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An Interpretation Of The Peoples' Temple and Jonestown: Implications For The Black Church

The purpose of this paper is to identify some implications of the Peoples' Temple and Jonestown for the pastoral care ministry of the Black Church. My task is an interpretive one.**

The fact of major concern for us is that the media's accounts of Jonestown conflict with the testimonies of those close to the Peoples' Temple and the Jonestown tragedy. It is out of this background and search for understanding that I offer my thoughts on Jonestown, the Peoples' Temple and its implications for the pastoral care ministry of Black churches.

When the news of the mass murders and suicides first broke, social scientists from across the nation of various orientations were called upon to interpret or "explain" the tragedy at Jonestown, Guyana. The leading and most widely read magazines, <u>Time</u> and <u>Newsweek</u>, interviewed and recorded the responses of leading authorities on the New Religious Movements in the United States. The responses from Black Church leaders and Black scholars were conspicuously absent, despite the fact that approximately seventy percent of those who perished in Jonestown were Black, the majority were women, many were poor and elderly, and many were from mainline Black churches. The racist way in which the media reported the events as well as the racist nature of the movement itself never surfaced as a central feature in the explanations of what went wrong. For the most part, white social scientists were called upon to "explain" a religious phenomenon that was heavily poor and Black. The December 4, 1978 issue of <u>Newsweek</u> reported:

Jones sought out the oppressed—especially poor Blacks, prostitutes and other outcasts—who would welcome his message of egalitarianism and his offer to a communal home. But religious groups such as the Moonies, the Children of God and the Hare

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^{**}I have read everything available to me on Jonestown and the Peoples' Temple. I have talked with pastors, participants, and relatives of those who were the victims of the Jonestown tragedy, and I have listened with care to those who have shared their stories.

Krishnas prefer college students of above average intelligence and idealism who will be a credit to the cult.

The underlying concern of this paper is the <u>particular</u> implications the Peoples' Temple and the Jonestown event has for the Black Church and community. To assume that this event had only universal implications ignores the particular implications of this tragedy for Black-Americans, and how it fits into the general history of Black religious experiences in this country.*** The focus of this paper, not limited to the Black church, represents an <u>expanded</u> reflection on an area that was neglected in the media and which escaped the attention of most social scientists who study the New Religious Movements in the United States.

In this paper I (1) identify two theories which emerged to "explain" Jonestown; (2) identify secularism as a central theme; (3) relate this central theme to a plausibility crisis in Black church religion and the appeal of the Peoples' Temple; and (4) identify some implications for the Black Church and its ministry in light of the Peoples' Temple and the Jonestown holocaust.

Even though a number of theories emerged to "explain" the events of November 18, 1978, I address only two explanations which I think have special relevance for the Black church and its ministry to the Black community. None of the explanation, derived from the various news media, ask: (1) How did the Black church permit this to happen, or how did this happen within the framework of the San Francisco Bay Area Black church community? (2) What did the Peoples' Temple and the move to Guyana offer Black people that Black churches failed to offer? (3) What was the Peoples' Temple's central appeal? (4) Was the Peoples' Temple and Jonestown a symptom of the malady resident in the contemporary Black church experience? If so, where is the malady located and how can it be exorcised? (5) Is there a malady in the total society of which the Black church's contribution to the tragedy of Jonestown is but a mirror reflection? And, finally, (6) What must Black churches now do?

The above questions suggest ownership of the problem and the need for Black churches, which once led the struggle for Black liberation, to assess their current posture, scope of responsibility and sense of mission. How Black churches answer these questions will ultimately depend on their self-understanding, conception of ministry and sense of mission for today.

It is important to consider the social science interpretations that emerged to "explain" the so-called mass murders-suicides at Jonestown, Guyana. Social scientists are in a particularly strategic position to influ-

^{***}Furthermore, someone needs to draw-out the particular implications this event has for women and their role (especially single parents and elderly women) who gave so much to the movement and were exploited throughout.

ence our definition of reality, the role of religion in the lives of Black people as well as Jonestown. Thomas Kuhn has introduced the concept of scientific paradigm or thought model. A paradigm is to the social scientist what a pair of binoculars are to the average person. It filters our perception of reality. Paradigms permit us to see only a certain version of reality while diverting attention from other aspects of the same reality. The point is this: a scientific paradigm does not simply reflect reality as it is. Since paradigms only capture a limited and relative perspective on reality, [they] "function importantly to shape the very reality they hope to capture and understand" (Edward Simpson, 1975:27). For this reason, it is important to understand the paradigmatic lens, or worldview, of the social scientists who commented upon Jonestown; for they helped to shape and determine what we understood to be the unquestioned facts surrounding the Peoples' Temple and Jonestown.

