

REAL MILLENNIUM GROUP™

These are copies of letters written in 1999 and are arranged in reverse chronological order, from December on back. This is just a sampling of the many I had written to people and organizations all across the country.

(This letter is in response to a letter written to me by a man from Pennsylvania)

Wednesday — December 22, 1999

Dear Ralph,

Thank you for your letter, and taking the time to address this subject, which is more than most people are willing to do. To begin with, I don't have any information about the other people who were interviewed for the article. I was interviewed by Don Babwin a couple of weeks before the article appeared, and we discussed the RMG and the millennium. No mention of other interviewees were made.

That being said, let me state my position on the matter. First, it was no mistake for Dionysius to have dubbed Christ's birth year (754 in the Year of Rome) as AD 1, even if he had the benefit of the number zero. As you state yourself, AD, anno Domini, means "the year of our Lord." Does it make any sense to have a "zero year of our Lord?" We are either in a year of our Lord, or we are not. Christ's birth year was the first year the earth was in the presence of the Lord. If a baby says its first word when four months old, it is "zero years old," but that event occurred in the "first year of its life." So it is no error, nor improper to begin the Christian Era with AD 1.

Dionysius' mistake came with his calculation of the actual birth year of Christ. This miscalculation is anywhere from 4 years to 12 years off. Meaning all the "Jubilee" talk from the Christian Church is in error, and even though I am atheist, would think any Christian would find this offensive — the church is bowing to a mistaken popular belief instead of the actual facts of its own faith.

As for the truth in historical sources, I have heard it said that when two historians argue a point of history, three distinct points of view can be heard — one each for the historians, and the third being the actual facts of the matter. Since history, from the time man has learned to write events down to the present, has been written by fallible men, it is inevitable that much of the history we read today is colored by the opinions and feelings of those men — the bible included. That is why careful study and continued cross-referencing among many different sources must be done to get the clearest view possible of the actual events of our past. I have said as much on the Bibliography portion of our web site. This is how I view the bible, and any historical source.

Being an atheist perhaps gives me a clearer view of what the bible tells than one whose devotion to faith may color one's perception as those past historians have colored our history. To utterly believe all that the bible says as incontrovertible truth is to pave the way to ignorance. The bible, as with any historical document, cannot be taken as the end all of Christian history — if it was, the entire world would have embraced the religion long ago. It is just another source of historical information, but one also written as a guideline to conducting one's life with a higher moral attitude. It was written by fallible men, devoted to their beliefs, for just such a purpose. As such, the historical information must be taken with a grain of salt, and cross-referenced, as I have mentioned before. We must remember, any religious historical document was written by men for the express purpose of promoting their respective religions — historical truth takes a second seat. Just look as the biggest Christian celebration of all — Christmas. December 25th is certainly not the day of birth of Jesus Christ. It was picked to coincide with the Pagan New Year for the express purpose of being able to convert those pagans to Christians with little effort. The true day and year of Christ's birth have been lost to time, because the focus of Christian historians was their faith, and not the significance of historical dating. Therefore, I will stick by those whose focus was the latter, and not the former.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write, and please feel free to send me any comments or questions you may have.

Wednesday -- October 20, 1999

Bowling Magazine
5301 South 76th Street
Greendale, WI 53129

Mr. Bill Vint,

I'm sure you'll remember my name from the many letters I have sent in the past documenting my disappointment in the state of sport bowling, and offering suggestions on how to improve the sport so that we can be assured of surviving into the 21st Century. This letter is slightly different, as you may tell from the letterhead.

In addition to being bowler, bowling center manager, and tournament director, I have formed a small historical group called the Real Millennium Group, to satisfy another of my passions -- history. One of the purposes of the group is to correct the misconception that the new century and millennium begin January 1, 2000.

