The Year 2000 Computer Glitch (Y2K) and Millenial Madness From a Christian Software Engineer's Experience

John J. Schultz -- July 5, 1999

As the new millenium approaches, the fun--and subconscious discomfort--begin as we all get to watch the flame of panic on the Y2K computer glitch burn ever more intensely. Nothing has captured more concern of the average person over the last two years than the impending roll-over of the calendar to the year 2000, and the impact it will have on our lives.

Yet if you listen closely and examine what's happening, it becomes apparent that the cause of the panic is not the Y2K technical issue itself. The cause of the panic is historic superstitions and fear about the approach of the year 2000 itself (known among Christians as millenial madness) being applied to the Y2K glitch.

Basically everyone that suffers from millenial madness needs a scapegoat, a mascot or a talisman to validate their fear. What better, more practicle item to focus on than the immeasurable impact that computers have on our daily lives, and the potential havoc that a disruption like Y2K can cause. After all, what a fitting way for God to bring judgement on the wickedness of the world. Right?

DEAD WRONG! Unfortunately, numerous people have adopted a survivalist mentality and claim the Y2K glitch as their motivation. This is quite sad, especially since the news media claim these people identify themselves as Christians. Whether they are really Christians (the news media loves to put this label on anything that's leans towards conservatism) is hard to say. One thing is for sure: these survivalists are displaying very cult-like behavior.

I have been programming computers since 1974 (age 12) and, excepting 9 years in the US Air Force as a Russian linguist (of which the last 4 were spent--you guessed it--programming computers) it has always been my career, and a labor of love.

I gave my life to Christ in 1992. Prior to the Y2K issue moving to the headlines, the Lord opened my eyes to prophesy in Revelation and Daniel. Much of this information put together a lot of loose ends that I had seen in my years in intelligence operations in the Air Force, as well as directions I had seen and been involved with in the development of business applications for computers, which didn't make any sense by themselves. The Lord's prophsey about Y2K is in

prophesy *indirectly*, and sheds a lot of light on the causes of millenial madness.

To summarize my view of Y2K based on my background, I'm concerned but no where near terrified.

I will cover two main focuses in this commentary.

- *The Programmer's Perspective*: some common sense about Y2K and what it does and does not affect.
- *The Disciple's Perspective:* some explanation of God's prophesy and non-biblical prophesy insofar as it has been fulfilled: where we are and most importantly where we are ***not***: all as relates to Y2K and the coming millenium. I will specifically address the misconceptions that have, quite sadly, lead to survivalist mentalty among thousands.

Part I
The Programmer's Perspective

A Short Summary Of Y2K

If you have heard of--and know what--the Y2K computer glitch is, skip to the next section. If you are one of those unlucky ones who has lived in total isolation for the last four years and hasn't heard of it, this section is for you.

Basically, the Y2K computer glitch occurs in computer systems that do not properly process a two-digit year when the year changes from 1999 to 2000 and beyond. In other words, a computer with a Y2K problem will see the year 99 as 1999, but will see 00 as 1900--instead of the intended meaning of 2000. Since most mainframe computer systems were built in the 60's and early 70's when disk storage and memory were very expensive, and no one planned for their lifespan to go into the 21st century, computer programmer's used the last two-digits of the year to conserve memory and disk space. Even though disk space was a concern, it was also easier to think in one century. After all, the practice started in the 60's and who would be using this computer after 2000 anyway?

This practice propogated throughout the computer programming culture, and is still used widely today. The problem being addressed as the Y2K glitch (or bug, or whatever term you wish to use) occurs when dates in the years 2000 and beyond are entered into the computer, and the computer confuses the 2000's for the 1900's.

In other words, many computer programs are going to read January 1, 2000 as January 1, 1900. When this occurs, it can have potentially dramatic effects on time-sensitive calculations and decision making. For example...