One of the major paradigms (or worldviews) that emerged to explain Jonestown is what I call the <u>Psychoanalytically Oriented Worldview Ex-</u> <u>planation</u>. This explanatory framework has its roots in secularism and contributes towards a plausibility crisis in traditional understandings of religion. For our limited purposes, an overly simplified and inexhaustive explanation of this view is presented here.

The bottom line in this explanatory worldview is that religious phenomena is based upon an illusion-perhaps the oldest, strongest and most persistent illusion of humankind. Within the psychoanalytically oriented worldview, religion is perceived as an inadequate attempt to deal with the reality demands of civilization. Religious cults, formed around a charismatic leader, have their origins in the sociopathic make-up of the leader. Persons who are drawn to religious cults and take up membership in them tend to be passive-dependent types in search of a surrogate parent or authority figure. In other words, the prime target for recruitment into such movements as the Peoples' Temple were the oppressed, especially poor Blacks, the lonely, dependent and insecure who welcomed the message of egalitarianism. According to this worldview, such persons had little or no sense of inner value and sought direction from a paranoid charismatic leader, and in the process took on his developing psychosis and messianic hopes. A fusion or total and fatal identification was made with the charismatic leader in the isolated jungles of Jonestown, Guyana. He and the group had become one. That is why when the leader made the decision to commit suicide, he took the entire group with him.

This general worldview was one of the explanations that emerged to give meaning to the mass murders-suicides at Jonestown. This particular worldview sought to locate the origins of the holocaust of Jonestown within the psychological framework, i.e., in the thinking processes and mindset of Jim Jones and his followers. <u>Audience corruption</u> is a term used to identify the interaction between the leader and his followers. According to this theory followers learn to give the responses the leader wants them to give. They feed it back to the leader on cue, who in turn believes even more in the power and rightness of his leadership. When he announces that he is God, the followers feedback the supporting behavior, and the leader soon comes to believe unquestionably in his own deification. In turn his unquestioned assent to divinity is believed by the followers. The present is the only reality and the leader the sole authority within the immediacy of a crisis and a closed cosmos. He is deemed beyond challenge. Hence, the December 4, 1978 issue of <u>Time</u> magazine began its explanation of the holocaust in this way:

The landscape of their minds was as grotesque as the corpse-littered village they left behind. They had started as seekers after meaning, direction, comfort and love. The Peoples' Temple, which provided a number of social services to the poor, had filled their lives with purpose. But in the Jungle of Guyana, it had all turned into fear and hatred.

This, in brief form, is the essence of the <u>Psychoanalytically Oriented</u> <u>Worldview</u> of religion. Religious cults, from this perspective, are a form of psychosis; a break with reality. This worldview has helped to explain some of the inner forces that move individual men and women, but it has not significantly aided a social order to perform its task anymore effectively; and it has not been decisive for understanding the social or relational character of our existence.

The other explanation I wish to consider is the one that suggests that Jonestown could only have come out of California. This I call the <u>Only</u> in <u>California Explanation</u>. Here California is perceived as a propagator of the bizarre. California gave the nation Richard M. Nixon. It was where Robert Kennedy was assassinated. It was the home of the Charles Manson Family; Aimee Semple McPherson, and her Four Square Gospel Church; the home of Father William Riker's Church of the Perfect Christian Divine Way; the Zebra Murders; the Symbionese Liberation Front; Synanon; the Free Speech Movement; EST; Bakke and Proposition 13. In California "Black Panthers become born again Christians; Ronald Reagan switched from being a liberal democrat to becoming Mr. Conservative" (The Daily California, 9 Jan. 1979).

The idea behind the Only in California Explanation is the notion that California represents individualistic hedonism, a retreat from reality, a playland or the insane ward; that out west, a peculiar ethos of normalness has emerged which puts certain groups and folk at high risk for exploitive adventures. San Francisco, as Howard Thurman once observed, is the most secular of U. S. cities. However, granting this, I cannot accept the idea that Jonestown, Guyana, could have emerged only from the soil and social ethos of the San Francisco Bay Area and nowhere else to make Jonestown solely the product of California culture. Jonestown was a product of U. S. society and western culture. To put it

succinctly, Jonestown was not an anomaly. It was a product of the evolving ethos of our time.

