

Many Diary readers have expressed interest in the sorts of responses we receive from listeners to the Family of God radio broadcast, so we sifted through some recent mail and photocopied a few excerpts, which are included in this Diary as a supplement. The broadcast is on radio stations located in all fifty states of the U.S. and is reaching into twenty-three foreign countries as well. Response to the broadcast continues to be overwhelmingly positive, with two-thirds of our mail coming from young people.

Now and then a phrase from one of the letters we receive stays in my mind. I jotted down one such comment by a listener in India because I was particularly struck by the way he phrased his remark about the programs he heard over Radio Sri Lanka: "They kind of lifted me up when I felt drooped."

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In the first months of 1977 two new dimensions of the work of FOG toward the goal of proclaiming the gospel and ministering to our fellows were announced.

In January the Department of Personal Spiritual Counselling was established, with Co-Worker Marvin Gawryn in charge. Marvin, who holds an MA in Psychology with a specialization in counselling, has launched this aspect of the FOG work with training sessions and with increased activity on an individual level with listeners who have come to us for help.

On April 5, Co-Workers Mary Echlin and Jo Ann Eichmann announced joint plans in conjunction with the FOG Board of Directors to establish a Publishing Company, which would be active as an outlet for proclaiming spiritual truth to the planet.

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May 1 was another big day in the life of this group. The third Spiritual Renaissance Conference, sponsored by the Berkeley Area Interfaith Council, was held. Members of the FOG crew provided the majority of the leadership and planning for this Conference. Terry McCade was Chairman of the Conference and coordinated all the many facets. Sara Blackstock served as Co-Chairman, including organizing the discussion group leaders and mobilizing a campaign for contacting all the religious organizations in the area (no small task). David Kantor was Chairman of Publicity and launched a broad campaign, producing many press releases and TV spots for distribution to local news media. Bob Blackstock did professional photography for the poster and Terry did the graphic design and layout. Vern taped and produced a half-hour program of interviews with the various participants, which was run on several local radio stations. Fred Shupp was in charge of the FOG booth for the affair, and Susan Shupp made a really magnificent banner for FOG which will be used again and again. Mid-way through the Conference there was a meal for all participants, and I was the Chairman in charge of planning and preparation.

Every member of the FOG crew did considerable behind-the-scenes work in one or more of the above categories. It would be a difficult task to recount all the letters that were written, the telephone calls made, the chairs transported across town, the cheese that was shredded and the oranges that were peeled, and the meticulous follow-up on a thousand and one details that were handled by the FOG crew. I, for one, shan't even attempt such a feat.

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The Conference was a fine success. Bill Shive, Director of the Bay Area Interfaith Council, made the following comment to me later in a letter: "Thanks, too, for your loving spirit and the joyfulness with which you and your crew carried out your work."

We all worked hard, and we enjoyed doing it. (Perhaps another time I shall tell you some of the amusing incidents, for we had our share of those, too.)

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David Gray travels in the course of his work, and covers much of California up to the Oregon border. He has made many contacts with radio stations during these trips, and has added the broadcast to several of them. Twice during the spring, Dave has been the guest on a call-in telephone talk show done live on KNCR in Fortuna. These have been lively sessions for Dave, since the station listenership is strongly Christian fundamentalist. The state of the debates might be characterized by a rather wry comment David made to me about the callers after the first interview: "Some of them," he said, "were even friendly!" David did well in these encounters.

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In early winter Vern was on a west coast speaking tour which took him from California to Washington -- speaking in a different city each night. Audience responses were warm, and press coverage quite positive.

Vern was also guest lecturer on philosophy and religion at the University of San Francisco, an engagement arranged by Gard Jameson.

Mark Turrin arranged a special session at Diablo Valley College where both Vern spoke and Cosmic Pilgrim Productions presented a multi-media program.

Jeff Wattles, who holds a Ph.D. in philosophy, is Humanities Instructor at Armstrong College in Berkeley. He invited Vern to be a guest lecturer on philosophy and religion during the spring term. (He also arranged for Bettina to conduct a session on music, and invited me to present a class on the poetry of Emily Dickenson.)

The Whole Earth Fair was held in Davis, California, May 7th and 8th. Cosmic Pilgrim presented a multi-media program numerous times during the two day period, and had very good audiences. Francyl sang and Vern spoke, also.

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In May Vern gave the Family of God Foundation crew a complete tour of the Pacific School of Religion Library facilities. Our FOG educational subsidiary, the Spiritual Renaissance Institute, is the first organization to be given the use of these scholarly resources.

This is a library begun in 1866 and now housing over 100,000 volumes of religion and philosophy, in addition to over 50,000 microfilms on theology, and numerous rare texts.

If you visit Berkeley and want to engage in advanced studies of the world's religions and philosophies, FOG can give you a library card including stack priveleges and the use of study rooms and desks in this great library.

During the last year we have added four people to the Co-Workers of FOG: Francyl Gawryn, Marvin Gawryn, Christine Baetge, and Jeffrey Wattles. Francyl is working with me in a Department which we call Procurement and Dispersal (more recognizable to you, perhaps, as Supply and Demand). Marvin, in addition to the Department of Spiritual Counselling, works in Tape Mail Out. Chris proved herself such a valiant worker that it was with great reluctance the Tape Mail In crew saw her transfer into Tape Mail Out, where she now is. Chris was in effect a Co-Chairman for the meal at the Spiritual Renaissance Convergence. Jeff is the coordinator of the Fifty States Campaign Maintenance Program, and is also in Correspondence Counselling.

Another faithful laborer is Richard Keeler, our Executive Investment Manager, who continues to do tremendous work -- quietly and behind-the-scenes. We appreciate him!