Your "From the Editor" column brought a wry smile to my face as I read the information that the New Millennium issue of the magazine will be a little late -- actually, it will be a year late if you were to really wait until the 3rd Millennium arrived! I have the historical facts and information on our web site about why 2001 is actually the year that we enter the 21st Century, 3rd Millennium, and the "Double Oh" decade (the technical decade, not the "era" decade), so I won't include the details in this letter. Although I personally would like everyone to celebrate the century and millennium at the proper time, I realize that this is an improbability. Part of the problem lies in that most people do not think about the actual facts of the matter, they just assume that what everyone seems to believe is the truth. Of course, this point is reinforced by the media, and commercialism. On the face of it, it's not really a big deal, except to those of us who hold Truth and History a little closer to our hearts than other people. However, there are instances where legal matters could be brought because of the misconception.

I refer to the article in the new issue of the magazine that details the ABC's plan to have a special award for the first 300 of the new millennium. Since the new century and millennium do not actually arrive until January 1, 2001, the ABC's plans might be in legal jeopardy. If they go ahead and give the award to the first bowler to roll a 300 game on January 1, 2000, they will have to give the exact same award to the first bowler to roll 300 in 2001. The same must be said of any award or sports record -- since the year 2000 is technically still part of the 20th Century and 2nd Millennium, any awards given or records broken would be listed as occurring during these two divisions. It will not be until January 1, 2001 that anyone holding any type of record would be safe from having his name removed from the books as holding that record in the 20th Century.

If the ABC wants to have a special award for the first 300 game rolled in the year 2000, they cannot legally attach any type of reference to the 21st Century or 3rd Millennium to the award. Otherwise a lawsuit can be brought against them by the bowler who actually does roll the first 300 of the new century and millennium, should he not receive the exact same awards and benefits as the bowler who rolled the game in the year 2000. I'm sure even if they were to issue two awards, a case can be made for the fact that only one bowler can roll a "first 300 game of the new millennium," and the bowler who rolls his (or hers) in 2001, would be that bowler.

If you have any questions, or comments, please feel free to contact me at the above addresses. I would also ask that you pass this letter on to the relevant people regarding the special 300 award so the proper steps can be taken to rectify the problems that may occur.

(This letter is a semi-generic type that I have been sending lately to individual news anchors and programs since the summer)

Wednesday -- October 20, 1999

Mr. Peter Jennings
c/o World News Tonight
ABC-TV

77 West 66th Street
New York, NY 10023

Mr. Jennings,

I regret that I was unable to view the program "The Century" which you hosted, however I was able to look through a copy of the companion book at my local bookstore. I was about 2 or 3 paragraphs into the introduction, when I came across a passage that, frankly, befuddled me. What I am referring to is the statement made in the introduction that is as follows: "the 20th century began in 1901 and will come to a close December 31, 1999." This is but a part of the problem since the 20th Century and 2nd Millennium actually do not come to a close until December 31, 2000, something you have admitted to on the ABC News web site. But what is even more confusing is the fact that the opening sentence of the introduction states that a century is "a period of 100 years." I ask you to do the math and see if the above statement equals 100 years, as it should, or only 99 years, as it actually does.

Being a man of intelligence, common sense, and (I hope) integrity, does not the fact bother you that news organizations, such as the one you are a part of, continually misstate the truth? Why is the fact that most of the public across the world will celebrate the millennium and century this New Year's Eve taken up by the news media, and reinforced as cold hard fact, when just the opposite is true? Is there some reason that people such as yourself cannot make an attempt to educate the public of this misconception? News organizations like ABC News say they uphold ideals of truth and integrity, but by continually going along and reinforcing the misconception, not only is the media breaking its own vows, but bowing to ignorance on top of it. Even when I see or hear one of these organizations, or people, admit to the truth, such as you did on the web site, it comes across like it was something distasteful, or an idea they heard from some half-wit, such as yours did.

