



editorial:

premillennial tension

Receiving her BAFTA award as Best Female Actress (for her role as Queen Victoria in *Mrs Brown*) Dame Judi Dench quoted:

The past is history
The future is mystery
The present is a gift -
Which is why it is called 'the Present'

As this last year before the new millennium begins, there is perhaps a greater sense of change, a greater sense of stress, and greater concern about the uncertainties of the future than ever before. Articles in this edition demonstrate the point. Yet the transition from 23.59 on 31st December next through 00.00 to 00.01 on New Year's Day 2000 is an arbitrary arithmetic thing without necessarily any significance in the heavenly places. Indeed it might have little significance in earthly places either were it not for a little millennial microbe lurking in some of our computer systems . . .

Whether we are all subconsciously if not consciously afraid of the Y2K bug, or whether we are all falling under the curse of 'the deathwish of helplessness' described by critics of the growing stress management industry, all of a sudden, where this new PMT is concerned, there is a lot of it about.

How helpful therefore to be reminded that we cannot change the past, and that (mercifully) we know little of the future. While we must learn the lessons of history, and while we must plan prudently in our professional, church and family lives for the future, we should cultivate the art of making the most of that special gift, *the Present*.

'Be still, and know that I am God' was a message that came through the psalmist. May we find stillness this year amidst whatever premillennial tension comes our way, and may we come to know God more intimately in 1999.

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