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Francyl and Marvin recently began a project of working regularly with terminal patients at Kaiser Hospital in Oakland, giving them spiritual encouragement and positive support. Francyl also takes her guitar and sings. Vern and I have for nine years done similar work with the youngsters at Children's Hospital in Oakland. The Family of God Foundation ministry in the Bay Area also extends to the Matilda Brown Home for the elderly, where we conduct regular services, and to the California School for the Deaf and Blind.

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The wedding of Mary Brunner and Jim Blessing was performed by Vern in the beautiful chapel at Stanford University. Connie Aller and I were among Mary's attendants, and Brian Cox one of Jim's groomsmen. Francyl sang, superbly accompanied on the guitar by Jeff. Jim and Mary are living in San Mateo where Jim is a scientific researcher at the Stanford Research Institute. Jim also does custom electronics work for the FOG equipment, while Mary Beth writes letters to listeners and is in charge of our cassette studio.

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**SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY;** (Vern asked me to pass this along.)

If you are interested in helping us coordinate our broadcasting activities with local radio stations and listeners in your area please let us know by writing directly to Vern at Box 347, Berkeley, CA 94701. There may be something you can do to help us in your part of the country.

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The enclosure of letters from listeners is so thick that I have confined myself to reporting only our business, and have sternly restrained myself from the chatter that I am often tempted to tuck into these Diaries. My cutting room floor is littered with bits and pieces that I have ruthlessly eliminated. However, I felt stern control was in order, since I am already including so much for you to peruse. (I shall have to admit, with a slightly guilty look on my countenance, that I could not resist at least mentioning my heroic efforts to keep this Diary short on your behalf.)

Happy summer to you,

Nancy

P.S. to our fellow Readers of The URANTIA Book:

During January of 1977 it was our great pleasure to have Jim and Eunice Mills stay with us for three days, during which time he presented two evenings of talks on universe philosophy. In addition, we had marvelous visits with both of them during their stay here.

(After three days of heavily scheduled activities, the moment came when we could all relax over a leisurely meal. Relax we did, and humor and antics reigned. We all greatly enjoyed Jim's comment, at the height of the merriment: "The Reversion Directors are at work, I see.")

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Vern and several of the crew were away the evening that Jim and Eunice arrived because Vern was conducting the memorial services for Josephine Kirscher, who had died of cancer. She was a student of The URANTIA Book, and a member of Mark Turrin's study group. Her family (not students of The URANTIA Book) were so impressed with the way she was able to meet her death that they wanted a student of The URANTIA Book to conduct the services. Subsequently, they sent a sizeable contribution to Chicago headquarters in her memory.

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At the recent Oregon conference for Readers of The URANTIA Book two dozen of us from the San Francisco Bay Area were in attendance. Marvin Gawryn presented an excellent seminar on "Spiritual Habits," and others from California and Oregon gave superb talks. The evening session was held at a college auditorium where Julia Fenderson, Chick Montgomery gave talks, Vince Ventola gave a worshipful presentation of slides of his paintings with music, followed by Francyl's music, an address by Vern and a multi media presentation by Cosmic Pilgrim Productions (including their new laser beam).

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A Special P.S. from Vern... In mid-July Nancy goes into the hospital for major surgery — the removal of a large tumor, a complete hysterectomy and appendectomy. Your prayers would really be appreciated. Thanks!

VRC

# A Religious 'Renaissance'

By RALPH RATH  
Tribune Religion Writer

BERKELEY—"In a religiously pluralistic society, the idea of sharing and dialogue between religionists is crucial," Vern Bennom Grimsley said. He is a radio broadcaster and the director of the Spiritual Renaissance Institute of Berkeley who will preside at an ambitious effort at interfaith dialogue May 1.

The third annual "Spiritual Renaissance Conference" will run from 1 to 9 p.m. and will include both discussions and religious practices.

There will be an organic vegetarian dinner (included in the \$3 registration fee) as well as displays and booths dispensing food, books and information.

Using the courtyard, offices and sanctuary of St.

John's United Presbyterian Church, 2727 College Ave., the conference will provide free child care for children between the ages of 3 and 12. The children will be given religious instruction and will present their own program at 7 p.m.

In an interview, Mr. Grimsley cited recent national polls as reporting that 96 per cent of Americans say they believe in God.

"This is a distant and generalized endorsement of religion," Mr. Grimsley said. Many of these people have only a very dim and confused idea of God, he said, adding that many "only believe in believing in God."

The May 1 conference, Mr. Grimsley pointed out, will go beyond the discussion stage and will "get into the viscera of religious experience." The hope will be that the participants will concentrate "not just on knowing about God, but on knowing God."



Tribune photo by ROY WILLIAMS

TERRY McCADE (RIGHT), PARLEY CHAIRMAN  
Vern Bennom Grimsley, Pingala Devi, Sara Blackstock

## 'Into Religious Experience'

The conference is sponsored by the Berkeley Area Interfaith Council (BAIC). The Celestial Seasonings tea company will provide herbal teas and has given a grant to help underwrite conference expenses.

Following an introductory talk by Mr. Grimsley, the other principal speakers will be Imamima Mehdi Khorasani, president of the Islamic Society of California; Pingala Devi, instructor at the Prana Yoga Centre; Sharon Gallagher, editor of Radix magazine, and Karam Jot Singh Khalsa, regional minister of the Sikh Dharma Brotherhood.

Terry McCade is the conference chairman. Sara Blackstock, BAIC secretary, is in charge of registration.

There will be sessions of Sufi dancing led by Farid and members of the Sufi Order, of chanting led by the Rev. Toshio Murakami and members of the Buddhist Temple, of meditative dancing led by Dharmamurti and members of the Paras Rajneesh Meditation Center and of worship led by the Rev. William Shive, BAIC director.