

GIFT GIVERS

Agape International Ministries

November 1999

From One to Many – The Positive Side of Y2K

As the world waits for the unprecedented and potentially cataclysmic impact of Y2K, the consensus seems to be “doom and gloom.” There are some who emphasize the positive aspects of the crisis, however. Here are a few examples.

Pulling Together

In an article entitled “All Together Now,” Paloma O’Reily, regarded by many as one of America’s leading authorities on Y2K community preparedness, has this to say about the impending crisis.

“The year 2000 problem represents a potentially difficult time for all of us. No one knows what will happen, nor how serious it will be. However, we can and will get through this or any other difficulties, if we all work together.

“Life isn’t just survival, it’s about living, building, and growing; and passing it on to the next generation. The only way to get through this is to pull together and work through it as a community. Problems can’t be escaped, they can only be dealt with. If you are concerned about your safety, the best means of securing it is to help your neighbor prepare; and work with your community to develop needed and appropriate plans.”

In another article, co-written by Jim Lord, a widely read Y2K columnist, O’Reily writes, “The year 2000 computing crisis poses a frightening threat to almost every aspect of our way of life. Some believe it should be confronted with a remote cabin, a pile of dried food, a big dog, and a shotgun. This strategy, although perhaps rational on an individual basis, is unworkable for society as a whole.”

Do the preceding comments mean that we should not individually prepare for Y2K? O’Reily

writes, “Preparing for the worst doesn’t mean you believe it will happen, it means only that you accept the possibility exists. You don’t need proof that your house will burn down before you buy fire insurance, nor that you will have an automobile accident to purchase car insurance. In the same way, you do not need to believe worst-case Y2K scenarios will happen to take out another kind of insurance — emergency preparedness.”

For O’Reily’s detailed, updated version of what should be done, consult her Web site at <http://CassandraProject.org/home.htm> or write to The Cassandra Project, PO Box 8, Louisville, CO 80026-0008. The Cassandra Project is a nonprofit organization whose focus is public and individual Y2K preparedness.

An Opportunity for Change

Eric Utne, founder and editor-in-chief of the Utne Reader series, while hoping that “we look foolish when Y2K passes,” nevertheless, is also planning for the worst. In his Fall 1999 Y2K Citizen’s Action Guide, Utne writes, “As we prepare for Y2K, something surprising and unexpected and quite wonderful is going to happen. We’re going to get to know our neighbors. Possibly for the first time in our lives, we will begin to know what it means to live in a real community. Most Americans these days live in networks, not communities. We tend to work, study and hang out with people who are like ourselves. We rarely associate with people who are not similar to us in terms of education, income, age, race, physical characteristics, and world view. We put our old people in nursing homes and our young ones in day-care centers. Lawbreakers are kept behind bars and the physically disabled and the mentally ill are kept out of sight. We pay trained

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EDITORIAL: On the Way to Finding Out

By the time you read this, there will be little more than a month to prepare for the impending Y2K computer crisis which we feel is certain to affect all of us to some degree come the stroke of midnight, December 31, 1999.

Massive effort and money has been spent in a desperate worldwide attempt to minimize Y2K's expected catastrophic effects, but just how much has been accomplished is not known. We do know, however, that AIM/CAMEM's computer data and computer systems are ready, as are the main banks with which the ministry has dealings.

Though we don't know how Y2K will affect the world, God does, and He's in control. So even if the worst-case scenarios do come true, we need not be unduly surprised nor concerned. "In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33 [NIV]

As Y2K draws nearer, we need to take comfort in the fact that it's never midnight for the followers of our Lord, Jesus Christ. On the cross, He conquered death, so we need not fear death, of any type — economic, lifestyle, whatever. "I tell you the truth, if a man keeps my word, he will never see death." John 8:51 [NIV]

For those who trust God through whatever's coming, Y2K will be an unprecedented opportunity to "occupy the Kingdom" as directed in Luke, Chapter 19. God expects no less from his people — the Body of Christ — because nothing but the blood of Jesus can bring together all men from every nation.

