



RADIO NETWORK

features

THE FAMILY OF GOD FOUNDATION

ON THE PEABODY
AWARD-WINNING SERIES

"Man and His Religion"



THREE
NATIONWIDE
NEWSFEATURE
INTERVIEWS
WITH

Vern Bennom Grimsley

INTERVIEW I

CBS Announcer: Next a look at Man and His Religion. Here's George McMannis:

Vern Grimsley is a handsome six-foot preacher from the University of Kansas. The non-denominational preacher is heard on more than a dozen radio stations across the country. And now he is based at Berkeley, where he almost daily preaches to students at the University of California. I asked the husky young man what kind of reaction he gets while aloft his campus soap box.

"Some people give me a hard time when I'm doing street preaching. For example, yesterday I was preaching in Union Square and had some alcoholics attempting to inflict some physical violence and had another evangelist threatening to knock me into the bushes and things like that--but the majority of people are really responsive, and it's true on the Berkeley campus as well. I've had some violence. We were taping one time, and I had a student try to wrap (actually not a student--one of the street people) try to wrap the microphone chord around my throat. And another time I had the equipment physically taken away...beer and milk and

wine poured into our tape recorder. But generally we have very good relations with them. And it's because there is that underlying spiritual quest; there is a God-hunger--there is an unsatiated yearning for spiritual meaning in a person's life. And it will not go away. And on some level of consciousness, everyone is really interested in talking about God."

Vern Grimsley is one of the youth generation's truly optimistic religionists. Says Grimsley:

Future history will view the events of the later twentieth century not as an era of war, crisis, and ecological disaster, but rather, he says, as the time when spiritual awareness was dawning.

INTERVIEW II

Just about any day of the week students and visitors to Berkeley's University of California can see a good-looking young man preaching about God and the needs of man's society. Vern Grimsley tapes his loud-speaker sermons and then re-plays them on about 15 radio stations in the United States. I asked the broadcast minister if he has a standard doomsday message that the world is taking its last gasp..."

"If it's a gasp, it's a gasp preparatory to another inhalation. I think that we are not about to expire. I think that there is tremendous hope for the world; that a spiritual renaissance is dawning and that crucially mankind needs to begin to see this world not as a battlefield but as a brotherhood-- as the family of God--all human beings as sons and daughters of God. And this kind of concept... I think it is a psychological truism that people live out their concepts; they tend to fulfill, to move toward what their ideal of reality, of themselves, of mankind is. And if people hold that vision that mankind is a family, the family of God, then in my conviction we will move toward the actualization of that."

You have quite a few of the folks over at Berkeley and around there who call themselves the 'Jesus Freaks.' What's your opinion about them?

"In my conviction, the Jesus movement runs the entire gamut from disturbed psychological fanaticism to that which is going to be part of a really profound spiritual renaissance. The Jesus movement I think is impossible to characterize with one single descriptive word. It's a whole spectrum. In one sense I'm part

of the Jesus movement. At the point at which the Jesus movement is anti-intellectual I disagree with it immensely, because Jesus himself said, 'Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.' He emphasized this intellectual aspect."

Campus preacher Vern Grimsley, who feels the youth generation is not a degeneration.

INTERVIEW III

A young, up-and-coming radio preacher is a tall, blond-haired man named Vern Grimsley. The articulate Grimsley tape records sermons to students nearly every day at the Berkeley, University of California campus. As a matter of fact, Grimsley was on campus as a peace maker during the worst of the rioting in the 1960's. Several times he found himself caught in clouds of tear gas in the middle of violence. Grimsley feels feels a new religious intensity, which grew out of unrest, has finally made itself felt on American campuses.

"I think that what is happening on a spiritual level in the midst of the Jesus revolution is extremely important. I think what is happening on the theological level is

less important. Because some people get into an extreme fundamentalism and then find themselves, in a period of only two or three months sometimes, finding this to be so intellectually inconsistent at some points that they reject that, and yet still have a craving to cling to some of the spiritual experiences. I believe a person's intellectual theology can be in transition. I have met some godly people with god-awful theologies-- I mean with really poor thought, intellectual comprehensions of what kind of a God they're talking about and what kind of spiritual experience. But the experience of finding and knowing God even in the midst of all these other intellectual transitions is an enduring and a sustaining and an abiding experience. And that is what is changing young people's lives."

Says Vern Grimsley, "Only transformed individuals can form a transformed world." And adds Grimsley, "I've come to the conviction that the majority of psychological problems are religious problems." And now he concludes, "I believe we are witnessing the formation of the religion of the future."

And that's this report on Man and His Religion. This is George McMannis.