

## RE: THE MILLENNIUM ISSUE

The date for the Y2K bug to attack us is fast approaching. One of my young friends bought property in the mountains of New Mexico and moved his family to a supposedly safe place. Some are preparing for the year 2000 by stocking food and water. Exactly what will happen remains to be seen.

Contemplating things to come, the *AUSS* editorial board started thinking millennium more than two years ago. Could we put together a special millennium issue? What relation could we find between the year 2000 and the biblical, theological, and historical research that constitute the trademark of *AUSS*?

We soon realized that the word "millennium," though the simple juxtaposition of two Latin words meaning "one thousand" and "years," conveys more than one idea. "Millennialism" is not so much the belief in a thousand-year period as the conviction that the last days are at hand. Examples of that use are George Knight's *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993) or the *Millennial Harp*, an 1842 hymnal used by the Millerites. A recent book ties the word to the Waco debacle: *Toward the Millennium: Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco*, ed. Peter Schäfer and Mark Cohen (Leiden: Brill, 1998). On the other hand, "millennium," as portrayed in Rev 20, has been a divisive element in Christian theology, creating "Premillennialists," "Postmillennialists," and "Amillennialists." Indeed, Stanley Grenz could write about the *Millennial Maze* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992).

Thus this special millennium issue of *AUSS* begins with an article by Jon Paulien, member of the *AUSS* board, professor of New Testament Interpretation at the SDA Theological Seminary, and author of monographs on the book of Revelation and eschatology.<sup>1</sup> Trying to learn from history, we asked him to write on the year-1000 furor.<sup>2</sup>

The second article deals with millennial expectations in Great Britain through the centuries, and was written by Hugh Dunton, a British scholar whose Ph.D. dissertation at King's College covered some of the same ground.<sup>3</sup> The final draft of Dunton's article arrived in June; on July 6, he

<sup>1</sup>Jon Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets: Literary Allusions and Interpretation of Revelation 8:7-12* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1988); idem, *The Book of Revelation: Too Good to Be False!* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1990); idem, *What the Bible Says about the End-Time* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1994).

<sup>2</sup>The popular version of this article appears in his *The Millennium Bug: Is This the End of the World as We Know It?* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1999).

<sup>3</sup>Hugh Dunton, "The Millerite Adventists and Other Millenarian Groups in Great

passed away after a short but painful illness. Some footnotes of his article are not in the normal *AUSS* style. We are publishing the piece anyway, as a tribute to forty years of pastoral and teaching ministry.

The millennium of Rev 20 is explored by three authors. Ed Christian is Professor of Bible and English. His work on chiasms, mentored by long-time *AUSS* contributor William Shea, finds that the chapter is at the heart of a "chiasm of chiasms." Ekkehardt Mueller, for several years director of the ministerial association of the Euro-African Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, first showed his expertise in microstructural analysis in his Ph.D. dissertation on Rev 4-11, subsequently chosen for publication.<sup>4</sup> In his article on the microstructure of Rev 20, he applies similar techniques. The end of Satan was an appealing idea to us—a promise of God's final victory. Steven Thompson, who has published on the Apocalypse, is an American with long pastoral and teaching experience in England. He now writes from Australia.<sup>5</sup>

Norman Young, a New Testament scholar and professor from "Down Under"<sup>6</sup> looks at the meaning of the millennium for believers. He pulls together the two strands of meaning of "millennium" and "millennial" in his article, "Urgency and Finality: The Essence of Millennial Belief."

Reviewers have tackled several books dealing with various aspects of the Y2K. See especially the reviews on pages 292, 295, 312, 323, and 331.

We trust that our readers will find this tribute to the passage from the 1990s into the 2000s informative, scholarly, yet faith building. For us at *AUSS* the three belong together.

For me, the end of 1999 marks a transition. This is the last issue of *AUSS* for which I will bear primary responsibility. The Spring of 2000 issue will be the first produced by the new *AUSS* editor-in-chief, Jerry Moon, and his new and able associate editor, Roy Gane, associate professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Languages at Andrews University. I wish to thank all who have cooperated in this enterprise for their support over the past eight years. To all a very happy turn of the millennium.

Nancy J. Vyhmeister

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Britain, 1830-1860," Ph.D. dissertation, King's College, London, 1984.

<sup>4</sup>Ekkehardt Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4-11* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1994).

<sup>5</sup>Steven Thompson, *The Apocalypse and Semitic Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>6</sup>His NT publications include *Rebuke and Challenge: The Point of Jesus' Parables* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1985). On another order, Young wrote about events to which he was very close: *Innocence Regained: The Fight to Free Lindy Chamberlain* (Annandale, NSW: Federation, 1989).