

ON CAMPUS

A black and white portrait of a young man with shoulder-length hair, looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a dark sweater over a white collared shirt. The portrait is set against a dark background and is framed by a thin, double-lined border.

**VERN
BENNOM
GRIMSLEY**

**ANSWERS
SPIRITUAL QUESTIONS
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASK**

**Transcripts of spontaneous question-and-answer sessions
with university students from the "ON CAMPUS" radio
program with Vern Bennom Grimsley**

ON CAMPUS

Published by the Spiritual Renaissance Institute,
A subsidiary of The Family of God Foundation, Incorporated
Box 347, Berkeley, California, 94701, U.S.A.

©All rights reserved, Family of God Foundation, Incorporated, 1976

I. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES GOD MAKE?

ARE SPIRITUAL THINGS REAL?

Student: I just don't believe in spirits. I've seen no evidence of their existence.

Vern: You're right. Spiritual things *can't* be seen and that's one reason, I suppose, why some people don't believe in them. But would you say that *love* can be seen, or *truth*, or *goodness*?

S: Well, that's true, they can't be seen. And as for spiritual things, I've read scripture, and I've gone through all that. Like, if your mother says "Go to church" and you go there and you believe it and then, suddenly, you just become aware that this is a fantasy.

V: Now if love and goodness and truth can't be seen, would you say they're real?

S: I've sometimes wondered.

V: Shall we take a vote? Given the admission that love, truth, and goodness are real—and they can't be seen—one could say that *those* would be spiritual realities. I'd say *God* is the same way. And when it says in the Bible that "God is love," that's saying that God is real in the same way that these most profound and exciting experiences of human life are—even though we can't *see* God.

HOW CAN YOU KNOW GOD IS REAL?

S: I have no use for God.

V: What do you think of the idea that *God* might have a use for *you*?

S: I don't believe there's a God, so how can he have a use for me?

V: Suppose you turned your back on that tree over there and decided you didn't believe in it. Would you make the tree go away? Would it disappear?

S: I can see the tree. I can touch the tree. I can kick the tree and hurt my foot.

V: Do you see what's going through the tree—the wind?

S: Yeah.

V: You say you *SEE* the wind?

S: No, I don't see the wind, but you know the wind is there because the leaves are moving.

V: That's what Jesus said to a man one time!!! You can look at a tree and see the wind going through it. You can't *see* the wind but you see what it *does*. Neither can you see the spirit of God, but it is possible to *feel* in your life what the spirit *does*. And it can change you.

WHY BELIEVE IN ANYTHING?

S: Should you *have* a belief? And is it possible that your belief separates you from other people?

V: If my belief were not in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, it *would* separate me. But if I believe all men are brothers—because they are all children of God—I think it would *join* me with people instead of separating me. Does that make sense?

S: Yeah, it makes sense. Yes, if that is the belief. But why do you *need* the belief? Isn't that sort of insecure to have a belief? Don't you just feel that without the belief?

V: Without putting it into words?

S: Yeah, just feeling it.

V: That makes it tough to hear on radio. (laughter in background.)

Another student: I think we should expand ourselves. And I think there is a great reward in doing that. And to feel just a certain faith is actually doing harm to yourself, not opening your mind and looking around. This is why I can't say I'm a Baptist, or a Methodist or whatever. But I can say that I believe in a God.

V: And you're a son of God?

S: Right! Definitely!

V: That's vital. If a person sees himself as a son of God, he can see other people as brothers. He can find a new love. And I believe that love in individual lives can change the world because then people are going to go out and live differently and treat each other differently.

S: Yeah, I agree there.

A third student: Do you make a distinction between believing and knowing? What I'm suggesting is, do you believe with an aura of doubt, perhaps, as opposed to knowing? You know you're in Berkeley, you don't doubt you're in Berkeley.

V: I would make a distinction between belief and faith: that faith is more than belief, and that belief is nothing but intellectual assent. One might nod his head to the proposition that we're standing just southeast of the Student Union Building on the Berkeley campus, but it wouldn't make an enormous difference in one's style of living. What I'm saying is that faith molds and motivates one's life, and the faith that one is loved by God, is a child of God, gives an entirely new impulse and impetus in going out and being able to live with joy, with a sense of peace, and living as a brother or a sister to all the rest of mankind.

IS RELIGION AN ESCAPE?

S: Generally the more extreme varieties of religion are an escape for people who wish to escape—whether they be old, young or whatever their condition.