I believe it appropriate to set the meaning of the Peoples' Temple and Jonestown within the context of the twentieth century, I am implying that explanations of the Peoples' Temple and Jonestown, as events, cannot be reduced to the personality of one man, or to the uniqueness of California culture or to the regressive nature of Black religion (which I do not address here). We are much the wiser to understand Jonestown, not as an anomaly, but as a product of a culture which attempts to repress and trivialize the essentially religious impulse. I want to identify secularism as a major contributing factor. By secularism I mean the erosion of traditional religious symbols of orientation and meaning centered around a compelling belief in one ultimate reality, and the increasing openness to a plurality of competing beliefs, all of which claim to be equally ultimate and meaningful. Secularism, as a molding power of modern consciousness, is easily underestimated. It does not stand alone but is supported by pluralism and privatism.

Each of these forces creates problems for the Black Church and a challenge to its ministry. In other words, we are facing a plausibility crisis in the Black Church which cannot be adequately appreciated apart from an adequate grasp of the meaning of secularism. Secularism has contributed to individualistic and privatized understandings of religious commitment and evangelism.

The underlying assumption is that the way to improve social or communal life is through the saving or salvaging of individual souls or psyches. Such attempts woefully ignore critical reflection upon existing power arrrangements which create hardships and contribute to social dislocation and alienation. Individual salvation has been the pervasive theme in Black church religion on the west coast. It is true that during the 19th century, and during the civil rights and Black power movements of the 1960's, the pressure was on the Black church to be at the forefront of Black liberation and social transformation, and indeed it was. But this emphasis was and continues to be resisted by many. The social dimension has been a minority concern and has been effectively countered by a very strong conservative strain towards non-involvement and private religion. Even Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was virtually snubbed by many San Francisco Bay Area Black churches when he visited during the 1960's and by those who had difficulty reconciling his struggle for social justice with their understanding of where God was and the church's role and ministry in society.

Secularism is and has been a long term social-historical process that has permeated the master institutions of our society, including the Black church, and has affected our psychological and social outlooks. The end result is a secularized conscience, closed to the claims of the religious recognition of it. In short, we are deeply embedded in a cultural and historical process that tends to obscure the relational character of our existence.

As an alternative to an individualistic and privatized approach to the church's ministry, I wish to suggest a conceptual basis for ministry, one that is consistent with the historic role of Black church religion in the 19th century and one that can see the connection between personal liberation and social transformation; political impotence and personal disintegration. The key concept here is relationality. The central theme is the unity, interconnectedness of human life, even the unity of all life. Relationality is not only an ancient theme, to a perennial topic, and a recurring insight which asserts our common unity and universal interdependence. Relationality is grounded in the insight that one's life is constituted in relations with others. Relationality expresses the idea that personal faith, responsibility and accountability are derived from a collective context from a sense of belonging to a common culture and to an oppressed and yet struggling Black community. Relationality is perhaps best captured in the old Zulu proverb: "umuntu ungumuntu ngabanye abantu" (a person is thus, because of other persons). He or she is there because there are other people with him, before him and after him (Z.C. Mzoneli, 1979:12). Relationality suggests that the Black community and the Black church, through interdependence, are constituent elements, each in the life of the other. They are mutually bound together in a common enterprise, and share a common destiny. The Black church therefore, cannot realize its historic role of liberation and empowerment in the present situation apart from Black culture and the Black community as whole; and the Black community cannot exist as a viable community and culture in a racist society by denying or destroying the key institutions that have enabled it to survive.

Nineteenth century Black religious leaders in California, as in the United States, had a relational vision (which predates the social gospel movement) enabling them to link personal responsibility to issues of social justice. Their vision embraced the liberation struggles of the whole Black community, religious and secular.

Many Black people originally responded positively to Peoples' Temple because it was a movement that provided psychic support and linked it with a program of social/communal outreach. Hence, Black peoples' involvement in the Peoples' Temple movement can be seen as an attempt to make Black religion relevant to their social, political and economic condition. By breaking with the insularity and seemingly irrelevant style of traditional Black church worship, many thought they had found in the Peoples' Temple a form of church involvement that spoke more directly to the issues of spiritual uplift, justice, social change and communal empowerment. Their vision of a new social order was not wrong. It was expressive of the relational paradigm. It was a vision broader than that found in many of the Black churches they left. But their vision was not enough. It lacked a self-critical dimension that would have enabled them to discern the false claims of Jim Jones towards ego deification. Black peoples' involvement in Peoples' Temple and Jonestown is difficult to explain in light of the Black nationalism of the 1960's, and the quest for African roots phenomenon of the 1970's. It appears to be an anomaly.

