

From This Corner

Any Day – Any Time

Larry Baird

The “Y-2000 Scare” was gaining momentum and there were dire predictions of the imminent collapse of everything. All computers were supposed to give up the ghost and banks would be shut down. Moving from 1999 to 2000 was to akin to “The Big One.” People were stocking up on water and canned goods. Some people were even finding religion. It was very close to hysteria. I remember telling the congregation I was serving at the time that we would be open the next Sunday as usual, the first Sabbath of 2000. It doesn’t qualify me as a “prophet,” but we were open, and the baskets for the community food bank were well stocked with bottled water and canned goods for the New Year. God is good.

I am suspicious of predictions, forecasts, and even some things that purport to be prophesy. Take these weather forecasts for instance. I never know whether to believe the meteorologists or not. Too many times they have forecasted blizzards that never stormed in. It is embarrassing when you cancel a meeting for a snowstorm that turns out to be a few flurries. It is even worse when what was supposed to be a few isolated flurries causes whiteouts. The only safe prediction is it will snow in western New York in January. You can take my word on that.

Those of us who call ourselves Christians do not do well determining the future either. Eschatology, for instance is the study of the end of history from a religious perspective. It may be the most useless of theological disciplines. Jesus tried to tell us this on numerous occasions, but no, we have to come up with theories. There is the theory of premillennialism, dispensational premillennialism, and amillennialism. There are more, but it was predicable I would forget their names. They are not concepts your average ordinary pastor uses on a weekly basis. The only eschatology I go for is the truth that “Christ will come again.”

Consequently never expect to read about me leading a group of the faithful to a mountaintop to proclaim Jesus is coming back the next day at 12:03 p.m. Me, I am still pondering John Wesley’s admonition to his pastors that they should be ready to “preach, pray, or die” at any time. That makes a lot of sense from where I stand, and makes for a great New Year’s resolution. Live faithfully. Do it daily. That way whenever Christ comes ... you will be ready... any day ... any time.