- Deliveries scheduled for January 1, 2000 and later could be interpreted as 1900 and automatically cancelled by a scheduling or ordering software application.
- Bank's potentially could calculate up to 100 years of interest for an account on a single day: January 1, 2000. *NOTE: Because of this potential, it is easy to understand why the Federal Reserve System was the earliest to start Y2K compliance programs, and had completed most of them by 1996. They recently released a statement that the banks in the U.S. are ready.*
- Credit and debit cards could be rejected as expired because processing terminals interpret an expiration date of "11/00" as November 1900. *NOTE: I personally worked on a project to correct credit/debit terminals in stores. All terminals nation-wide that handled Visa and Master Card had to be compliant by March 1997. Believe me, you wanted to be compliant by that time--no one could afford the fines for a Y2K related problem.*
- Routers and switches on computer networks could fail, as well as electrical power and possibly phone service.
- "Just In Time" inventory management, which is the true foundation that makes overnight carrier service like FedEx so possible, could miscalculate inventory management. This would cause orders not to be placed, or shelf and backroom stock to be ordered destroyed because a bad date calculation determined it had perished or exceeded shelf life.
- A host of consumer devices with embedded chips that use date functions could possibly fail. (*I have a few comments later about specific devices which should defuse the media-hype on the subject).*
- Many functions which sort based on time could put year 2000 at the top of the list (being read as 00), and years 1901..1999 after it (being read as 01..99).

...and much more...

The problem is vast, and truly unmeasurable. Computers have so vastly and so rapidly affected our lives that we don't have the resources to fully deal with the problem by the immutable deadline: December 31,1999. There simply aren't enough programmers to go around, and there isn't enough time. January 1, 2000 is one deadline that can't be delayed--period!

Understanding Some Y2K Misnomers

Standardizing use of a four-digit year

The easiest way to make a system Y2K compliant is to change all the 2-digit years to the 4-digit year. But there is a false and misleading statement about making a computer Y2Kcompliant, which states...

"The system ***must*** use 4-digit years to be compliant."

The truth is that many of the older systems simply can not use a 4-digit date: it is too costly and impracticle to change huge databases, especially when archives and legacy culture are involved. So where a

4-digit date can not be used, software is used to examine the date and determine whether it is 19## (e.g.: anything 80 or above) or 20## (e.g.: 79 or below) and adjust the date accordingly prior to further processing.

For an example of this, look at your most recent credit cards. You will notice that the expiration date still uses the same familiar MM/YY format as it has always used (e.g.: 11/00 for Novermber of 2000). The magnetic stripe stll encodes the year as "00", but software corrects the date to 2000. It is easier to update software *only in the terminals reading the card* to convert a date for a simple comparison: to see if the card has expired.

If you wanted to change to a 4-digit date on the magnetic strip of a credit card (and on the text imprinted on the card face), all of the following steps would have to be completed:

1. issue a new standard for a magnetic track with a four-digit year.
2. coordinate and disseminate it
3. update software and possibly hardare in the computers creating the text and magnetic track information on the credit and debit cards, and allow for a phase-in period of years for the cards (where both formats need to be processed).
4. update software in the terminals reading the card.

As you can see, even common sense prevails in dealing with the problem. By simply adjusting the way the date is processed internally after it is read, only step 4 is necessary.

The Embedded Chip Issue

One of the biggest concerns of late has been the extent of use of embedded chips affected by Y2K: one of the biggest single groups of computers. These are essentially micro-computers without keyboard and displays, as one would tradionally think of a computer. Among engineers, they are generally referred to as control devices. Some examples of embedded chip devices are:

- A home alarm system is an example of a control device: it has inputs from sensors, maybe a connection to the telephone line, a small LCD or LED display and a limited keypad to control its functions.
- Your cars on-board computer chip that monitors and often regulates your cars intake, ignition and exhaust, and warns you when you need service.
- The microwave you cook with, and the electronic timer on your kitchen range.

Many of these devices are not Y2K compliant, but still won't be affected by the Y2K problem. The misinformation about these devices being propogated is that if the chip has a non-compliant date function, than the device itself is not Y2K ready. This is not true.

The overlooked factor in this statement is whether the device uses the date function at all. Because chip manufacturers tend to incorporate

many features into their products to access many different markets, it is common for companies building devices with the chip to use less than 50% of the chip's instruction set or features.

As with any service in the chip (which date and time functions are), the date function often goes unused. Even if the chip is not Y2K compliant, a function not using the date function of the chip would never know it or be affected.