V: It is an escape to believe that every man is your brother? That you're

supposed to treat him as you would want to be treated yourself? That's an escape? It looks to me like an *advance*—far from a *retreat*—it's a *confrontation* with life, an encounter, an embrace of reality.

S: But does *that* have anything to do with religion?

V: Yes, definitely, with what Jesus taught—the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man!

Another student: I have a question. In just thinking, it has occurred to me that the idea of having a God, as most Christians claim, that is truly omnipotent—that this might be incompatible with the idea of *free will* in man.

V: God *is* all powerful, then he had the *power* to give *free will* to man. In Jesus' saying, "Be you perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect" is a challenge and an adventure for daily life. A person can feel, "Today I can be better than I was yesterday, I can treat new people as my brothers. I can learn to love in a new way and explore the truth."

IS RELIGION AN OPIATE?

S: I haven't felt anything so I couldn't say that I believe in God. I'd be lying to you.

V: My conviction is that by very simple faith a person can find this experience, this great joy.

S: I've had a lot of faith. I was brought up in a religious family. I just have no use for it. I'm agnostic.

Another Student: I think religion is an opiate.

V: But do you believe that faith is an opiate when in fact people will go out and *suffer* for it? Because the definition of an opiate is a pain *killer*, yet when people will go forth and serve their fellow human beings in jungles and deserts and give themselves in a very painful way, wouldn't you say that's the contrary to an opiate, if religion can do THAT in a person's life?

ARE RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS TOO ANCIENT TO BE RELEVANT?

S: The religions of the world are too old.

V: They are?

S: Yeah. I feel that they're really old.

V: And therefore not relevant?

S: Right.

V: Of course, some things that would be old *might* be relevant, might they not? Water is old, and the sun shining down on us in the sky is old, and *they're* relevant. So simply being old wouldn't in and of *itself* mean religion was irrelevant, would it?

S: But how can you possibly be acting now, in the 20th century, according to

what some man said twenty centuries ago? I think you have to redefine everything.

V: Ever hear of a man named Aristarchus, the Greek?

S: Oh, yes.

V: Aristarchus, the Greek, some three hundred years before the birth of Christ, said that the world was round. He computed this by his own mathematical and astronomical studies. Just because he was an *ancient* are we going to *reject* that? **(Another student interrupts)**

S: I don't believe in any god, so I can't really talk to you.

V: I think belief in God *is* optional.

S: (Laughter) I'll go for that.

V: But if a person has the choice between seeing himself simply as a worm of this earth, and of no value at all, and on the other hand seeing himself as a child of God and every other human being as brother...

S: That's not the point. See, I'm not a worm; I'm a human being.

V: Let me give you a statistic. According to the psychological research and data on this matter, every other hospital bed in the country is occupied by a mental patient. A lot of people DO think themselves to be worms of earth. Here's the point I'm making: The major psychological problem in the country is a feeling of unrelieved guilt; people DO look down on themselves and deprecate themselves—so it DOES make a difference whether a person believes himself to be a child of God!

WHY ARE THERE PROBLEMS?

S: Why are there all kinds of problems in the world?

V: I think the point is that God has given us a world in which there are all manner of things. We can mine metals from the earth, we can harvest crops from the land, we can delve into the world and we can gain all these things. Then we can create of them what we want to. It's the same way with atomic power, for example. Atomic power can be used to make bombs and *blow up* cities, or it can be used to turn generators and dynamos to *light* cities and produce electricity for them. Man has the same choice, this God-given choice, before him in his very life itself: whether he's going to use his possibilities and potentials for good or for evil. And that's why it's important to seek for the will of God—really to pray, to ask for God's direction and guidance. I believe it's the happiest, most joyous way possible to live. God has an infinite, almost blinding love for his sons and daughters, and that's what we are.

S: Yeah.

V: Does that make some sense to you?

S: Yeah, some—now—the way you explained it. Yeah.

HOW CAN LOVE CONQUER HATRED?

S: All the love in the world can be contained in a small paper sack.

V: Oh, really? Ha. One request: don't break that paper sack.

S: Right. When you're inside your mother, man, all you know is love, see. And then you don't even have to think. Food comes when you want it, and when you're born Mom has to say, "Don't cross the street or you might get by a car." That's when hate starts getting programmed.

V: Wouldn't it be possible that the mother saying to the child, "Don't cross the street against the traffic, you might get hit by a car," is in fact said out of love instead of out of hate?

