

ALAN PHELPS

# World's end requires computers

The big story in South Korea this month is the biggest story of all — nothing less than the end of the world.

An estimated 20,000 South Korean Christians, according to a Los Angeles Times report, are part of a movement convinced that Oct. 28 marks the day prophesied in the Book of Revelation when 144,000 believers will be beamed to heaven. Everyone else will have to sit through seven years of war and famine before the Second Coming of Christ. Bummer.

The news has spooked scores of South Koreans into selling homes, quitting jobs and abandoning families. Mainstream churches, the Times said, have condemned the movement as blasphemy.

But, hey, who knows? We've witnessed the collapse of communism, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure — why not the Second Coming?

An advertisement paid for by the mostly Korean-immigrant Church of Praise in Aurora, Colo., appeared in the Omaha World-Herald on Sept. 27, telling Nebraska readers all about Oct. 28 — "The Rapture."

"The Lord has revealed the time of the Rapture (Oct. 28, 1992) and the Great Tribulation (1993-1999) to many different walks of life... through visions, dreams, prophecies, and voice," part of the ad read.

I can't remember any visions I might have had, unless you count the weird things I start to think about when I nod off in Art History 168.

And as far as "prophecies and voice" go, I'm drawing a blank.

I suppose all this means the Rapture has not been "revealed" to me, personally, by the Big Guy. But that's OK, because my subscription to the

World-Herald came through for me. I'll be ready.

The ad also tells of that pesky old "666" deal: "666 represents the Antichrist who will be the head of the revived Roman Empire to be merged as the union of European nations.... The 666 mark will be in the form of computerized identification numbers," it said.

I don't want to speculate on how European unification ties in to all this, but I've heard of the computerized markings before. I used to work as a tourist guide at an Interstate 80 rest stop, where an odd man of the cloth once told me how all of us have invisible bar codes on our hands, and "They" read them whenever we buy something at the supermarket.

"They would be upset if they knew I told you that," he said, taking a quick look behind him. Maybe they were following him, I don't know.

At the time, I simply stared at the strange man for a moment and then decided I would go home for the day. Little did I realize that he might be speaking the truth.

Perhaps many of us really are walking around with these blasted numbers emblazoned on our hands, and the only people who know which of us are marked "666" are those sneaky scanning cash-register operators.

I worked at a ShopKo for some time, and on occasion I ran a register. No one ever told me how to read the customers' hands, and now I feel kind of left out. I can't help but wonder what computerized ID number is on my hand. I could have known about this whole thing years ago, instead of finding out a crummy half-month before the end of the world.

It seems interesting to me that the Lord has chosen to use computerized identification numbers to keep track of everything. I never got that out of my reading of the Bible. I'm sure the

apocalypse will be a pretty hectic day, and all, but one would think He could manage without any sort of help. He's never had to use computers before.

I wonder what type of computer He will use. IBM, Apple and the others must be competing like mad for that particular endorsement. I wonder if He got a good deal on a software package such as Windows.

It is somewhat depressing, really, talking about the end of the world. I suppose you could look at it another way — after all, the whole thing will be just peachy for the 144,000 who get to go upstairs. But spending seven years down here with the Europeans and their Roman Empire doesn't sound like much fun.

The World-Herald tells us the movement's literature advises those left behind to "Read the Bible like you have never read it before... pray... and do not take the mark (666) at any cost, even if it means you and your loved ones die as martyrs."

Perhaps this is where the European connection comes in. The "mark" the movement mentioned could be the German Mark, which has done so well on the currency markets of late. The number 666 could refer to an exchange rate. I'll have to contact my broker.

Those slimy Europeans are brewing up something or another — all those South Koreans, the Church of Praise and my wacky traveling preacher friend can't be wrong. And in the middle of a worldwide recession, too! How could Europe plan the end of the world and manipulate the Mark so deviously?

Thank God we have a military-industrial complex mighty enough to mop up that entire continent.

Phelps is a junior news-editorial major, the Daily Nebraskan wire editor and a columnist.



KIRBY MOSS

# Frustrated philosophers hit mark

I happened to be standing in the restroom the other day at Bessey Hall and noticed crude writings on the wall.