Just as on the day of Pentecost two thousand years ago, God is going to move across the world and gather His people from every nation. All will come under the same gospel, worshipping in one accord the One and true living God. Those who accept Him will have eternal life, those who don't will perish.

What does this mean for you? Y2K may be when you find out!

— Wade David

Remember... It's Your Newsletter

Please help us make your newsletter more relevant and personal. Do you have an insight or an experience that could inspire and encourage others? We hope you'll let us bless others by sharing it through **Gift Givers**. Of course, we can't promise to publish all submissions, but we truly value what you have to say, and love hearing from our readers.



(...continued from front page)

service personnel to handle 'others' for us so we can get on with our careers and our personal growth.

"Y2K is an opportunity to change all this. Y2K is the excuse we've been waiting for to stop making so many compromises in how we know we should, and want to, live our lives. Y2K is our opportunity to stop our polluting and wasteful practices, and start living more sustainable, environmentally friendly lives. Y2K is the conversational gambit that can lead to discussions that begin to knit webs of affiliation, care, and mutual support. Y2K can bring a family feeling throughout the community."

Utne's Action Guide is available at most national bookstores, online at www.utne.com, or by calling Powell's Books at (800) 878-7323.

Discovering What's Possible

In a rather scholarly evaluation of the Y2K problem entitled "Turning to One Another: The Possibilities Of Y2K," Margaret Wheatley and Myron Kellner-Rogers, experts in complex organizational processes and concepts, write that Y2K represents a new type of problem: the failure of complex systems. The writers go on to say that "what was first seen as a problem for each organization (or country) to solve individually has become a problem that can't be solved alone. What does it matter how compliant and ready you are if your suppliers lag behind, or if your employees can't get to work or don't have food, or if power plants fail? What good does it do you to be prepared if your neighbors aren't?"

"Initially, Y2K was thought to affect only software; it seemed to be a relatively simple problem, but then we learned that embedded microprocessors were vulnerable to the date change. These chips are so prevalent in modern life — in cars, satellites, home appliances, utilities, oil rigs, transportation systems, telecommunications, manufacturing, and medical equipment — that the average American is in contact with [about] seventy microprocessors before noon each day.

"Complex systems require new approaches to dealing with their entangled interdependencies and inherent fuzziness. Complex-system failures cannot be solved alone. Y2K insists that we come

together in new ways, that we turn to one another.

"Disasters often illuminate what is best in humans: our heart-opening willingness to come together, to use whatever is available to rescue and save other human beings. The year 2000 problem requires just such participation from all of us. We cannot leave Y2K to the technology experts, or to the consultants, or to leaders. We are all affected; we all have essential perspectives to contribute, and we all must be involved.

"The nature and complexity of Y2K leads us to invite back those we've excluded from current society. Our elders knew how to function before computers became substitutes for human activity. Our poor and disenfranchised long ago learned how to pull together in the face of need, or failed delivery of services. Our youth want to reconnect with us; their energy could be focused on the many assessment and information-gathering activities required. Our churches can provide both physical and emotional centers for this work.

"Let's all begin our planning from the place of possibility, not fear. If we have worked together to discover what's possible, we will have developed the collective capacity and compassion to go through whatever Y2K presents to us. If we begin in earnest now to call ourselves together, the millennial sun can provide its energy to those dreams of community held by many of us."

Wheatley and Keller-Rogers can be contacted on the web at www.berkana.org, or at PO Box 1407, Provo, UT 84603. ■

— Wade David

Urgent Prayer Request

Mike Hutchinson, a missionary in West Senegal, West Africa, was involved in an unavoidable accident where a 16-year-old boy was killed. Apparently there have been rumors that Mike is in jail under murder charges, but this is not true, though it is our understanding that his driver's license and passport may have been taken from him pending a hearing on this matter. While waiting for the outcome of this situation, Mike is continuing with his ministry. Pray that the rumors will stop and that as the truth becomes known, the situation will be resolved satisfactorily. We live in a hostile world with unfriendly and resistant people, so we need to cover our dear workers in a blanket of prayer.