Another student: Who knows? There're no positives. Whatever is, whatever is. Just take the day and be happy.

V: Except that a person always has a choice of whether or not he's going to conceive of this world as a battlefield. And people who approach the world with that understanding—that it's nothing but a battlefield—are going to do nothing but get into *battles*.

S: Well, it *is* a battlefield, brother; but what's more important is what's going to come out of this battle. You know you're engaged in a battle. Just like so many. Your cause is the important thing, of course.

V: The cause of love?

S: That's a *very* good cause.

V: That's my cause, and I think that's God's cause, too.

S: Well, love...hate...they are all the same, because you can't have love without hate.

V: I believe you *can*.

S: I don't think so at all, because you can't define one without the other. Everybody knows there's evil clanking around in the streets, and it takes an awful lot of love to melt those iron and cement cells and militia tanks.

V: Yes, but all this clanking around in the streets *begins* in the *hearts* of human beings. It begins with *people*; and if you can change *people*, you can change the world.

S: You don't change people.

V: I think you do. It *is* possible to define love without contrasting it to hatred. My favorite definition of love—you want to hear it?

S: Sure!

V: Love is desiring to do good to another. Whenever that desire to do good to another person—to the entire family of God—exists then that is love.

WAS GOD INVENTED BY MAN?

S: I read the front of the Bible and it says translated by King James or some dude like that. And it was probably invented by a government to keep their people in line.

V: You mean God is an invention of government?

S: Yeah, I really think so. An God is a crutch for a lot of people, man; it's a righteous crutch.

V: What if a person is lame and limping? Does he *need* a crutch? Are you saying crutches have no value?

S: It all depends.

V: For another thing, even where there are no governments—in some of the oldest tribal structures and pre-tribal structures among the aborigines of Australia, for example—there is *religion*, a belief in God. So how could you say it was set up by the government, if people who *have* no government still believe in God?

S: That's cool. Ha, ha, yeah, I can dig that.

V: In other words, there is a spiritual *need* in man.

(To another student)

V: Do you believe there is a God?

S: There's something, somewhere.

(Laughter)

V: You mean in order to create this world and this universe and hold everything together the way everything is held together there would have to be a God to explain it all?

S: There's something, somewhere, that caused all this. I don't know what it is.

V: I strongly believe that there *is* a God, and that by personal experience an individual can have a sense of *knowing* God. A person can have a sense of fellowship with God, that this is a friendly universe, in spite of evidence sometimes to the contrary. Man can live as a son of God and a brother to his fellow man, and this can transform the world—living as one family of God.

WHO IS GOD?

S: Who is God?

V: What did you say?

S: Who is God?

V: Who *is* God? I believe God is the Father of all human beings, that God is the First Source and Center, that God is the Creator, Controller and Infinite Upholder of all reality. What do *you* think He is?

S: I believe he's all that, but he's more. He's volition. So, what if volition says that God is of no practical use, that only volition is of practical use?

V: A God who can *change* volition—that is, who can change the *will*, the outlook, the understanding of people—is *very* relevant. And I believe God can do that. I've seen this happen in my own life.

S: What about man changing the idea of God? Doesn't man do that?

V: I believe that not only is God made in man's image, sometimes (in that religion has evolved and the concepts of God have changed) but also that God first of all made man in *His* image. Certainly, our concepts, our theories, our ideas and theologies of God have changed; but I think the Fatherhood of God is

still a very *relevant* idea because this is a God to whom a person can *relate*.

HOW CAN I BE CERTAIN OF LIFE AFTER DEATH?

S: Do you believe that everyone dies when their time comes? That when God feels that it's your time, you die?

V: No, I don't.

S: Some people do believe that, and I just can't conceive of it. Like, just a month ago one of my best friends died from drugs. But, I don't see how someone might say, "Well, it was her time to go. God felt that she was no longer useful on this earth," or whatever. And I just don't see that at all.

V: No, I don't believe that either. But I *do* believe that God is infinitely compassionate, that God is infinitely loving. And I *do* believe there is life after death.

S: Oh, I believe there is life after death, too, very strongly. But I believe what *I* believe—bits and pieces from beliefs of other people...

V: Sort of a "creedal cafeteria"?

S: Yea, I guess so.

V: Well, I *do* believe there is life after death; and I believe that man does not go through years of assiduous work developing character, learning patience, learning how to love and all the rest of this only to have it all snuffed out meaninglessly for the rest of eternity. I do believe there is a *spiritual* aspect to life, and it is that *spiritual* aspect to life that *survives* death.