The percentage of systems certified as ready for Year 2000

Recently, the US Postmaster General testified before Congress that less than 6% of the US Post Office's systems had been tested and certified Y2K compliant. That is an accurate statement by itself.

The problem is that a lot of people quoting this source of information claim that only 6% of the US Post Office's system are Y2K compliant. The implication from this claim, of course, is that 94% percent of the Post Office computers will fail or show a Y2K gltich on January 1, 2000.

The misnomer comes from confusing the phrase "tested and certified", with the concept that anything not tested will fail. In reality, the Post Office probably experienced something similar to mine: less than 20% of all computers/devices tested fail a Y2K process. So when the Post Office says that 6% are tested and Y2K compliant, probably less than 20% of those systems required a fix for Y2K.

In addtion, of the 94% not yet tested, you can safely bet that about 2 in 10 will have a Y2K glitch. That's roughly 18.6% of systems--*but not 94%*.

Y2K: The Common Sense Perspective

"First the toilets explode, then the locust swarms attack--what next?"

-- Y2K article introduction in a Microsoft Direct Newletter

This sarcastic title truly captures my feelings on the way the press and the public in general are handling the entire Y2K issue. Having served in the US Air Force in the latter days of the cold war, I can draw a parallel to the predictions of Y2K Doomsdayers and the Nuclear Holocaust predictions of scientists and anti-nuke activists.

No one in their right minds would denegrate the effects of a nuclear war. After all, the popular bumper sticker accurately states, "One nuclear bomb can ruin your whole day." But the advocates of extreme nuclear holocaust predictions, when closely examined, use descriptions of humans behaving worse than cattle. This would rightfully offend most people.

So too are the predictions of the Y2K Doomsdayers. Their assumptions are that computer technology is so trusted and unchallenged, that the knowledge of day-to-day operations could not possibly be handled without them. They also point out that as more and more electronic commerce occurs (credit/debit cards, paperless transactions), the potential for financial disaster is great.

First of all, let me relate something that I have learned from day-to-day dealings with distribution companies, manufacturing companies, and other companies providing regulary daily service. I have run into literally dozens of older staff members that are just praying silently that the Y2K problem is huge--even monsterous. Many of these people have been warning their companies for years about over-reliance on computers and less reliance on human thinking. If the problem is bad, they can put these younger "geeks" and "nerds" in their place, and show them how it is done by hand. January 1, 2000 would begin their days of glory.

While their solution may be overly optimistic, it is easy for younger people to forget that aircraft, ships (even Titanic), skyscrapers, cars. and every other engineering feat in life was created and operated without the help of a computer until the 1940's. If a computer fails, the tool fails: but life does go on.

If anything, Y2K will be a reality check for us to see just how we are dependent--and comfortable--with automation. Truly, it is a test to see how much we control the tool, or the tool controls us.

To Date or not to Date...

Several weeks ago, I was reading a mass media article on the projected effects of Y2K. As an engineer directly involved with systems that potentially have the problem, I find it fascinating to see how a problem is viewed by a non-technical person.

The potential problem mentioned was traffic lights. This brought a quite grin from me. You see, traffic lights are indeed programmed to a switching sequence based on time. *But they couldn't care less what date it is*. Traffic lights are programmed to count from 0 (Sunday) to 6 (Saturday), ad infinitum. This is the traffic light's concept of a week. It has no concept of what day, month or year the week is in.

KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid)

This is a successful engineer's golden rule, and traffic lights are designed with it in mind. The control logic for the traffic light timing usually varies on the weekend (day count 5 and 6) to accomodate lighter traffic loads. *And this is exactly how you can tell that a traffic light is not subject to Y2K effects.*

Not only is traffic lighter on weekends; it is also lighter on weekday holidays. And if you've ever driven your car on a weekday holiday with light traffic, you know there is nothing more frustrating than hitting all the red lights on your route. Had you driven at the same speed on Saturday, which is almost always programmed for a lighter

traffic load, you most certainly would have encountered all green lights. The weekday timing is set for a commuter traffic pattern, and on a weekday holiday, you are simply the victim of an exception.