Y2K: There still is a problem with it.

by P. L. "Buster" Smith, computer specialist, RET

First of all, I believe a word about myself is in order. I'm a retired computer systems design specialist with 23 years of experience within the computer industry. I hold several design awards and commendations for excellence in this field. I hold a degree in computer science, a Bachelor of Divinity, a Masters with primary studies in prophecy, and an honorary Doctor of Divinity.

The Birth of the Millennium Bug

In the 1960's and 1970's the cost of storing data (information) of one million bytes (a very small measure of data held within a computer's storage system) was around \$250,000 (one quarter of a million) dollars. Even the larger companies could not justify that very high price for storing their records on a computer without standardized formatting as a guiding principle. For comparison, that same one million bytes of information can now be stored, 30 years later, for a few pennies! (Yes, pennies!)

One of the quick fixes used in the computer industry was to choose what is now known as the "computer date" system whereby designers used only numbers to represent dates. They were stored, for instance, as 101070 to indicate October 10, 1970. This saved a great deal of valuable storage space, and from a functional standpoint, it was much easier to handle, helping to put a stop to common errors. For example, there was no need to worry that the month might be misspelled. The major reason for this date standardization, however, was because of the cost of computer storage space at that time.

Money, as usual, dictated the solution to yet another problem. As time went on, most of the original programs were modified and enhanced to meet specific user needs. This made the date problem much worse. You see, in the early days of many programs that have become the work horses of today's computer systems, all records that contained a date code of 99 were considered to represent infinity or date unknown/unspecified. This is still the case in almost all of today's computer programs because they were built around the structure of these old work horse programs. Most programs of today are not new

but are in fact changes or enhancements of programs which were compiled decades ago.

There is such massive data exchange today that it is possible that *just one* computer can corrupt the entire world's financial markets and political systems because when that one computer encounters a date using 00 for the year 2000, it may reset its internal calendar to the year 1900, thereby not only corrupting or destroying its own critical records, but those of any other computer(s) receiving information from it.

A Trillion-Dollar Problem

To some, the Y2K problem may seem minor, but to give you an idea of its scope, consider this: The Federal Banking System of the United States (the Fed) estimated that Y2K would require the rewriting of about 60,000 lines of computer code in just its own computers. They now know that the required amount of work is about ten times that number of lines at a cost somewhere near four times the original estimate, bringing it up to about a trillion dollars. Also, the time required to finish this project has it completed 4 to 6 years too late.

This problem also exists in the FDIC, the IRS, our national military defense systems, the national and international air traffic control systems, most telephone systems, the stock market, grocery distributors, oil production facilities, manufacturing industries, train rail systems, cargo shipping, mail bar coding, hospital and nursing care operations, companies large and small, satellite communication, television networks, nuclear weapons deployment control systems, and on, and on, and on.

Alan Greenspan of the Federal Reserve says that the national government has a back-up system waiting to nationalize all communications, all energy distribution systems, and all banking and financial markets so that our "world" can survive, but he remains, "unable to say" what that system is.

Meanwhile, our president stands ready to sign executive order EO-11490 which basically gives him the power to declare martial law, suspend the constitution, and dissolve both the congressional

and the judicial branches of government, thereby handing total control of a national police/military force (made up of all military and federal, state, and local law enforcement) to the executive branch of government. All speech, gatherings, media reporting, etc., will be regulated and controlled by the executive branch, under the president's command.

You Don't Have to Be a Y2K Victim

If we, as informed citizens and Christians, are going to meet this problem head on, we must be prepared in three major ways.