Another Student: So you courageously and heroically choose to assume that there is life after death. I must admit that that is a courageous and heroic assumption.

V: Thank you.

S: It takes that much courage to put yourself that far out on a limb.

V: And here you come with a saw!

(Laughter)

S: Here I come with a saw. I don't know—why can't you just live now? We *know* we're alive now. Why don't we live now and let death take care of itself? That's what I'm saying.

V: *I'm* as sure that I'm going to live after my death as I am sure that I am alive *now*.

DO YOU NEED GOD TO LOVE PEOPLE?

S: Do you need to believe in a God to treat someone else as your brother? Do you really need this?

V: Let me ask you this: do you think the brotherhood of man is possible?

S: Do I really think so? No.

V: Why not?

S: I think people are just not ever going to be willing to treat everyone as a brother.

V: Maybe it is because we are reluctant to think of one God as being our *Father*, and the planet as being a *family*. What do you think?

S: Well, I don't know, but the Christians have never really been able to do this. Take for example the crusades. (sarcastically) I mean that shows a lot of "love and affection" toward the Moslems!

V: A distinction has to be made between the religion *of* Jesus and the religion *about* Jesus. Historically we've done a lot of talking *about* Jesus, and there have been a lot of teachings *about* what Jesus taught. But what he *himself* was talking about was a relationship *of love*. He was talking about compassion, about turning the other cheek, about doing good to a person who does evil to you, about loving your neighbor as yourself.

IS THERE A PURPOSE IN THE UNIVERSE?

S: I just don't believe that all this was created by some spirit. I think scientists have proof on the creation of the universe that is much more satisfying to me. I've found it much easier to believe than the Bible.

V: So you think that God did not create everything?

S: I don't think he even exists.

V: He wouldn't do much creating then.

S: He created nothing.

V: You say you think that the reason God does not exist is because it is possible to account for the universe and explain everything that exists without God?

S: Well, that's one reason. And I've seen no proof of God except for everybody jumping around with their Bibles and screaming and yelling and building huge buildings.

V: What about the *design* of the universe? The cleavage properties of minerals, the atomic structure of the elements, and so forth? Does it seem too incredible to have been just an accident?

S: Mmmm. It isn't an accident—you know—I wouldn't—well, you know...It's an accident, but it isn't *really* an accident...it's more like, uh, that is the way things happened, all the atoms created and all the dusts swirled around and created planets and the gasses created the stars.

V: If you were walking along the street and you came across a transistor radio, took the back off and looked inside and it had nine or ten transistors, it had batteries and all the rest; you turned it on and you were able to get a radio station with it—would you be inclined to think that it just *happened*, or would you be inclined to imagine that it probably was designed and manufactured?

S: Oh, it was designed and manufactured. I wouldn't think that it just happened.

V: Do you think an *atom* might be more complex than a transistor radio?

S: Yes.

Another student: I strayed away from the religion that I had been taught and began to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a reason. And I didn't want to stand up and face the responsibility of God and the responsibility of my life, and so I tried to give other answers and other reasons for the existence of things without God. I was just frustrated.

V: There is no explanation, you think, without God?

S: There *isn't*. I was just frustrated and bewildered. My brains were wracked trying to give other reasons for the existence of things and other reasons for the purpose of my life outside of keeping the commandments of God. I tried to give reasons for this; I was frustrated; I was about to go out of my mind. But the moment that I turned back to religion and accepted God and prayed to God and asked him to give me strength, things began to calm down and I began to feel more like myself again.

V: And part of what convinced you and made you certain of the existence and the reality of God, you said, was the design and the order of the cosmos and the universe?

S: Right, yes, in the *order* that is in the universe.

V: One mathematician has said that the odds of the universe happening by accident without a God—without a designer—are equivalent to the chances of an unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing shop.

(Laughter)

S: I like that.

V: In fact, George Gallup, creator of the Gallup Poll, said that he could prove God statistically just by the human body: all the fantastic biochemical and metabolic processes that take place; the design—from the retina of the eye to glandular hormone structure; that it would be a mathematical *impossibility* and *incredibility* that all this could have happened by accident. There *is* a creator, *God*.

S: Vern, you can't be. You just said we can have no knowledge of life after death. Empirical methods break down about such things as death.