I am reminded of an old axiom: if people settle for things that are only good enough, nothing would ever, in actuality, BE good enough. We as a society are continually striving to better ourselves, and to become more civilized than the societies that came before us. Why then are we suddenly settling for "good enough" in regards to this matter? As founder of the Real Millennium Group, I have become very frustrated at the attitude raging across the country, and fostered by the media in particular about the year 2000 being referred to as the first year of the 21st Century and 3rd Millennium. A basic understanding of history, and simple mathematics proves this to be a falsehood, yet the attitude prevails.

This is the major reason I founded the RMG. History, and its impact on today's world, is very important to me and our members. That is why we have taken what is considered to be a trivial subject to many, and made it our cause. Trivial subjects have a way of becoming big problems. How many people even knew Kosovo existed a year or two ago? Then the tragedies were brought to the public's attention, and now it has become the major focus of today's newscasts. A little more than 50 years ago, a similar "ethnic cleansing" was taking place in Europe -- the perfect example of history repeating itself, and why all of history should be important to us; the small, insignificant parts, as well as the world changing events.

We have to face the facts that the majority of the world will celebrate the century and millennium this

coming January 1st, despite the fact that it celebrated the dawn of the 20th Century at the proper time in 1901. What has happened to change our view of the facts since then? But celebrating an event, and recognizing the actual date of its occurrence are two different things, a fact that the media seems to have ignored. We celebrate the births of two of our country's great leaders, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, on one day -- Presidents' Day. Yet neither man was born on this day, and we all recognize that fact. The schoolbooks still teach us that Washington was born on February 22nd, and Lincoln on February 12th. The same holds true for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. Why then can't we seem to recognize the true date of the turn of the century and millennium? This event is at least as important as any other, more so to us living today because we will be part of a select group around to witness an event that occurs only every 1,000 years. Don't you think we should at least get the date right?

If we start to ignore historical facts like this, because it doesn't suit our purposes, or seems to not matter much in the great scheme of things, how long before we start to ignore or change more important events? Will we begin to teach our children that Washington and Lincoln were indeed born on February 15th? Will we change the date of our country's independence to March 4th, just so the kids can have another day off from school? Will we begin to rewrite history to suit the purposes of sponsors, or people who like the misconception better than the fact? The changing, and ignoring, of historical facts has been practiced by many a tyrant throughout the ages. What the media and people today are doing with the date of the millennium is no different than the starting point used by many a historical figure bent on making history meet whatever desire they wished it to tell.

It is the "instant gratification" that today's society has embraced that has brought the world to the state it is in today. "If it doesn't directly affect me, then I don't care" is the attitude taken by many people, and it has been the cause of needless suffering for decades. Not too long ago, the "true news" media divested itself as much as it could from the tabloid journalism that has grown to a fever pitch, yet now, many honorable news organizations have taken the same approach to news journalism as the tabloids they once put down. Now we find ourselves bending history to suit the needs of our instant gratification syndrome, and companies who are looking to make a quick buck. As history has shown in the last two decades, it seems this problem will only grow bigger, and it won't be long before we really are changing history to suit our own purposes, instead of learning the true facts of an event. It is bowing to this need that causes tragedies like Columbine -- the "just do it" attitude that says damn the truth, and never mind the consequences, if it feels good, just do it.

It is time for the media and public alike to start waking up to the facts of our past, and honoring the men and women who did their parts in advancing the human race from tribal apes to the somewhat civilized race we are today. If we forget our history, we forget who we are, and where we came from, and we trivialize the work of our forefathers that we claim to hold so dear to us. It seems to me it's only a matter of time before we say to hell with them, they aren't helping to pay the bills, or they're not here to party with us, so why we should we care that Washington fought for the freedom of America, or Lincoln freed the slaves. It would have happened eventually, right? I think it's time for the media to start living up to the qualities they claimed they stood for when first founded, and begin to deal with the truth of our history, including the truth of the new century and millennium.