1) Physically. Many of the things we take for granted in our society may come to a grinding halt. When this happens, we must be prepared to provide the basic essentials for ourselves and our families. (See the chart on the next page for a list of 12 ways to prepare for the coming crisis.) If the computers go down for a long period of time, we will have to learn to function in somewhat primitive conditions where the essentials of shelter, fresh food, and clean air and water will take on an entirely new meaning. Depending on how long the crisis lasts, we may end up fighting for survival against the forces of nature as well as the intrusions of unprepared neighbors.

2) Mentally. The second area of preparation is our emotional well-being. Please remember that the God of heaven will supply all our needs by Christ Jesus, our Lord. This statement was true when it was written almost 2000 years ago and is still in force today. It is also true that God the Creator gave us a wonderful brain with which to think and reason. Many times God provides for us and protects us by sending warnings ahead of time

so that we may make preparation. All the faith in this world or in heaven can never change the fact that to be ignorant on purpose is just being plain old stupid. If I walked by your house and saw that your dwelling was on fire, do you think that I should warn you, or should I choose to let God preserve you because of your faith in Him? I would be locked away to protect me from myself if I did the latter. I am writing this article to warn you before it is too late.

3) Spiritually. The third area of preparation is the most important of all. You must be prepared spiritually by being adopted into the family of God, through Jesus Christ. If you do not know Jesus as your Savior, if you do not have peace in your heart, if you do not know that God has forgiven you of all your sins and has washed and cleansed you from sin, then you must ask Him to be the Lord (Master) of your life. It is going to be difficult to make it through this soon coming crisis. Without Jesus dwelling in your heart, this time will be a period of great hopelessness and pain. Ask Jesus to be your Savior now! There is no time to waste! Do not go any further until you accept Jesus. Find a Bible and read the book called Romans. It will give you great insight into God's dealings with us. Find a good Bible-believing church and become very active in its operation. The only way we are going to make it through this crisis is with the support of our family in Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter.

In conclusion, I urge you to pray for the best but be prepared for the worst! Also, feel free to copy and distribute this article as you see fit. Be guided by the Holy Spirit. ■

Special Provision for New FC's in Effect Now

As an encouragement to small and medium-sized churches, a special provision is in effect through the end of 1999. New CAMEM Founding Church positions with an initial donation of \$3000 or less, will be given full Harvest Unit credit for the initial donation. The usual \$1500 expansion donation will be waived under this special arrangement. In effect, this will quadruple the monthly Direct Harvest (projected at \$200, instead of \$50) that would normally be available to a Founding Church starting with a \$3000 donation!

NOTE: All expansion donations will apply if the Founding Church elects to give additional donations. This special arrangement only applies to churches that have been meeting regularly for at least three months. It does not apply to other organizations, missionaries, or groups within a local church.