If the traffic light were programmed to be date sensitive, the engineers would most certainly take advantage of its capability and program in holiday timing. Or would they?

There is a general rule (pearl of wisdom) in the world known as the 80/20 rule. It says that on any project, 20% of your effort will accomplish 80% of the results; while the other 80% of your effort accomplishes only 20% of results. The traffic light is an example of an 80/20 implementation: 20% effort (count 0 to 6 infinitely), accomplishes 80% of results (a program for weekly traffic patterns).

The other 20% (adjusting for holidays) would require date awareness in the timing circuits. It would also require additional code to calculate the date on which a holiday falls. It would also have to be reprogrammed if Congress passed a law for a new Federal holiday, or changed an existing one. And another change could be required if scientists decided to adjust the calendar by skipping a day to compensate for the slowdown in earth's rotation.

This is a prime example of why *KISS* is a good philosophy. Engineers program a system to the need, not to what its potential is.

As a rule of thumb, the first thing to evaluate whether a device or appliance is Y2K susceptible is to evaluate whether it even uses a date. Some examples:

- Alarm clocks only care what minute it is in a 24-hour cycle. They don't use dates.
- Microwave ovens only display the time, and I've never seen one that could cook past 1 hour. They don't use dates.
- Clocks and timers on ovens and ranges don't use dates.
- VCR's: some do and some don't. Most VCR's know the day of the week, and program on a weekly cycle. Some newer ones (90's) use dates for programming. These need to be checked.
- Camcorders: some new 8mm and VHS-C camcorders use dates, but only for stamping the tape. Check with the manufacturer.
- Home P.C.'s: there is a chance that your computer will see 1900 instead of 2000, but most will reset when the date is adjusted one time in the BIOS (that funky memory check and device probing that occurs when you first turn it on).

I've included some links at the bottom of this commentary on Y2K preparedness. They have further links to a much fuller list of items that may be susceptible. When in doubt, check with the manufacturer. The best place to check is the manufacturer's web site: most all companies have statements of compliance on their home pages.

As you can see the Y2K problem is real, but the Y2K panic is just that: panic. Any psychologist or socialogist will tell you that the less information a person has about a problem, the more their insecurities of not being in control of the problem will surface. And those

insecurities will multiply directly in proportion to the impact, which that failure to control will have.

Now let's move on to the millenial madness issue, and its causes...

Part II
The Disciple's Perspective

The Books of Daniel and Revelation

In this section, I am examining the context of The Holy Bible--exclusive to all other writings. This is because of the Bible's historical integrity and reliability in prophesy. The Book of Revelation, in conjunction with the book of Daniel, provides a striking picture of the world at the end times. It's contrast to the world we live in today can give some surprising insight into the Y2K problem as a whole and how it impacts the end-times world.

The Bible, God's Holy Word, cautions that a person without the guidance of the Holy Spirit will not see the revealed works and intentions of God in His writings. Many people forget that God's avowed enemy, Satan, and his demons are still at work and have powers in this world (Revelation 20:...). God only reveals passages to His chosen servants, at His chosen time, for His chosen purpose.

As much as the Y2K problem is improperly exploited by alarmists, so too are the Book of Revelation and the warnings of God's coming wrath on mankind also exploited. While the warnings and the wrath are real, they are too often promoted to the world without God's more important offer of mercy, love, forgiveness, and reconciliation. (see John 3:16-17)

My intent in commenting on future prophesy is not to act as an authority on it: I am not. It is also not to remind you of the coming wrath of God. It is to show you that an easy way to reduce panic over Y2K is to learn and understand God's perspective on the future. Only in contrast to His divine plan for the world can we develop the inner peace and stability needed for a clear conscience and a happy life.

Before you read the following commentary, I urge you to pray to the one God to open your eyes to His truths. Even if don't know Him, He'll hear you and respond...

God, through His divine revelation to John on the island of Pathos, has left us a blueprint for the way the world will look and operate at the end times: the time of Christ's return. In His infinite wisdom, *He also left out the timeline and the specific occurences* leading to the construction of the end times world He describes. Unfortunately, many alarmists have seized the opportunity to tie their philosophy to God's prophesy.