However, the relative success of the Peoples' Temple movement in San Francisco and Jonestown is not difficult to explain when we consider that the influence of these movements of the 1960's did not take significant hold in established Black religious institutions. Although the Peoples' Temple was not formally identified as a part of this network, it did have a strong working relationship with it. This network and the Peoples' Temple developed a kind of ideal working relationship that many activists and socially concerned church people, working with poor people, desired and were drawn to. The appeal of Peoples' Temple was not only its charismatic leader but its interpretation of religion, its sense of family and social outreach programs. Peoples' Temple was concerned with Black unemployment, problems of poverty, juvenile delinquency, criminal justice, welfare dependency, alcoholism, drug addiction and related social problems. The Peoples' Temple's ability to influence structures of power gave folk a sense of 'somebodiness', a sense of belonging to a great cause. In order to appreciate its appeal we must see it amidst an enclave of the relatively conservative, status conscious, privatized religious orientation of many Black churches which had an inward religious orientation without the outward thrust of significant social action programs or political involvement.

Even after the Jonestown tragedy, one embittered person who was a participant in Peoples' Temple put it to me this way:

Most Black churches do not even want to be bothered with understanding or framing a response to Guyana. People's Temple emerged out of a need and filled a vacuum in the Black community; a need that was missed by the Black Churches. Peoples' Temple ministered to the unchurched, the Black elderly, the addicted and alcoholic, welfare dependents, juvenile delinquents, the lonely and the alienated of all sorts.

It is small wonder, then that many found in the Peoples' Temple movement a place to belong, an outlet for their religious and political aspirations, a social program and a cause to which they could give themselves.

"Jim Jones" (with his more than 2,000 member congregation) "was the only political leader in San Francisco who could completely control the way his followers would vote" (New West, 18 Dec. 1978). New West magazine reported on December 18, 1978:

The Reverend Jones could turn out a crowd for any politician's speech and did it so

often that Peoples' Temple members became known among the mayor's and district attorney's staff as "The troops." If you gave Jim Jones six hours notice, he could deliver 2,000 people. 'They were made to order,' one Democratic county chairman's staff member raved, 'You should have seen it—old ladies on crutches, whole families, little kids, Blacks, Whites'.

If New West and other news reports can be trusted, then we must raise the following question: Was there not a force or a power strong enough in the Black community itself to counter the influence and fraudulent claims of Jim Jones, or anybodys else, for that matter? He moved into the heart of the Fillmore district, took over the lives of young Black men, old women, mothers and babies. According to news reports, he infiltrated Black organizations and diluted their effective counter moves; took hundreds of poor and Black people with him into the isolated jungles of Guyana and in time ordered suicide or murder. In the interim, he did much to give people hope and a vision of a new society. There were unbought critical voices in the Black religious community, but these few voices alone were not organized and strong enough to counter the effects of Jones and his movement. Can this happen again in the Bay Area or other American cities? And, if so, what kind of structures or mechanisms are necessary to counter such developments before they escalate into strong politically and financially backed movements on the scale of the Peoples' Temple movements? Would such a movement have gotten as far as it did if the chief victims were not the disposable people: the Black youth (some of whom were juvenile delinquents or wards of the state), elderly Black women on social security, drug addicts, and left wing social activists?

In the wake of Jonestown, Guyana, the temptation will be strong on the part of Black church leadership to not only denounce Jim Jones and the Peoples' Temple, and write it off as the work of the devil, but there will also be the attempt to avoid legitimate guilt, remove oneself from hearing appropriate criticism, and to deny responsibility in what happened. In a society as interdependent as ours, no one can walk away clean. Such denial would be unfortunate if it is used to justify no change in the way the Black church sees its mission and ministry. If this is the case, then Jonestown would be a message that fell on deaf ears.

It will be important to remember the positive and heroic things done by the Peoples' Temple which somewhere and somehow need to be continued. The official closing of the Temple on December 31, 1978, created a vacuum which somewhere other groups may not be able to fill as successfully or very fast. The Peoples' Temple has already demonstrated the need for a ministry that will reach those for whom no one else seemed to care. Black churches are challenged to consider the possibilities of a multifaceted, cooperative outreach and social change ministry, shared by a number of Black clergy and lay people, and combine such efforts with community resources. No one church or clergyperson ought to try to fill this vacuum alone. To go it alone tilts in the direction of messianism and egomania.