The Real Millennium Group has a web site that deals with the historical aspect of the millennium, and can be reached at the URL below the letterhead. If you would like to take the time to contact me, I can be reached at the e-mail address in the letterhead. The true measure of a man is the ability to look beyond personal desires and uncover the truth. I have been able to do so in my life, and have been a better person for it. Can anyone in your organization say the same, including yourself?

(This letter was sent to a local church Reverend who had a letter published in the newspaper)

Thursday -- May 27, 1999

You made some interesting points in your letter to The Times on May 24. While doing my research on this subject, I actually came across three different dates, in addition to Dionysius' estimate. One dates Jesus' birth as far back as 12 BC, which would have made the millennium occur in 1988. But that is not the reason I am writing.

I have always been interested in history, and recently have focused in on the early AD years as my favorite period (Knights in shining armor and all that). As such, I believe it is very important to learn from our past, and remember the people and places who have shaped our world, and us as a people. That's why I have formed the RMG and created a web site in Hometown AOL dedicated to this subject. It distresses me that the majority of the world takes such a flippant attitude on this subject. It may not be as significant as the fall of the Roman Empire, or the bombing of Pearl Harbor, or the more recent events in Kosovo, but this one man (with the help of Bede the Venerable who established the BC system 200 years after Dionysius) has made a major impact on our lives today.

Who knows what system of chronology we would be using if it wasn't for Dionysius? Even though I am an atheist, I think it is very important to note that even today, most of the world uses a Christian system of chronology. Certainly, it will have no effect on the world if we celebrate the millennium, century, and decade in 2000, but that minimizes what Dionysius was trying to accomplish. What if we suddenly found it more convenient to celebrate Jesus' birth in the middle of the summer, or decided that it would be easier for everyone if Easter was celebrated on one set day, without the yearly variation? Would Joan of Arc be a Saint if her accomplishments for France were forgotten by the world? What if we decided to make Pearl Harbor Day a national holiday, but celebrate it in March, simply because that month has no other holidays?

What I am trying to get at is that we should pay more attention to our past, and honor those who have lived through it. If we start to ignore things because they are inconvenient to us, like when to celebrate the millennium, how long before that crosses over into the more important aspects - like Christmas and Easter, the attack on Pearl Harbor, the fall of the Roman Empire, Hitler's extermination of the Jews, and the repeat of that event in Kosovo.

It's easy to say that 2000 is as good a time as any to celebrate, but that kind of thinking can lead to greater tragedies and injustices. The more we forget the little things in our history, the easier it becomes to start forgetting the bigger things. If you would like to visit our web site, this is the URL:
<http://members.aol.com/bjwyler>

Remember our history, and remember those who have made it; for without them, we learn nothing, and we become nothing.

Friday -- March 5, 1999

Jersey Style Magazine

2 Haslach Avenue

Suite One

Hamilton, NJ 08629-1133

Jersey Style,

I have recently formed the RMG as a way of getting the message out about the coming of the new millennium. Members of the RMG come from all walks of life, and share some common interests. Personally, I enjoy learning about the medieval ages of our past, and am an avid fantasy and sci-fi

reader. This has allowed me, through my research, to discover the actual year of the new millennium (and the decade and century as well). The number of people who believe the year 2000 to be the turning point of our chronology has surprised me, and this is why I formed the RMG.

Most of the world uses the Gregorian Calendar for keeping track of the days and months. This Calendar was created by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 AD as a replacement for the flawed Julian Calendar, instituted by Julius Caesar in 46 BC. But our use of the current chronology of years was instituted by a monk by the name of Dionysius Exiguus in the year 532 AD. It didn't come into widespread use until late in the 8th Century, but it is the same system we still use today to mark the passage of the years.

Dionysius wanted to create a Christian system for dating events based on the birth of Jesus Christ, which he estimated to be December 25th, 753 in The Year Of Rome, what we currently call the year 1 BC (Before Christ). Modern historians now believe that Christ was born in 4 BC, which would be 750 in The Year Of Rome, but the years are marked from Dionysius' estimate. He called the years after the birth anno Domini (AD), meaning in the year of our Lord. All years prior to his birth would be BC. So, the first full year of Christ's presence on the Earth was called the first year of our Lord, or 1 AD. There is no year Zero in our current reckoning of the years.