CAMEM Harvest Fund Performance

October, 1999

11.6%

***THE ALMIGHTY SHOWERS
US WITH HIS BLESSINGS!***

12 Ways to Prepare for the Coming Y2K Crisis

1. Get hard (paper) copies of all important documents, such as birth certificates, social security cards, deeds, titles, tax returns. Once you have these documents, find a place other than a bank safety deposit box to store them as many banks may shut down when the crash hits.
2. Protect your personal property before bank runs begin by changing them to tangibles (silver, gold, platinum, etc.). Bartering and tangible exchange may become the means to obtain goods and services after Y2K hits. Store your tangibles in a safe place other than a bank.
3. Find a good source of water other than your faucets. Ideally, it's best to have your own well with a simple manual pump. Other sources of clean water include springs, creeks, and other natural water ways. If you use water from outside sources, it may require sterilization.
4. Stockpile provisions. Remember, stockpiling is not the same as hoarding. Stockpiling is holding a reserve for an emergency that may arise. Hoarding is the acquiring of items by any means after a crisis exists. A general rule is: 2250 calories per day per person.
5. Learn to defend yourself, your family, and your property. If your convictions are such that a gun isn't appropriate, there are alternatives like mace, a guard dog, etc. That is a personal decision.
6. Look closely at where you live. If you are planning to move to the country, there has never been a better time than now. Gangs and military police will probably be the rulers of urban areas. Get to know your neighbors. There is strength in numbers.
7. Make sure your clothing is adequate. It may get pretty cold without central heat. And with no air conditioning, the summer nights will be sticky. Also remember, when things tend to be uncomfortable or a little hot, tempers tend to run on the warm side, too.
8. Make certain you have a medical supply kit in your house. A how-to book on medical emergencies may be a true life saver. Become acquainted with its contents from cover to cover. You never know when you may need to sew up a cut, treat a snake bite, or even deliver a baby. Make sure that you have prescription medications on hand for those who need them.
9. Set up some kind of alternative communications system, such as a CB (Citizens Band).
10. Make sure you have an alternative source of heat for warmth and cooking. A gas grill may be good for the short term, but it will run out of propane. Where will you get a refill? The nearest filling station may be miles away, assuming that it has propane when you get there!
11. Plan ahead for the disposal of waste. Don't wait until the time comes when you're forced to do it. When we can not flush our toilets, old fashioned chamber pots lined with grocery bags will ease the disposal process and conserve on water. Plus, those bags can be easily buried. Remember that illness and vermin spread very rapidly in filth. Sanitation is high priority.
12. Make sure that you have several how-to books on hand on subjects like general repair, carpentry, etc. Also have some hand (non-powered) tools with which to work. You might want to have some nails, screws, tape, plastic sheeting, fasteners, washers, glue, rope, wire, etc., in case you need them.



Bonnie's Corner

Greetings once again! During this festive time of the year, everyone here at Agape is thankful for all the blessings being bestowed by our mighty God upon His children. Not even the potential Y2K dangers detailed in this newsletter can dim our joy as we know that whatever happens, God will be with us. "For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, 'Do not fear; I will help you.'" Isaiah 41:13 [NIV]

This is not to say that we should not take action in matters that concern us, however. While our trust should be in the Lord to see us through the difficulties and snares of the world, we often need help from our fellow man, and this sometimes includes our elected officials and policy makers. Letters to these people — whether they be to Members of Congress or locally elected officials — can be an effective way of influencing public policy, such as laws and procedures regarding abortion, education, and, yes, even Y2K. Some letters, of course, are more effective than others, especially those which comply with the following tips which I want to share with you.

1) Have a Specific Message. Make sure to have a specific action request before you write. If you want a decision changed, a vote cast a particular way, or to communicate specific facts, be clear and concise. For legislative action, be sure to include the name and bill number of the legislation you are advocating (i.e., the America Loves Dogs Act, HR1). Ask for a specific, detailed reply, and be prepared to write a second time if you receive a response that is vague.

2) Be Brief. Your letters are more likely to be read if they are brief and to the point. Include one or two arguments for your position — presumably, those arguments in which your opinion would be given particular weight by virtue of your position or those that are simply powerful on their own merits.

3) Target Your Letters. Elected officials — particularly federal office holders — seldom read their own mail. This duty normally falls to a staffer — often one with little influence over policy decisions. To increase the chances that your letters will have impact, make sure to direct them to staff members who have some responsibility for the issue(s) in question. For letters to Congress, these individuals will most often be Legislative Assistants or Legislative Directors.

4) Personalize Your Letters. Although mass-produced postcards and letters can demonstrate to policy makers that a large group of people hold the same point of view, individually written postcards and letters are much more effective. A policy maker knows the letter writer is genuinely concerned about an issue when he or she has taken the time to write a personal letter.

