



Escaping Frenzied Christianity

You and I recently have experienced one of the greatest scams in the history of Christianity. Over \$1 billion were drained from the pockets of the Body of Christ—and no one has been held accountable! We have heard no public apology and most Christians are unaware that it even happened to them.

Just before the dawn of this millennium, people were stirred into a frenzy concerning the scare of Y2K. People all over the world were affected, but sincere Christians were the most susceptible and American Christians were hit the worst. They more than any other people diverted tens of millions of dollars into the purchase of food, storage containers, flashlights, and generators. They held their breath as the clock approached the midnight hour of the last millennium.

Then it happened—nothing.

It is not just the financial loss that disturbs me. It is deeper. It is the fact that Christians could be so easily swept into such fear. They reasoned that God needed to cause some catastrophic event in order to awaken people to revival or to usher in the return of Jesus Christ. Many actually wanted God to cause an economic crash. They hoped that He would send the world into chaos. They expected God to have His day

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of vengeance. They thought God was as frustrated with the world as they were and that, finally, He was going to do something about it.

Does anyone dare admit our mistake? Or shall we hide our heads in the sand and pretend that we did not err? Perhaps we should pray that God gets 'em next time.

Christians are supposed to be wise, yet they certainly missed it with the Y2K fiasco. They turned out to be the most gullible and ignorant of all people. Worst of all, they were estranged from the heart and plan of God, as I will show later.

This has happened more than once. Every few years, various groups of Christians catch the "Endtime Madness disease."

In some ways, it is similar to "Mad Cow Disease." When my wife and I were traveling in England at the height of the last outbreak, cattle and sheep owners were going to great extent to stop the spread of this plague. Tens of thousands of livestock were put to death. As we traveled through England, we noticed many areas that were unaffected. In still other areas, the livestock were all dead.

In similar fashion, the disease of Endtime Madness seems to incubate and spread most successfully in certain parts of the world. As I travel and speak in many nations, I notice that Christians in my own home country of America are among the most susceptible. Indeed, the closer I get to Southern California or certain other locations, the more often I find Christians seriously infected.

Endtime Madness leads to foolish behavior. The

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Bible tells us that without a vision people perish (Prov. 29:18). If they have no vision beyond the soon return of our Lord, then they get hit by a form of mental paralysis. Without realizing it, parents care less for their children's education. Long-range financial planning seems less significant, even vain. Businesspeople get out of bed Monday morning still dazed by the preacher's Sunday message concerning the imminent end of this world.

Christians infected by Endtime Madness stop reading their Bibles and spend their "devotional times" reading books which focus on the great trials that lie ahead of us. They fill their minds with how bad the world is and how everything is getting worse. They hold to the assurance that Jesus soon will return to rescue us, and that message becomes the standard by which every minister is evaluated. Every time they hear a minister preach, they think that he or she missed God if the message was not centered on endtimes or at least ended with a reminder that Jesus Christ soon will return to rescue us out of the increasing mess of humanity.

Endtime Madness is a symptom of a limited intellectual and biblically-balanced diet. Christians who expose themselves to only one way of thinking and isolate themselves from what the rest of the Body of Christ believes soon form the distorted perspective of this disease.

I can compare it with a food craze which has recently taken hold of many in my home town. A certain type of doughnuts, called *Krispy Kremes*, have become very popular. I can testify why because I, too,

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have had them melt in my mouth for a quick delight. I also know that if you eat four or more Krispy Kreme doughnuts and wash them down with coffee, you will have plenty of energy to accomplish the work ahead of you—at least for the next two hours.

Yet, if you eat only Krispy Kremes, you are going to be sick. Eventually it will show on your body; it will show in your mind. More healthy foods will seem unappealing and even boring.

Similarly, Christians who accumulate endtime books and saturate their minds and hearts with the words of endtime televangelists develop an unhealthy form of Christianity. They don't know they are sick because each message they hear sounds so important, so urgent, so stimulating. An evangelist can spread his frenzy and motivate the listeners to act quickly, responding to his every appeal. However, that level cannot be maintained long term. The push of the televangelist does not always match God's desires for the individual listener, nor for his family, business, finances, future, or ministry.

Just before the opening of the new millennium, I was asked to write a book on the soon-coming end of the world. A major publisher of Christian books assured me that he could sell thousands if I just hurried so he could get them into the Christian bookstores. I didn't write it. I never believed anything significant was going to happen with Y2K, nor do I believe that Endtime Madness produces healthy Christianity in the Church.

Most of the Christian leaders with whom I have been relating over the last few years have been

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waiting eagerly for this millennium to dawn. Before that crossover date, Christians' minds were permeated with fear that God was about to end it all. We knew we could not fight the massive bombardment of endtime propaganda. It was impossible back then to introduce successfully a different, more positive way of thinking. Yet now we all have crossed the millennial line and we are still here. Many are lifting their eyes to look further down the road. They are disillusioned with date-setting preachers. They are questioning the wisdom of short-term planning. They are beginning to question whether God may have a plan for this world—other than its soon destruction.

I want to show you a different way of thinking—a more sane way of thinking. In the process, I hope to inoculate you against Endtime Madness. More important, I want to offer you a different worldview—a worldview which is more healthy and biblical.

By “worldview,” I am referring to the way in which a person looks at life, society, Creation, and the whole world as it advances throughout history and into the future.

I need to take you on a journey to show you how your present worldview developed and where it went wrong. This will require some labor on both your and my part. We must glance back at history and consider the influences which have formed our present thought patterns. We must confront our own ways of thinking and correct them where they have gone askew.

If you will enter into this process with me, you

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will be left with a more optimistic worldview. You will obtain a clearer picture of God's plan for humanity and His heart toward us right now. You will recognize His hand sovereignly moving in the nations across the world. You will have hope where once you had fear.

If you allow me the privilege of challenging your present thought patterns, you will be left with a more sane basis on which to govern your life. You will be wiser in making daily decisions, such as what goals to set for your children, where to invest your finances, how your business can become more successful, what ministries God will be blessing in the coming years, and what you should be planning for your future.

Please walk this path with me. It will take some time, but when the future comes into focus, you will realize how important and fruitful this journey will have been for your own life.