Sales of survival kits (from food to complete shelter) have skyrocketed; some urbanites are leaving city for remote areas, in

many cases well armed. To make matters worse, an uncertain number of people may raid the banks in the last days of 1999 to protect themselves from a perceived threat to their financial assets.

The Y2K glitch will have some effect on daily business and our lives. But why, oh why, did it have to occur on the first day of a year, which has been dreaded in cultures around the world for centuries. Y2K (the software glitch) and Y2K (the year) are like steak and marshmallows: separate they are OK, but together they leave a strange aftertaste.

The Book of Revelation accurately describes the world as it is prior to Christ's return. It is indeed, a world society very much different from the world society we have today. In fact, *it is no where near the condition described in the end-times blueprint*. We're getting closer to it, but the world can not be conditiioned by 2000 (or perhaps the next full decade) to the state required for fulfillment of the end times prophesy.

This disciple's section will focus on two points:

- The proper use of prophesy as God intended: and the world often forgets.
- The current condition of world society versus its necessary conditiion for fulfillment of end-times prophesy.
- Reasons that a bad Y2K glitch could further delay the cause of the prophesized one-world government.

The Proper Use of Prophesy

After Jesus's death on the cross and resurrection, He met with his disciples to prepare them for Pentacost. His direct instructions to his disciples were not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father--and He reminded them that He (Jesus) had told them earlier what that promise was.

There is something in human nature that always tries to outguess the future, and the disciples were no different. They began to ask whether this promise from God was the promised restoration of the kingdom of Israel. Jesus' answer was direct and to the point:

> *He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Sama'ria and to the end of the earth."*
> *-- Acts 1:7-8*

In a nutshell, he told them "don't worry about the future: that's God's job. You have your job: focus on that." Much like the Y2K panic today, the survivalists are making a similar mistake that the disciples did: they are trying to outguess God.

It is important to understand that God works with prophets to prove who He is. Although there are some exceptions (like Jonah's

prophetic warning to the town of Nineveh), when God's prophet describes the coming event or action, it almost never includes the timeline. This is especially true of the books of Daniel and Revelation.

To understand why leaving out the timeline is important, you have to consider the nature of any future prophesy, and its impact on the human psyche. Much of the information in Biblical prophesy is of an extremely negative nature: wars, pestulance, beasts, blood, wrath, etc. Bleeech! Nonetheless, its message to man is very important in building faith in God's ultimate control of all events in heaven and on earth.

To understand the wisdom of leaving out the timeline, consider the following earthly example:
For almost 10 years I lived in Southern California (the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles). It was one of the best times of my life. And from the day my family and I moved in, all of our relatives outside of California were constantly joking in their letters and phone calls about whether we had prepared for the "big" earthquake (the "big" earthquake is something that seems to concern those outside of California more than those that live there). Although the frequency of the jokes subsided over time, they were still there and wouldn't go away.

Of course, as any Californian can tell you, any worry of the big earthquake goes away after your first lesson in what to do--and you just learn to deal with others--mostly outside of California--who are worried about the next earthquake. Californians also have some neat ways of dealing with earthquake predictions. While I was there, no less than four seismologists made predictions for a big earthquake--all wrong of course.

What happens in California when these predictions are made is pretty amusing, when you think about it. Some morning talk show will have the person in their studios (on ground zero for the earthquake, no less) for a live interview, and the hosts will jokingly read the time peridoically followed by the catch phrase "...and still no earthquake." More mature Californians really know how to handle the predictions: they throw a big "End of the World" party with their friends the night before. Basically, the predictions aren't taken very seriously (except by disaster preparedness agencies) and life pretty much goes on as normal that day: sometimes even with a notable hangover.

Now picture this...
One day, in walks another seismologist making a major earthquake predicition for Southern California. But this person is different: he has credibility. Unlike the many who have preceded him, all 500 of his earthquake predictions are flawless: right down to the minute of latitude and longitude, and the hour that they will occur. And this time he predicts one for the venerable Southern California. In fact, he predicts that this one will be so severe, that the worst fear of many (and the not-so-secret wish of may others) will occur: Southern California will drop into the ocean.