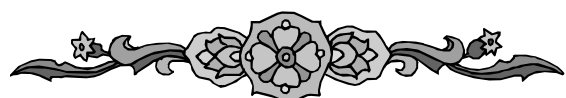
5) Be Courteous. Rude comments in your letter will make it less effective. One can be firm while being courteous.

6) Follow-up. If you receive a vague response from an elected official, write again and request more specific information. And, should the policy maker do as you ask, make sure to send a thank you. Thank you letters are rare and thus most appreciated.

And there you have it. Most of these steps, as excerpted, with permission, from the Environmental Policy Task Force's **How-To Guide #1**, seem like just good old common sense, to me, but you'd be surprised how many times people forget to put them to use. If you want more detailed information about proper communication with policy makers, write to the Environmental Policy Task Force, 300 Eye Street, NE, Suite 3, Washington, DC 20002, or phone them at (202) 543-1286, Fax (202) 543-4779. If you're on the Internet, you may email to ncppr@aol.com. Their web site is www.nationalcenter.inter.net.

And while on the subject of letters, don't forget to contact us through the addresses and phone numbers listed on this newsletter's staff column on page 2. We would love to hear from you on how AIM/CAMEM and/or the newsletter is blessing you. If you're not happy about something, we would like to hear about that too. And we would love to include your prayer requests in the newsletter. Remember that Dave and I, and all of the staff, love all of you as brothers and sisters in Christ, and it is our great pleasure to bless you in every way that our loving God allows. It is our sincere prayer that you will have a great Thanksgiving.

-Bonnie



Stand Together – Be Free!

As I begin this column, I am reminded of just how much God has blessed AIM in its efforts to share God's abundance with fellow Christians. This is especially true of CAMEM, where God's power and grace is being poured out beyond expectation. In the grip of such awesome growth and potential, there is always the possibility of getting wrapped up in the demands of day-to-day involvement, so at this traditional time of thanksgiving, I want to slow down for a few moments to share with you the foundational position of this unique ministry.

I'll begin with the fact that although we are a nondenominational ministry and do not consciously attempt to force our teachings on anyone, the ministry's leaders are predominately evangelical Christian in their belief and practice. This fact inevitably affects every aspect of our ministry efforts, including this newsletter. For this reason, the following partial statement of faith is offered as a basis for Christian fellowship.

God. There is only one true God. He is spirit and exists eternally in three indivisible persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Bible. The Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible are the inspired Word of God, infallible and without error in the original writings. The Bible is our authoritative guide for faith and practice.

Man. All human beings, though created in God's image, are born with a sinful nature, because of Adam's sin. As sinners, they are under the penalty of death, both physical and spiritual.

Jesus Christ. The Lord of all creation is Jesus Christ. He pre-existed with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. In obedience to the will of the Father,

Jesus became flesh and dwelled among men. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and miraculously born of Mary, a virgin. Jesus lived a sinless life. He is our Supreme Example, demonstrating how man is to walk in harmony with the will of God, with the power of God flowing through Him. Jesus called all people to repentance. He was crucified, suffered, bled, and died, offering Himself as the payment for the sins of all mankind. He was buried and rose from the grave on the third day. He ascended to the right hand of God the Father where He reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus is the only mediator between God and mankind. He provides the only way for people to be reconciled with God. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. Jesus Christ will return to earth, raise the dead, judge all men and women, and establish His glorious kingdom.

The Holy Spirit. All human beings are convicted of sin and drawn to Christ by the Holy Spirit. He indwells, enlightens, empowers, encourages, and equips believers to live victoriously, in harmony with the will of God and in fellowship with one another.

Salvation. Individuals are free to accept or reject the forgiveness, pardon, and reconciliation offered them in Jesus Christ. Each person is also accountable for his/her choice. When an individual trusts Christ for salvation, the person is justified by God and adopted into the family of God. Failure to trust Jesus for salvation results in eternal separation from God in Hell.

That's our stand. Stand with us, and be free!!!

Happy Thanksgiving!

- *Brother Dave*



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