

WHO WE ARE

The Center For Millennial Studies is an independent, nonprofit research center committed to educating about apocalyptic and millennial phenomena. Comprised of academics, independent researchers, graduate students and others, CMS provides an important link between researchers in specialized fields and the growing popular interest in millennial and apocalyptic activities.

CMS was conceived by Richard Landes and Stephen D. O'Leary.

Trained as a medieval historian, Dr. Landes' specialty is popular expectation leading up to and following the year 1000 A.D. Dr. Landes has also been "tuned in" to contemporary millennial manifestations for the past 25 years and offers a unique historical perspective for understanding current apocalyptic and millennial phenomena in light of past events.

Dr. Stephen D. O'Leary has been studying modern apocalyptic expectations for the past 20 years. Dr. O'Leary is trained in communication and rhetoric and is the author of *Arguing The Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric*. Dr. O'Leary's interests are wide ranging and focus on the unique brands of apocalypticism which have informed much of American history from the early Millerites through the current prophecy and UFO conferences which he often attends.

CMS PERSONNEL

In addition to the experts currently associated with CMS, we also maintain a database of millennial and apocalyptic authorities throughout the United States, Europe and the Middle East.

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THE PHENOMENON

Round numbers are powerful factors in the social imagination. They are all the more important in a Christian society which has, from its earliest times and for almost 2000 years now, expected the return of Christ at the end of a millennium (by a variety of dating systems). For those who follow the indices carefully, the approach of the year 2000 promises, despite the emergence of a modern scientific culture, to provide a wide range of millennial activities on a scale rarely seen in the recorded history of civilization.

In its most virulent forms, apocalypticism is perhaps the single most dangerous political belief extant. Those in its grip live in a world of paranoid dualism in which good and evil prepare for their final battle and there is no neutrality. They are impervious to rational argument and empirical disconfirmation of their beliefs, and they have none of the inhibitions that a future imposes on most behavior (for they believe there will be no consequences).

CMS GOALS

to gather and archive the vast "harvest" of millennial literature that is appearing at the turn of the second Christian millennium;

to provide analyses to media, researchers, academics, policy makers, and anyone else interested in objective, accurate and timely information about apocalyptic and millenarian manifestations;

to study and analyze apocalyptic thought, the millenarian movements it generates, and the kinds of mutations that they must undergo in order to adjust to the (inevitable) return to normal time;

to collect and edit documents from earlier such times;

to raise public awareness of the patterns of apocalyptic behavior, to provide historical perspectives and to offer prognoses about growing millenarian activity; and

to make research materials available for future generations so that they have the best possible record of this period of apocalyptic activity and so that it will be much more difficult to rewrite history and mute the voices which were consequential at the time.



The CMS logo depicts the two basic stances when confronted with prophecies of imminent and radical transformation. The Rooster crows, "The dawn is soon, awake!" The Owl hoots, "Shush, the night is young, the foxes abroad, and the master sleeps. Back to sleep." The sideways figure eight was used in the medieval period as a symbol of 1000.

LILLY ENDOWMENT CONFERENCE SERIES

The Apocalyptic Year 1000: History and Historiography (1996)

An inquiry into the role of apocalyptic expectation in the social changes that occurred with rather unusual intensity at this time.

Apocalyptic Others: Millenarian Views of Unbelievers Among Jews, Christians and Muslims (1997)

An inquiry into the ways in which the three most apocalyptic and intertwined religious traditions conceive of the religious "other" in apocalyptic time.

Knowing of a Time, Knowing the Time: An Inquiry into Historical and Contemporary Practices of Dating the End (1998)

An inquiry into the types of millennial traditions around the world and socio-religious contexts in which they first arose. This will be cross-cultural and will also examine how movements deal when the date they set has passed.

New World Orders: Millennialism and the Western Hemisphere (1999)

A collaboration with American Studies at Brandeis University, this conference will look at all forms of apocalypticism and millennialism in the western hemisphere, of both indigenous and European origins, either religious or secular.

Peace Movements, Revivalism and Social Transformations (2000)

An inquiry into the popular irenic strains of millennialism and the ardent mass movements it produces. Special attention will be given to patterns of dealing with the common cycle: peaking on enthusiasm, acknowledging failure and consolidating a position within a more hostile society. This conference will also compare new movements with movements within older traditions, focusing on the relations of enthusiasm to institutional structures.

Millennialism and Power (2001)

A study of the ways in which millennial activity interacts with institutional power. Subjects will range from the challenges to power that millennialism, in its earliest and most apocalyptic stages, poses to the ways in which a later, post-apocalyptic millennialism, consolidates power. These methods may include violence and revolution, uses of millennial imagery in ruler cults, anarchic as opposes to imperial millennial visions, law and millennialism, social solidarity and institutional power, technology and communications.

Disappointed Millennialism and Cultural Mutation (2002)

An historical and contemporary inquiry (during the mathematically millennial year, after the passage of the enthusiastic one) into what happens to groups when their expectations (of themselves and of God) fail. This conference will deal with millennialism as revitalization in its many shapes and in its historical impacts.

ARCHIVE & PUBLICATIONS

CMS Archive

The CMS is currently amassing and maintaining an archive of articles, thoughts and ephemera related to millennialism and the year 2000/2001. Please send us all relevant items.

Journal of Millennial Studies

Our bi-annual on-line journal can be found at:

www.mille.org/journal.html

Please see <http://www.mille.org/guidelines.html> for submission guidelines.

The Apocalyptic Year 1000

Proceeds from our first annual international academic conference, edited by Richard Landes and David Van Meter (Oxford UP 1999)

Millennial Stew (our quarterly newsletter)

each issue contains:

- an in depth article on millennialism written by a recognized authority
- a comprehensive books received section
- an extensive book review
- a happenings/millennial activities section
- a resource list of other organizations studying aspects of millennialism
- millennial cartoons and humor

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