The idea of relationality suggests a cooperative enterprise and a shared ministry. This is a challenge, because it is often difficult for the clergy to share authority and leadership roles or acknowledge their own limitations. We do have our own ego problems which often get in the way of fashioning creative and cooperative responses to social issues. On the other hand, the community and our congregants sometimes expects miracles from us. They expect things they do not expect from other professionals. The potential for audience corruption, self-deception or collusion is always present. The seduction is that our congregants often look to us to provide answers to problems that are too great for any one person to solve. No one can completely fill the void in someone else's life, nor can any one person, or church alone transform the social order. To attempt such creates false hopes and false dependency, and thwarts the necessary development of communal efforts to fashion creative responses for social change. The tendency towards messianism is just as real for the rest of us as it was for Jim Jones. We all participate in the same structure of finitude that Jim Jones knew.

Here, in brief, are some further implications for the Church's ministry derived from this presentation:

1. <u>Interpretive</u>: The Black church as a witness to the presence of the living God has an interpretive role to play in addition to being a gathering place for worship. The interpretive role includes: interpreting to the people as clearly as possible the events which mark and circumscribe their existence in ways that can enable them to link their faith with responsible involvement in the world; interpretations that bring to bear the Biblical Word and mediate the active caring of God's presence in our time. The church's interpretive role ought to enable us to identify our social location, give insight concerning the nature of the social structures under which we labor and prepare us to fashion creative responses as persons of faith and agents of change.

A note on the Biblical Word: Perhaps, one of the lessons to come out of Jonestown and the Peoples' Temple movement for the Black church is that we need to better understand the history of our faith and actional possibilities in light of the Biblical Word. An inmate at Vacaville Correctional Facility recently told me that he wasn't sure where it was to be found in the Bible, but that "the law of self-preservation" was the first law of the Bible. How wrong he was! Although he grew up in a San Francisco Bay Area Black church, he was still in the fog on the Bible and its message, and yet he thought he was quoting from the Bible. He could not distinguish the biblical message from other messages or social philosophies he had acquired. This brother and inmate does not stand alone. He represents many in our churches who profess the faith, but know very little about what the Bible really has to say to us. In this case a little bit of knowledge can be dangerous. The Black church must interpret as clearly as it can the central proclamation of the gospel in ways that liberate Black Christians to link their faith with a responsible and daring commitment to the living God who struggles with us in and through every case of oppressions.

2. <u>Communal Empowerment and Interdependence</u>: The Black church must once again assert itself as a communal church, seeking to heal, empower and undergird Black families, support the alienated, psychically distraught and socially abandoned, and feed the spiritually hungry. The church cannot do this alone, but must see itself as a part of a social network.

The Black church has a continuing supportive and empowering function to play in Black family life. Historically, the Black church has been the backbone of the Black family (W.E.B. Dubois, 1903). The Black church has functioned for many as an extended family, reinforcing and strengthening a sense of inner worth, respect and value of each for the other. Eugene Genovese referred to these values as "weapons of defense." The Black church in the past has nurtured a religious faith ". . . that taught them (slaves) to love and value each other, to take a critical view of their masters, and to reject the ideological rationale for their enslavement" (E. D. Genovese, 1972:6).

We are still challenged to reject the ideological rationale and behaviors that support our enslavement. Again, Genovese writes: "And the slaves, drawing on a religion that was supposed to assure their compliance and docility, rejected the essence of slavery by projecting their own rights and values as human beings." (E. Genovese, 1972:7) The Black church is challenged to play a similar role in the lives of Black families and single persons today who face new forms of alienation and spiritual bondage to materialistic values. Of central importance here are processes of victimization in Black male-female relationships.

The Black church is still challenged to enable Black families and singles to break the bonds of enslaving action and to develop their capacity to change, grow, care, and to strengthen and sustain nurturing relationships. This will require an approach that goes beyond the traditional conception of pastoral care taught in most seminaries. "Liberation of the oppressed" will become a vacuous euphamism if the intended audience is itself too emotionally crippled to respond.

3. <u>Social Action</u>: This interpretation and healing must incorporate social action aimed at systemic change. Interpretation must be linked to praxis and reflection. Social action must seek to comprehend and transform the process and social arrangements which maintain legitimate structures of oppression (a need for a critical theory is implied but not developed here). In the words of the August 6, 1977, National Conference of the Black Theology Project in Atlanta, the Black church "must come out from behind its stain-glassed walls and dwell where mothers are crying, children are hungry, and fathers are jobless." Social action ministries must be open to the critical perspectives of others as the church and community continue to evolve the praxis of caring, emancipation and social transformation.