The prediction is made public 30 days from the expected occurrence, and the newspapers carry the story worldwide. How do the Californians react now?

They react the exact same way as someone trying to put their timeline on God's plan would react. The sundeck they planned to add to their house is scrapped: after all, who wants a sundeck (or a house) sunk like a shipwreck in the ocean. They make immediate plans to move out of the area. Basically, life as it was known comes to a standstill.

In this scenario, as with God's prophesy *had He put a timeline to it*, life comes to a standstill and mental paralysis sets in. God wants His people to have an understanding of what lies in the future of the world, without worrying about it. The way to eliminate the worry is to accept that it will happen "someday" (as with the "big earthquake" in California) and to put it aside and enjoy life.

Anyone who attempts to predict when events prophesized by God will occur is only asking for trouble. So trying to put Y2K and end-times events together can only have negative--and possibly devastating--results. Whether the people tying God's prophesy to the Y2K problem realize it or not, they are damaging lives--*and need to stop it right now!* Don't be surprised if a dramatic increase in the number of suicides occurs in the last weeks of 1999, many related to the subconscious fear of the coming year 2000.

Current vs. Prophesied World Society

The Book of Revelation contains specific descriptions of the world at the time just before the Great Tribulation--God's wrath on the world. Probably the greatest gauge of where we are relative to that description is to review two sections of the most well known--and most often misquoted and misinterpreted--verses of Revelation.

And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead,
and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.
Revelation 13:16-17

Having been a programmer for so long, I have to periodically remind myself of how much society and culture are not at the bleeding edge of technology as we engineers in the lab. The above verses describe an economic system designed for restriction of commerce to individuals with a mark of loyalty. The mark itself is physical: the greek verb used for the word "mark" carries the connotation of "sculpture", implying a physical deformity: most likely the bump--however minor--of an imbedded chip or tracking device in the forehead or right hand.

I won't get into the details of the chip itself, although you can do your own research on a Destron model TX1400L if you want an example of what the mark most likely is. My point here is that no where in the

world are we using a device embedded in our bodies to transfer money from our accounts, or even to qualify for that transfer. Credit cards, ATM cards, *and even smart cards*, the latter of which qualify as the first true form of cashless transactions and will eventually see large usage in the US, do not meet the qualification of the mark of the beast.

In addition, it is interesting to note that the smart card just began to be deployed and used in Europe on any scale in 1998. Visa and MasterCard also began an add campaign around 1996 to promote smart card usage in the USA, ending the add with "...it's working in Austrailia and its coming to the US." Well, if it is--where is it?

In 1998, the Federal Government filed a lawsuit against both Visa and MasterCard for stonewalling deployment of the smart card in the US. The lawsuit is actually a red-herring. The real reason that the smart card has not taken off in the US is our inherent knowledge that the disapperance of cash is the first step to the mark of the beast and being totally financially dependent and controlled by an outside entity.

Basically, we as a culture don't want the smart card. We are, after all, based on Christian culture where the knowledge of end-times prophesy, however basic, is part of our tradition. The lawsuit by the Federal Government is really to force the smart card on the US culture, and this is one of the few times that I feel sorry for both Visa and MasterCard corporation. They are being made unwilling catalysts in this.

Still, the smart card is an interim step to the mark of the beast. The smart card is not going to be injected into your body, because you carry it in your wallet like any other credit/ATM card. And to show how far we are from implementing the mark of the beast at grocery, mega, convience and mom-and-pop stores, consider how many of them are now ready to take smart cards for payment. It took Visa and MasterCard literally 10 years to get 40% of the stores to have a credit card terminal, and still not 100% of the stores have them. Imagine how long upgrading all those terminals to smart cards will take, let alone changing the credit card culture to the smart cards. And once that happens, how much longer will it take to equip the stores with the ability to process mark of the beast.

The obvious answer is, of course... *not by 2000, and not within a large number of years*.

The second passage extracted from the Book of Revelation shows where we are in terms of Government structure. The beast, to whom the mark is attributed to, is the anti-Christ. And his World Government is described in the following verses:

... Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;
Revelation 13:1-3

This passage, especially the first verse, describes the world government in its basic form. The seven heads represent the seven continents, and the ten horns each with diadems (or crowns) represent ten districts each with its own ruler. One organization, The World Constitution and Parliament Association, already has been promoting a strikingly similar proposal (for details, I highly recommend you read the book "Entroute to Global Occupation" by Gary Kah).

