

Essay on the film jonestown

[Countries](#), [Vietnam](#)



Introduction

The culture of Americans was greatly affected in 1970s because of the Vietnam War. This war made the vice president to resign and ended Richard Nixon presidency. This led to strikes across the country paralyzing businesses, schools and other institution. The pope culture was taking root among the youths in the country and people felt that they were alienated from their culture. Women unions grew strong to fight for equal rights in terms of education, art, and political views. Such movements led to legalization of abortion, which gave the women right to choose. It was also in this era that homosexuals came out strongly to demand their rights that and got a lot of attention of the leaders. Pop music became popular that prompted many people who sought to refuge in clubs due to the ongoing Vietnam War to engage in drugs and other social upheavals.

Discussion

Late 1960s to early 1970s saw a great rise in social upheavals in United States when troops went to Vietnam. The media stations widely covered the brutality of the American war against communism in Vietnam and led people to demonstrate because most of them argued that it was not necessary. This created a climate of protests where all the communities took the advantage to fight for their rights especially the minority groups. There were so many publications, books and advertisements that taught people on issues of sex and how best to enjoy it. People went beyond limits and broke the culture and societal established taboos in fact this is when the homosexuals came out publicly in America demanding for their rights.

The film gives an overview of Jones's history from his childhood until he found himself in rural Indiana. He used to conduct funerals for animals when he was still young but not knowing what was ahead of him. He always desired to socialize with all people regardless of their color, race, or social class, which made his family to be alienated in the neighborhood. He later relocated to Indianapolis where he started an integrated church and ministered there for some time. Due to racism in Indianapolis, Jones had to move his church to Redwood Valley in California and the church grew very fast. As time passed, Jones begins to surrender all their earthly possession to God by giving them as a sacrifice.

Most people in America were not happy with the government decision and the rise of social upheavals in American society. Religious movements seemed to be the only associations that could embrace people of all kinds. The established religious institutions also seemed to have no clear answers to the rising immorality and discrimination and this made people to yearn for new religious answers because the existing one proved not to work well. Everyone was tired with the way the society was acting, nobody cared about the culture, norms, and other forms of morality. The religious institutions expected to preach morality, and help people turn from evil ways did not look different from the rest of the society.

Stanley Nelson, Marcia Smith and Noland Walker who the main coordinators in the film uses this documentary to reveal a true story of Jim Jones, a Pentecostal who promised the world of equality but eventually led to a massacre that claimed over 900 lives of people who joined People's Temple in Guyana November 1978. Jones offered the church members with jobs,

homes and other incentives that made to see a sense of a just world. They could see themselves transforming the world through the church. The believers were ready to give their lives to the “ man of God” for they thought he had a better plan of changing the unjust world.

There was an unexpected visit by U. S. Congressman Leo Ryan to investigate claims that The Temple’s church was turning into a political movement. The delegation found it hard at first to access the town because Jim Jones had passed information baring political leaders from visiting the area. It took intervention of the attorney and other leaders for him to be allowed. He found the people very happy and seemed to have no problem.

The whole drama began when the congressional representative asked those who wanted to fly out of the town to feel free following a note from one of the members of the community. The first group was allowed go to the airstrip and because the truck was not enough for them, Ryan waited for the second shift. Everyone was surprised to see Ryan’s shirt was full of blood from a man who had cut his hand protesting of this act of evacuating. The whole airstrip became chaotic and full of violence and that is when Jones issued statements saying that the government had come to interfere with their church. Mothers received notice to give a poisonous drink to their children before committing suicide this lead to death of over 200 children. Adults were also encouraged to take their lives with Jones arguing that it was better for them to die than to live a lie. Through interviews with the survivors, the film manages to bring out the death tale in a clear way. At the end, Jones did not manage to meet people’s expectation of ensuring equality among the citizens of America rather his movement turned into a suicidal

move that left families, friends, and the whole nation with wounds. He manipulated innocent to commit suicide without a sustentative reason because by doing so they never solved any problem of inequality.

The Temple's Church was an extreme kind of religious cult compared with other religious movements of 1970s. Members were being asked to give all their possessions unlike other churches where members only gave tithe and love offerings. They went to the extreme end of believing in one person as if he was their savior and could do anything that he commanded. Jones betrayed his people by asking them to commit suicide just because the government had found out that he was leading the church in the wrong direction. It is however important to note that most religious movements rose up during to counter the rising immorality in the 1970s. Issues of drug abuse, homosexuality, and other forms of moral decay came up and so the religious groups had to be aggressive in addressing these issues.