4. <u>Prophetic</u>: The Black church in the United States has often played a prophetic role when it has proclaimed the power of the gospel in judgement upon an exploitive economic and social system which ensures structural inequality and insidious forms of racism and sexism. That role was expressed in the witness of Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Richard Allen, Jeremiah B. Sanderson, Martin Luther King, Jr., and a host of other witnesses. The prophetic role of the church must continue to evolve an alternative perspective consistent with its interpretive task and social action ministry.

This paper has attempted a near impossible task, namely to, (1) identify two theories which emerged to explain Jonestown: (2) identify secularism as a theme of central importance; (3) relate this theme to a plausibility crisis in Black church religion and the appeal of Peoples' Temple; and (4) identify some implications for the Black church and its ministry of the Jonestown tragedy in Guyana. Secularism found expression in the dominant theoretical explanation that emerged from social science about the Peoples' Temple and Jonestown. Yet, this theory, which I called the Psychoanalytically Oriented Worldview Explanation, was incapable of diagnosing the larger social world that produced Jonestown, and failed to enable a critical analysis of the social structure that may have moved some of the individuals to join the Peoples' Temple and move to Jonestown. The paper has attempted to frame an adequate response from a broadened perspective of Black pastoral care. Within this perspective, individual liberation and social transformation are linked. I have tried to point out that emancipatory struggle must seek to strengthen awareness of the connection and interdependence of human life, and must continually involve a social and self-critical dimension enjoined with faith in the one who undergirds the struggles of Black people to be free, and struggles with them through conditions of oppression and tragedy everywhere. Genuine social emancipation is inseparable from the emancipation of the human self and mind. These are a part of the same dialectic which is at work in the community of the oppressed on this side of Jonestown.

APPENDIX A

figure 1

Jonestown Victims by Sex and Race

			American			Mexican	
	Black	White	Indian	Latino	Asian	American	Total
Female	49%	13%		1%		1%	66%
	(438)	(121)	(4)	(12)	(2)	(10)	(587)
Male	22%	10%				1%	34%
	(200)	(88)	(3)	(3)	(1)	(8)	(303)
Total	71%	23%	1%	2%		2%	100%
	(638)	(209)	(7)	(15)	(3)	(18)	(890)

This information was tabulated from a list of victims of the Jonestown mass suicides and murders released by the State Department. The list of victims was obtained from The San Francisco Ecumenical Council, May, 1979.



figure 2

Jonestown Victims by Age, Sex and Race

	Black		White Latino		ino	Mexican		Asian		Indian				
	F	M	F	М	F	М	F	М	F	М	F	М	Total	
11 yrs. & younger	6% (55)	5% (44)	1% (9)	2% (16)	 (4)	=	(2)	 (4)	Ξ	=	(2)	(1)	15% (137)	-
12-16 years	4% (37)	4% (36)	2% (16)	2% (16)	(1)	(1)	-	(3)	Ξ	_	Ξ	-	12% (110)	Interpretation
17-21 years	5% (49)	4% (30)	2% (19)	1% (9)	(1)	=	(2)	Ξ	(1)	-	_	_	13% (120)	retat
22-29 years	4% (34)	3% (29)	3% (27)	1% (10)	(3)	(1)	(3)	Ξ	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	12% (111)	ion of
30-40 years	4% (37)	1% (10)	2% (20)	2% (14)	(1)	(1)	(1)	-	—	_	_	(1)	10% (85)	f the
41-50 years	3% (30)	(4)	1% (11)	1% (10)	_	_	(1)	=	=	=	=	_	6% (56)	Peoples
51-65 years	8% (70)	2% (18)	1% (9)	1% (9)	(1)	_	_	=	-	_	(1)	_	12% (108)	
66 years & older	14% (121)	2% (18)	1% (6)	(2)	(1)	_	(1)	=	_	_	_	=	17% (149)	Temple
age unknown	1% (5)	(2)	(4)	(2)	=	_	_	(1)	=	=	=	_	2% (14)	le
TOTAL	49% (438)	22% (200)	14% (121)	10% (88)	1% (12)	(3)	1% (10)	1% (8)	(2)	(1)	(4)	(3)	100% (890)	

This information was tabulated from a list of victims of the Jonestown mass suicides and murders released by the State Department. The list of victims was obtained from The San Francisco Ecumenical Council, May, 1979. •

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