



Spencer Pendergrass

Vern Grimsley, director of the Spiritual Renaissance Institute in Berkeley spoke

before a small crowd Wednesday at CSUF. His talk was taped for his international religious broadcast,

"On Campus." Grimsley regularly makes campus appearances nationwide.

Religious program taped at CSUF

By PAULINE REPARD
DT Staff Writer

"Spiritual renaissance will make more difference in the world than any conflict, war, political, economic or social upheaval since the beginning of man," Vern Bennom Grimsley, director of the Spiritual Renaissance Institute in Berkeley, said.

Grimsley, who broadcasts the international religious program "On Campus," did a live taping at CSUF last Wednesday before an audience of about 40 people.

"When I first began the radio show at UC Berkeley 10 years ago, I not only saw riots, bombings and suicides, but also the dawning of an awakened spiritual interest," Grimsley said.

"Only transformed individuals can create a transformed world. Many students are trying to find self-realization. A survey at UC Berkeley showed 86 per cent of the freshmen were entering college in a quest for life's meaning," he continued.

"As they ask about life and their own identities, they should discover their potential for tremendous energy. Human potential is spiritual as well as physical and emotional."

Grimsley said one need not intellectually understand spirituality to accept it. Just knowing we have a place in

the universe, and that God loves us, he said, will bring spirituality.

Recalling some of the questions he has been asked by students over the years, Grimsley said one question dealt with how religion can be good when so much evil has been done in its name.

"Because wrongs have been done in the name of Christianity does not mean that the principles behind it are bad," Grimsley explained. "Present day doctors are not held accountable for wrongs done by members of their profession in years past. The same should hold true for Christians.

He emphasized that many people do not like religion because of misconceptions that are generally accepted.

"I've been asked how Jesus could whip people to get them out of the temple when he supposedly stands for love and peace. But nowhere in the New Testament does it say that he used the whip on anyone. And only one of the four accounts of the incident even mentions a whip at all," Grimsley said.

According to Grimsley, some students look at a few scriptures and come to the conclusion that Jesus used fear to convert people. But, he pointed out, what these students don't read is Jesus' teaching of the new commandment to love one's neighbor as one's self.

"There's no such thing as a stranger, really. He's just a brother you haven't met yet," he added.

"One student told me that religion should be studied intellectually, in a classroom, and that's all. When one studies politics, or nutrition, is the knowledge left in the class? Absurd! Things that are learned are meant to be applied to life. Religion and philosophy at their best are the most delightful experiences a person can have. You don't see God, you experience Him," Grimsley said.

He said there are many complaints about the institution of religion, but felt that the 'container,' or institution, isn't necessarily identical to the truth contained. Religion can expand horizons and fill human needs, he said.

"We can discover the source of our spirituality. Most people don't even explore it, let alone discover it, but anyone can transform the self. Until people are transformed though, the world can never be," Grimsley claimed.

He said that, while at UC Berkeley, a student told him he could never believe there was a God who loved him "Unless 2,000 angels came to him with thunder and lightning, and playing the music to '2001'."

"I asked if he would believe if only 1,000 angels came, and he said yes. I finally got him down to one angel with no music or noise, and he still said yes, then he would believe.

"So it wasn't a matter of the number of angels. It was his own willingness to believe that was the issue," Grimsley said.