A quick look at today's world political situation shows the United Nations gaining in strength and authority, but still has no where near the muscle to rule the way the Bible describes it must: with the authority of the dragon. In addition, we are no where near ten absolute governing districts in the world. Anyone who understands politics knows that is still quite a long way off. But keep an eye on the local ethnic conflicts bubbling up from time to time, and how they affect the political maps on your kids' globe. These breakups--like we have seen in the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Republics--are a necessary predecessor to the creation of consolidated governments.

And, of course, none of this can be fulfiiled soon... *not by 2000, and not within a large number of years*.

The possible impact of the Y2K bug on future prophesy

In the section describing the mark of the beast, it may have been apparent that the computer, which we have become so dependent upon today, will play a great role in the enforcement of economic restraint using the mark of the beast. The vast expanses of the Internet make this possible, and electronic tagging devices are already available to track any item or person.

But how much we trust computers has to do with how much they betray us. Anyone who has had a computer lock-up in the middle of writing an important document knows the frustration of lost time and effort, and wonders if a manual typewriter still has better qualities when it comes to reliability and productivity. Once that thought has passed, new precautions come into play to prevent the loss from occurring again: save to disk more often, backup files regularly, and use an uninterrupted power supply if you don't trust your power company.

But computers at a corporate level are quite often the core of the company, and not just in the high tech industry. These computers, when they lock up or experience a glitch, can break faith in the company by delaying delivery of products and services, or even *destroy* the company if it can not bring its systems back online.

This point was driven home to me back in 1994 during a briefing with one of the major IT companies, whose business was automating warehouses with scanners communicating by radio frequency and computer decision making to optimize warehouse pickers loads and movements. Several large clients of theirs, after installing their systems, now ran at twice the productivity with only half the staff, so their reputation proceeded them.

We anticipated that their briefing would focus on the needs and direction of the auto-ID industry as applied to their technology and lessons learned. Their briefing instead emphasized the need for 100% 24 hour/7 day system availability, using hot backups, dual mirrored systems, geographic redundancy, etc. Their bottom line message in the briefing was...

> "A total systems failure in today's business environment means totally out of business."

At high levels in the government, there has been a strong push to get the critical systems fixed: the systems that people depend upon for the finances and benefits. Interestingly, both the U.S. Federal Reserve and the U.S. Social Security Administration were among the first to have their computers 100% ready for Y2K.

Because the forces promoting the one world government are well aware that their enforcement needs are totally dependent on computers, it would be unwise to estimate that the Y2K bug would cause anything more than a simple hiccup when January 1, 2000 rolls around. Anything near catastrophic would create such a distrust in technology, that people would abandon many areas of automation--even if only acutely. The broken trust in technology would take years, even decades to recover. The one world government advocates feel the momentum is on their side, and I do not believe they are going to allow the issue to be anything more than a hiccup. They can not afford to do otherwise.

For this reason alone, I believe the Y2K hype will prove itself as just that on Jan 1, 2000: hype.

In Conclusion...

Although I don't believe the alarmists, please take Y2K seriously. Disruptions are going to occur somewhere and at some level. Be patient and be prepared.

The best common sense I have heard for preparations is to treat Y2K as a hurricane. After it blows through you may be on your own for up to a week, before help arrives. So stock some common items that should be in your household anyway, review and/or get current copies of records you should have anyway. ***Basically, use Y2K as an excuse to get the things done that we all should have done anyway.***

The links below contain more information on what you can do to prepare. Remember always to keep Y2K in perspective. Life will march forward into the new millenium, so plan for it.

SOME LINKS WITH SOME MORE INFORMATION ON TOPICS DISCUSSED HERE...

Cornerstone Community Church	A Y2K sermon done in February (available as notes and Real Audio).
The American Red Cross	The American Red Cross' Y2K preparedness section
Enroute to Global Occupation	by Gary Kah. An excellent book on the one world government forces and their activites. It will open your eyes.