

VERN GRIMSLEY IN SO.CAL.

- Jim Mcnelly (insert at end)

Persons living outside of California little know that this state is deeply split between the North and South. There are conflicts over water rights and use of taxes between the forested, more rural north and the arid, more densely populated south. It was with great anticipation that I, as a student at a university in Southern California, was able to help Vern Grimsley from Berkeley in Northern California come down and do some open evangelizing in ultra-conservative Orange County.

Vern had told me that he wanted to tape his radio broadcast, "On Campus", on campus at schools other than Berkeley and asked about my school, Cal State Fullerton. Anxious to bring some life to a rather barren commuter school, I jumped at the idea. I went to the Religious Studies student association and asked them if they wanted, at no expense or effort on their part, to sponsor Vern's talk on Campus. They balked at the idea stating that there was a separation of church and state and that religion on the radio from a school might be too controversial causing the government to close down the Religious Studies department. ^{I never} ~~There was no mention~~ of any connection with URANTIA activities, just the ~~thought of~~ proposal of religious evangelism. I had been one of the founders of the student association and was shocked at their hesitation in supporting a project of a long time member. Undaunted, I went to the Student Activities center and founded my own group called

the "Friends of Truth." It was no problem getting a faculty advisor and four members as there are many URANTIA scholars and friends of truth on campus. Our first activity was sponsoring Vern to speak and indeed he did.

~~Armed with microphones, public address systems, posters and press releases, I set the stage for Vern's arrival.~~ Those who may have seen Vern speak before URANTIA gatherings know of his presence and oratorical power, but those who have yet to see him in outside truth revealing are in for a surprise. His appeal is compelling, universal and a thrilling demonstration of the dynamich of a living spiritual faith. On a campus known for its apathy and active non-involvement, Vern was able to hold the attention of one hundred full time listeners and to cause an equal number of passers-by to stop and listen for a short while. Vern, in one afternoon, out drew the rock-bands, the political pedagogues, the lecture series and even food as a main attraction.

He told us not to be ashamed for being religious in an age where organized religion is getting a bad name. He shared some insights gleaned from years of talking to students at the Berkeley campus. More than being entertaining, Vern's message of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is presented in a dynamic and compelling manner. Not only is his style interesting and the material thought-provoking, the relevance of his appealing gospel is immediate in its receptivity.

His talk went on for an hour with questions and answers following. When Vern addressed our monthly FUSLA meeting in December, the message was still the Gospel of Jesus, but the appeal was for teachers even more than believers. Vern drew over eighty persons to the FUSLA meeting

with many of the Bay Area group coming down with him.

As Director of the Spiritual Renaissance Institute and President of the non-denominational Family of God Foundation, Grimsley has been the subject of a nation-wide CBS interviews and powerful Radio Free Europe has beamed his commentary on the future of religion behind the Iron Curtain in six languages.

This dawning spiritual renaissance, according to Vern, "will one day make more difference in this world than any war which has ever been waged, or any governmental, political, social or economic upheaval in all of human history." This is an age of seekers, and we at the Spiritual Renaissance Institute say there is something to find -- God. When you seek God, you seek it all; when you find God, you find all."

Those interested in more information may contact the Spiritual Renaissance Institute by writing to Box 347, Berkeley, California, 94701. Be sure to ask for the time and station for Vern's broadcast, "On Campus", in your area.