of Ukiah, Calif., People's Temple has mushroomed into a virtually unmolested kingdom.

The temple's legal counsel, Timothy O. Stoen, is an "assistant pastor," although he holds no divinity degree and, admittedly, is not an ordained minister.

The same "assistant pastor" is the assistant district attorney for the county.

IN RECENT DAYS "Prophet" Jones has found himself and his temple in the glare of the public eye — the result of a joint investigation by The Indianapolis Star and the San Francisco Examiner.

An Indianapolis woman, Georgia A. Johnson, has alleged, in a notarized affidavit about the temple, that her two daughters, aged 17 and 21, were "programmed and are too frightened to say anything much about Jones and his operation."

The same woman declares the older daughter was inveigled into an interracial marriage and placed on welfare rolls "when there was no need for her to be on welfare."

A BISHOP in the South Coastal Baptist Church Association, the Rev. Richard Taylor of Oakland, Calif., has disclosed requests for a complete investigation of People's Temple, made last March to Mendocino County Sheriff Reno Bartolome and County District Attorney Duncan Jones, went unanswered.

A former Indianapolis couple, Mr. and Mrs. Marion Freestone of Ukiah,

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(AP Wirephoto)

PEOPLE'S TEMPLE FAITHFUL PICKET SAN FRANCISCO PAPER
Protest Articles On Church And Its Leader, The Rev. James Jones



PISTOL-PACKIN' GUARD ONE OF MANY 'PROTECTING' PASTOR
Temple Buses Part Of Fleet Used To Transport Flock To Church

Sept. 21, 1972
The Indianapolis Star

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Calif., who bolted from the temple in Nov., 1970, say they tithed 25 per cent of their earnings to the group for four years, but were given receipts for only 10 per cent.

So distressed has "the Prophet" become over questions from the press that, this week, 150 pickets surrounded the Examiner building at San Francisco.

They carried signs saying "invasion of privacy" and "this paper has lied."

EFFORTS by The Indianapolis Star to reach either the Rev. Mr. Jones or his lawyer, Stoen, were futile.

Numerous telephone calls went unreturned.

Yesterday, Stoen's office said he had departed for a five-week vacation.

Although the self-styled "Prophet of God" implies in church bulletins that he has "no thought for his personal comfort" and that he "wears only used clothes," records in Marion County reveal numerous property transactions involving real-estate transfers which wound up in his name or that of a profit-making corporation controlled by the Rev. Mr. Jones, his wife and his mother.

THE "FOR PROFIT" venture—Jim-Lu-Mar Corporation—lost its corporate charter June 1, 1970, because, according to the secretary of state, "no annual returns (reports) ever were filed."

The People's Temple at Redwood Valley, resembling a gymnasium and boasting a swimming pool, may be the best armed temple in the world.

No fewer than four men guard the temple. Three wear sidearms with bullets for their pistols—one a .357 Magnum. The fourth sentry carries a shotgun, according to Lester Kinsolving, Examiner reported who was stripped of his notebook and pencil and his photographer relieved of his camera when they attended services recently.

The question is asked, "Who is this Messiah for so many?"

His flock comes from as far away as San Francisco, Seattle and Los Angeles to the temple, 7 miles north of Ukiah, the county seat of Mendocino County in California.

"Prophet" Jones is known to have had another "assistant pastor," Archie Imes, in Indianapolis in recent weeks negotiating for acquisition of a new temple here at 749 North Park Avenue.

His old People's Temple, 975 North Delaware Street, has a sign out front that says "St. Jude Deliverance Center."

But, a local part-time minister, M.F. Cazell, 423 North Alton Avenue, whose Victory Temple Inc. still is carried in the Marion County recorder's office as owner of the property, says his church is about "three years behind in payments" and "I just want Jones to take over the deed."

A \$42,600 mortgage on the property still is held by Wings of Deliverance Inc., a not-for-profit, tax exempt, religious corporation formed by the Rev. Mr. Jones in February, 1965.

However, the charitable corporation also had its initial corporate charter revoked the same day the Rev. Mr. Jones' Jim-Lu-Mar money-making corporation was told not to do any more business in Indiana.

But, Wings of Deliverance has made a comeback.

It was reincorporated May 15, 1972, with the Rev. Mr. Jones, his mother and his wife as directors and an Indianapolis woman, Kathleen Davenport, 5023 Orion Avenue, as resident agent.

IN CALIFORNIA, where the masses flock to hear the faith healer preach to a background of rock music, the faithful are gathered into the temple's fleet of 11 former Greyhound buses that run from early morning until late at night, broken only for communal meals prepared by temple cooks.

Some of those who no longer believe in the divine miracles allegedly performed by "Prophet" Jones say the be-

lievers are filled with superstition and the supernatural, of faith wrapped up in filling an empty stomach.

The modus operandi (that's Latin for method of operation), says an Indianapolis man, bitter about his aged mother being "lured" into the congregation, is reminiscent of the Kingdom of Peace, founded by the late Father Divine.

IN FACT, says Eugene Cordell, 3443 Elizabeth Street, "Jim (Jones) visited Father Divine in the late 1950s and that was the beginning of this movement."

Cordell says his mother, Edith E. Cordell, now 70, first met the Rev. Mr. Jones when he knocked on her door selling live monkeys.

"She bought one and began going to his church," Cordell said.

So powerful was the appeal of the Prophet that he headed the Human Rights Commission here under former Mayor Charles H. Boswell. That was before he tagged himself as the "Prophet of God."

HIS MINISTRY, which had been interdenominational in nature from about 1949 to 1963, was so effective that, in February, 1964, he was ordained in the influential Disciples of Christ Church here.

He's still in good standing, a spokesman for the church said this week.

The Rev. Mr. Jones' temple, in 1971, reported \$165,240 in "contributions to local church" and \$42,637 in "miscellaneous outreach."

The figures are contained in the Disciples' 1972 yearbook.

IN 1965, the Rev. Mr. Jones moved West with many of his local followers,

Two of them, who since have left the temple, say the Rev. Mr. Jones "had us convinced the world would end on July 15, 1967, and the only place we could be safe was with him in California."

(NEXT: What living in the People's Temple commune is like and a look at some clout that—until now—has shielded "Prophet" Jones from the public glare.)