V: What I'm saying is that faith *itself* is a state of *knowledge*. When Kathleen Norris—the San Francisco novelist—died, someone went back and found a 1924 edition of *Vanity Fair* magazine. The editor had requested famous Americans to write their own epitaphs. I remember the one Kathleen Norris wrote:

"This model mother, sister, wife
Believed through all her joys and woes
That life is death and death is life;
And now she knows."

I believe that, too!

II. HOW CAN I FIND AND KNOW GOD?

WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF PEOPLE?

S: Jesus had long hair in the pictures and a beard. Does that mean that he was a hippie? Does that mean he was dirty?

V: Are you asking, "If a person has long hair, does God condemn that person?" Clearly not.

S: Why does everyone say that a boy with long hair is dirty and grimy, and all that junk?

V: God is concerned with the inner motivations in the hearts of people.

S: He's in my heart?

V: He *knows* what's in there. Yes, in one sense you could say that he *is* in there.

S: Okay, but then if he's in my heart, what about the people who have bad hearts?

V: (Laughter) I mean to say, in your inner *mind* and your *motivations*, in your *mind* or in your *soul*.

Another Student: I think "heart" would be meant figuratively.

V: Thank you for that explanatory footnote. Yes, I think the important thing is that God *does* know what's in a person's mind, but it is not a matter of how long a person's hair is. It says in Micah, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." These are the requirements—not the length of hair. That other is all secondary.

DO I HAVE TO CHANGE BEFORE I CAN FIND GOD?

Male Street Person: I used to be strung out on smack.

V: You used to be on heroin, in other words.

S: Yes.

V: For how long a period of time were you on heroin?

S: I shot it every day for a year.

V: How much was that habit costing you? How expensive was it at that time?

S: Well, it probably ran as high as fifty dollars a day. And I have burned people¹, ripped them off², I have been in knife fights—

V: Winning or losing?

S: Some I won, some I lost. As I smile now you can see some teeth missing. It nearly cost me my life. I got so bad into burning and ripping off that people were out to kill me for it.

V: This was during the period of time—you say for a year—while you were on heroin?

S: Right.

V: Continually and every day?

S: Right, right.

V: And then you found God, and this changed your life?

S: I was in Mendocino Hospital for my third time and when I was released, the very same day I was released, I thought back to the other two times I was released. I flashed on³ what the psychiatrist said. He told me that if I wanted to kick the habit, I'd have to stay up there at least a year, and even after that time they weren't sure that I'd be off of it or not. As soon as I came out, I sold my bus ticket to go to San Francisco. I had some money, and I was thinking of going back into the city my third time and fixing that same day I got out of the hospital, which I had done the previous two times I was released.

V: Taking a shot of heroin?

S: Right, the same day I got out of the hospital. And I knew I was going to do it. And I stood on a highway, then I started doing some soul-searching. Because I've had it, you know, I've had it up as far as I can take it.

V: You probably almost felt as if you were searching for your soul, didn't you, in the soul-searching that you did at that point?

S: Yeah, I was searching for something to rescue me from all of this. Everywhere I turned, like, I've even tried to take acid⁴ to get away from heroin. I've tried to take speed⁵ to get away from heroin. And I met a chick, and I went out with her for a while and we were making it together, but it didn't work.

V: Then how was it that you found God as a personal experience in your life after all this drug-taking and all this trouble you'd had?

S: All strung out on dope, thinking all these lowly, dirty thoughts about ripping people off, and burning them, it was a comforting thought to know that I don't have to straighten out to come to God, but he can take me *just as I am* and come into my life.

V: Exactly as you were!

S: I used to think that in order to meet God, I'd have to clean up first, and I'd have to get my head straight, and get all these thoughts out of my head and all—about ripping off and burning, and purse-snatching, and whatever. But it's not true! He don't care *what's* in your mind. He doesn't care what you look like. He sees you inside. He wants to know if you're searching, if you want the truth, if you

¹"burning people": cheating others when selling illegal drugs.

²"ripping off": stealing.

³"flashed on": thought of.

⁴"acid": LSD.

⁵"speed": methamphetamines and stimulants.

want to change your way of life, if you want to come to the truth and the light—that's what he's interested in.

V: He's interested in this questing and hungering for your heart, whether you're hungry for God.

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO FIND GOD?

S: Well, like, what was your feeling when you finally, you know, hit it?

V: When I found God, you mean?

S: Yeah, yeah. Did you see him? Did you see him, or did you see the golden gates and all that stuff? Did you see heaven through the clouds?

V: No, I didn't see anything with my physical eyes, but it was a *joyous feeling*.