That means the first century and millennium began in 1 AD and ended in 100 AD and 1000 AD, respectively. The 2nd Millennium (the one we are currently in) began in 1001 AD and will come to a close on December 31st, 2000, not 1999 as is the common misconception. I have enclosed a copy of the flyer we have been posting, which also explains this reasoning, and we are hoping you will help us pass along the message before a lot of people start their celebrating a year early.

I certainly realize that in the grand scheme of things that this is hardly a major problem, but if we lose our sense of history, we lose a part of who we are. If you have any questions, or would like more information, please contact me at the above address.

Thursday -- 25 February 1999

TV Guide

Letters Department

Radnor, PA

19088

To All Concerned:

This may not be a big issue with some people, but when history is such an important part of our lives and television viewing experience, an error such as Phil Mushnick's in his Sportsview column about this year's Super Bowl really stands out.

Phil opens his diatribe by saying "The final Super Bowl telecast of the century was perfect." When I first read that, I couldn't believe that next year's Super Bowl wasn't going to be broadcast, then I realized that Phil doesn't know when the century ends!! I would expect this from those overpaid athletes who make their money with their bodies, and not their brains, but not from a sports writer -- unless they share the same faults as the stars they write about.

It may be a trivial thing, and hardly affects our lives whether the new decade, century, and millennium begins January 1, 2000, or January 1, 2001 (the actual date), but if we no longer care how we break down our increments of recording history, why not say that each century is now only 50 years long, and we are now in the 40th Century? Why not say that World War II happened back in the First Millennium, and who really cares anyway, if we were not around to witness the event? Heck, while

we're at it, let's just say the Dark Ages of the early years of the AD Calendar never really happened -- there isn't a lot known about that period anyway -- so who cares which decades and centuries it really encompassed?

We should all consider ourselves lucky to be alive to witness the turning over of the new decade, century and millennium. In the grand scheme of things, it is not as earth shattering as a global war, but it is an important event in history, and we should get it right.

I have included a sheet that has the proven facts of when the new decade, century, and millennium begin. As a publication that deals with the truth, and operates in a medium that records history every day, I think you, and Mr. Mushnick, should be interested in the factual data, and not common misbelief.

Tuesday -- 23 February 1999

USA Today

Letters To The Editor

1000 Wilson Blvd.

Arlington, VA 22229

To All Concerned:

It was interesting reading your article in the February 22, 1999 issue about what to name the new decade, but it seems to me, that this problem seems more important that when the decade, century, and millennium really ends. This is no small thing either, especially since when things happen are slightly more important then how we will refer to them in the future.

It may be a trivial thing to most people, and hardly affects our lives whether the new decade, century, and millennium begins January 1, 2000, or January 1, 2001 (the actual date), but if we no longer care how we break down our increments of recording history, why not say that each century is now only 50 years long, and we are now in the 40thCentury? Why not say that World War II happened back in the First Millennium, and who really cares anyway, if we were not around to witness the event? Heck, while were at it, let's just say the Dark Ages of the early years of the AD Calendar never really happened -- there isn't a lot known about that period anyway -- so who cares which decades and centuries it really encompassed?

Let's get one thing straight, when a momentous event happens in the course of history is equally, if not more important, than what it turns out to be referred to long after it happens. We should all consider ourselves lucky to be alive to witness the turning over of three of our breakdowns of timekeeping -- The new decade, century and millennium. In the grand scheme of things, it is not as earth shattering as a global war, but it is an important event in history, and we should get it right.

I have included a sheet that has the proven facts of when the new decade, century, and millennium begin. As a newspaper, I think you should be interested in the factual data, and not common misbelief.

Sincerely,

James J. Bergevin

Real Millennium Group™

Founder and President