I've seen these scribbles all my life, but this time I looked deeper at the writing. I read between the lines. I began to probe the meaning of the metaphysical ramblings of someone who had gone before me.

What started out as a routine trip to the restroom turned into a small-scale, wholly untenable anthropological study that follows about the sentiment of a culture.

To impress lexicologists, I titled my study: The Analysis of the Levity of Laconic Lavatory Lexicon. Or for lay folk: Why Do People Write on Bathroom Walls?

Before I explain the method and results of my analysis, let me tell you, I got an odd feeling roaming around restrooms when I had no scheduled business to perform.

People looked at me with the unsaid expression, "What in the hell are you looking for, man? You come here to 'perform' or what?"

For a few days whenever I entered a restroom, I sucked in my shame and continued on my quest for words of wisdom on the walls of restrooms, which I picked randomly, of course. So much for method.

Now for a preliminary look at the findings, which I will divide into men's and women's. I know what you're thinking — restroom ramblings. Please note the parenthetical information is mine.

Burnett Hall, men: "If God intended the world to have gays, he would have created Adam and Steve."

"Oxymoron of the week: frat academics."

"How many frat boys does it take to screw in a light bulb? One to screw it in. Two to make a T-shirt about it."

"Die Fags."

"#@\*& nigers." (Spelled wrong.

Must have been in a hurry).

"Niggers. KKK."

"NU Football Sucks." (A dis-senter!)

"Please take a seat. My AIDS will be right with you."

"The only good Iranian is a dead one."

Burnett Hall, women: "What is love?"

"Impeach Bush!" (OK! When?)

Oldfather, women: "We are everywhere! Even in Nebraska!" (Message next to a pair of the female symbols, circle atop the cross, holding hands).

"I love Dave."

Bessey, women: "Did you come here to #&%! or look around."

"Get High."

Bessey, men: 1st person: "Lower the drinking age."

2nd person: "Legalize marijuana."

3rd person: "Legalize cocaine."

4th person: "Legalize murder."

5th person: "Legalize your mother." (No doubt a group effort).

"He who cuts on another's identity must be unsure of his own." (Profound.)

Armed with these cursory survey results, it became apparent that the most common themes underlying many of these writings were about sex, homosexuality and greek system vs. the world stuff.

The writings on the walls were etched with hate, fear and hope. They revealed some things about the ethos of genders. Either men have a lot more to say than women — there were fewer writings in the women's restrooms — or women just aren't as malevolent as men. Many of the writings on the women's walls bemoaned love and peace.

Artists of anatomical parts frequented the bathrooms; their drawings always larger than life, of course.

There were ramblings in circles. Written in pencil. In ball point. In everlasting marker. With keys. With knives. With fingers.

Spelling seems a lost ability for

many of the anonymous philosophers. Maybe someday someone will invent built-in spell checkers for bathroom stalls for words like lesbien, polatics or testacals.

It's amazing how people do that anyway. Like you'll see the message: "Dormies eat raisen brand for lunch." Inevitably, someone comes through later, scratches out "raisen brand" and writes above it "raisin bran." Pure genius!

Here's an example of an actual grammatically corrected finding on a stall door in Oldfather.

Original writer: "Eryn & Jay, true love forever. I know this is childish, but I really love him and I have never wrote on a bathroom wall before."

Editors: Someone crossed out the "and," replaced it with a period and made two sentences. The same person also crossed out "wrote" and changed it to "written."

Later, someone underlined "wall" in the original and wrote below it: "This is a door, honey."

Later, still, another person wrote: "And your grammer sucks the big one. Better marry the #@%&!+## so you can drop out."

Most of the writings were in solitary places, like phone booths and library stalls and bathroom stalls. Or in remote places where not too many people venture. I found this curious, because when I think about it, I've never seen anyone writing these messages.

Maybe these contemporary etchings are somehow descended from primal cave drawings in France and Northern Spain.

In the future, when archaeologists excavate this campus and find these indelible inscriptions in the marble or everlast marker drawings, they may wonder, "That's a strange cultural phenomenon. This artifact dates back to A.D. 1992. Paper had been invented hundreds of years before that. Yet, these people still wrote on walls?"

Moss is a graduate student studying anthropology and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.



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