S: You felt it in your *body*?

V: I felt it, I'd say, in my *soul*. I felt it spiritually. The finding of God wasn't just a glandular or emotional feeling.

IS FINDING GOD A DECISION?

V: It's when you're driving down the freeway ten miles over the speed limit between two diesel semis and behind a moving van on a rainy midnight with your seat belt unbuckled and no tread on the tires and all of a sudden the rear doors of the moving van come flying open and a grand piano with a four-poster bed strapped to it rolls out on the freeway—it's at a time like *that* the average person learns to pray.

(Laughter)

S: It's at a time like that the average person *dies*!

V: However, should you have a bit more time at your disposal, you might want to try what Jesus said: "Go into your closet, close the door and pray."

S: Whenever I hear a preacher, I pray that they go away.

(Laughter)

Another Student: Either it's [spiritual motivation] there or it's not, and all the rituals and all the things you're going to do are not going to change it. And, in fact, I believe that it's always there, and what you've got to do is find it and exploit it to the greatest degree.

V: If a man had oil or gold in his backyard and all the geological engineers on earth knew it, they could all come parading up to his front door with attache cases in their hands and with maps and demonstrations that there was oil or gold on his land; but if a man *chose* not to believe it, he could go on living in a hovel and on a bare subsistence existence by the sheer refusal to believe something *that* good was already in his possession. And that's the condition of most people on this planet right now. They don't believe because they almost adamantly *refuse* to believe that anything that good could be true—that man could be a child of God, infinitely loved, with a spark of divinity within him!

HOW CAN I FEEL GOD'S LOVE?

S: I had a drug problem.

V: You were taking what—LSD?

S: I was taking everything. I did speed for two years, I've done smack, I was in a mental hospital for acid—I'm just a typical drug addict.

V: Are you still on it all?

S: Yeah, and I might...like my head is so messed up that, uh...that I can't think straight any more. Like I have a lot of feelings that I can't express. Well, I said one time, "I'm not gonna do the hype any more."

V: You mean you were not going to shoot heroin or speed?

S: Yeah, I said I wasn't going to do it anymore and that was in tenth grade, and I just did up some coke [cocaine] a couple of days ago. You know, it hasn't worked. I got into a religious trip a couple of years ago, in eighth grade, and I really dug it. I read the Bible and I've gone through the whole bit, you know.

V: The crucial thing is to make a complete commitment of your life to God and say, "Father, here I am, as a daughter of yours, I give my life totally to you." Then open yourself entirely to God's will and spirit. That's a beautiful decision. Do you see what I mean? The two great commandments in Mark, chapter twelve, were: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and you should love your neighbor as yourself." And when this new love begins to dominate your life, there is a joy in it and then you'll be certain about it, and you'll have power over drugs and over anything that binds you.

S: Well, how would I get this feeling? What would I do to—what would I do?

V: You have to have the *faith* to believe it. In the same way, I could hold out a handful of diamonds to you, but the choice would still be yours to accept them. That's the choice. It's a choice to *accept* the love and forgiveness of God. If you'll only accept it, then you can know the joy of living as a daughter of God. And it's a thrill!

S: Oh, I understand now—

V: Just *accept* it. Remember that God is a Father, that he is infinitely loving and you are infinitely *valuable*; that God knows every hair on your head, every thought in your mind, every cavity in your teeth, and he *loves* you. Right?

Different Student: I mean, His mercy endures forever.

V: That's how loving God is! And if you can just dare to believe that and live that way by faith every day and accept this infinite love of God, there's power in that.

S: Yeah. Okay, I can... alright... I understand that... well, I can *do* that. Alright... I'll *do* that.

V: And then go out and begin to *live* in this new way. *Live* by that faith. Act on that *faith* and life is a *joy*!

S: Yeah. Yeah, you talked me *into* it. I'm going to go upstairs—

V: (Laughter) That's great! What do you think of that!

Second Student: Man, that's *beautiful*!

Only transformed individuals
can create a transformed world
Only better men and women
can fashion a better society
Only advanced citizens
can architect an advanced civilization

All humankind are one vast family
This world our home
We sleep beneath one roof
the starry sky
We warm ourselves before one hearth
the blazing sun
Upon one floor of soil we stand
And breathe one air
And drink one water
And walk the night beneath one luminescent moon
The Children of one God we are
And brothers of one blood
And members in one worldwide Family of God

By Vern Bennom Grimsley