

It's As Vern Said--It's Up To You!

Gard Jameson

Last week, amidst the noontime hour traffic of White Plaza, Berkeley radio broadcaster Vern Grimsley spoke about religious questions that university students are most often puzzled by.

His topics covered the gamut of queries which he has confronted in dealing with students from the University of California at Berkeley. He stated that religion is an experience, not of mind alone, but of the whole person, a commitment to living by faith in God and in the Family of all Humanity, in synchrony with our highest values.

"The essence of the teachings of Jesus is the Way of Love and Service. He came to teach that we are children of God, and that by faith we can appropriate this truth in our personal experience. You as an individual are known and loved by God, with whom you may have spiritual fellowship — this very instant. But finding God is a decision, a deliberate exercise of your own God-given free will."

Grimsley said that every doubt which a person may carry about the vitality of a belief in spiritual realities is capable of being resolved by a test. Like true scientists, Vern said we should be willing to donate some time to this "live and momentous option." He quoted the Roman Stoic Epictetus who said that all one need do is to go to a quiet place and honestly open one's heart, then will one know if all that God-talk is true. That is the acid test, Vern said. It is impossible to verify the existence of such a Being by philosophic inquiry, since God is Spirit.

'Not A Grandfather'

"God is not a cosmic grandfather who sits on a cumulonimbus cloud strumming his great white beard while recording all our Faults with a red marker in the debit column, and all our good deeds with black marks in the credit column. He is the First Source and Center of all things and beings who loves each and every one of his children with

an infinite love."

Though there was not one heckler bothering Vern, which as he said was his usual experience in talking to the people at the Berkeley campus, a number of people attended the preacher's hour long talk. These people were not only greeted by Vern's "glad tidings" but also by a number of supporters from the Berkeley area, where Vern heads a non-denominational, non-profit foundation.

Vern stated that he had a number of radio broadcasts around the world, including such places as England, Ceylon and Africa. He has been encouraged by the good response which he has received from these places. From such response, and from his dialogue with numerous students concerning Jesus' life and thoughts, Vern is convinced that the planet is now "in the midst of a Spiritual Renaissance which is

ultimately bound to make more differences in this world than any war which has ever been waged, any battle which has ever been fought, any political, social or economic upheaval in all of human history."

Enthusiasm Appreciated

This student very much appreciated Vern's enthusiasm. In this time of political, social and economic riptides, it is refreshing to hear such words. If Vern is correct in saying that faith is not just a justification for weakness, but a substantiation of strength, it would seem that in this time of energy shortage, faith is indeed an option which should be honestly considered by every individual.

More true than the often quoted phrase "We are what we eat," is the phrase, "We are what we think." Our self image is that which shapes our whole future; if it is that of a "good doctor" or a "good lawyer" that, then, will be

the limit of our potential, our peak; that image serves as the basis of our life.

If we would envision ourselves as children of the Creator, infinitely loved by that God, how much broader would be our horizons for achievement! This is not to say that being a good doctor excludes the possibility of realizing that one has been "created in the image of God." It is to say that it makes a tremendous difference which one values more, being God's person or being the best doctor on the ward.

Try living first as God's person, then as that doctor who is able to serve others — see if it doesn't lead to happier living. It is your decision; no priest, evangelist, book, creed or friend can make it for you. "He who seeks will find." (Gard Jameson is an undergraduate majoring in religious studies.)

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