

Author cites historical similarities

By **JOHN CALLAHAM**
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Even though 1,000 years separate 1000 A.D. from 2000 A.D., a renowned journalist and author said Monday there are many similar events that occurred at both periods in history.

James Reston Jr., author of the book "The Last Apocalypse:

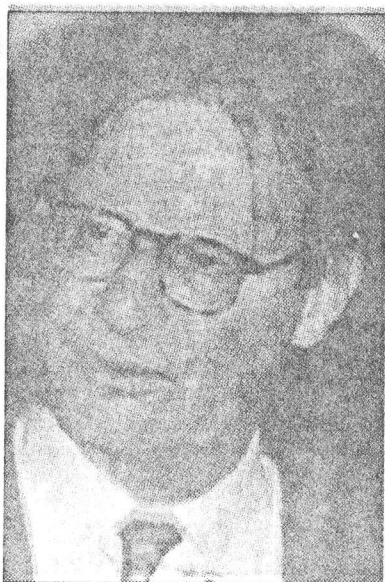
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Europe in the Year 1000 A.D.," spoke on the development of the book Monday at Western Piedmont Community College's Moore Auditorium.

Reston was the first of three speakers for the college's annual Fall Speaker's Forum, which will continue through the week.

Reston said he was struggling with a novel about the Reconstruction period of U.S. history when the idea for a non-fiction book chronicling the events of 1000 A.D. came from his editor several years ago.

Reston said he wondered how he



James Reston Jr. makes a point during forum.

would write such a book, saying, "Where would the magic be?"

He found the magic after reading the book of Revelation and of the many different visual interpretations of the passages by artists around the

first millennium. "It is a wild and strange book," Reston said.

Reston showed slides during his speech depicting several artistic representations of the book of Revelation to further his point.

Reston decided to do the book and to concentrate his efforts on looking at the Christian world around that time, since 1000 A.D. only had meaning for that group and other religions had different calendars.

In fact, Reston said the upcoming celebrations of the second millennium are a bit late. Due to a mathematical mistake in the currently used calendars developed by Frances the Small in the seventh century, the turning of the millennium should have been celebrated four years ago.

Reston said Europe was mostly a pagan-ruled land just 50 years before 1000 A.D. and that the land was constantly under attack from groups such as the Vikings and Magyars.

However, by 1000 A.D. most of

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Europe had converted to Christianity and the nomadic attacks had all but stopped. "It was a kind of anti-apocalypse," Reston said.

A similar development has occurred in this time period as well. Fifty years ago, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was beginning, and the threat of nuclear war was growing.

Now, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the threat of nuclear war is no longer as big as it once was. "The world is now a safer place," Reston said.

Reston said admires how people around the world are celebrating the current millennium. Great Britain is building the Millennium Dome, a structure twice the size of the Georgia Dome, that will be devoted to education.

By the same token, Israel is renovating Nazareth and Bethlehem for the millions of pilgrims who will be visiting in the next year.

The United States, by contrast, is not thinking about the millennium beyond the Y2K computer bug and a big party in New York's

Times Square, according to Reston. "I think it is a huge failure of imagination," he said.

As to what the next 1,000 years will bring, Reston touched on how the medical and scientific world could change human beings and how they are cared for.

However, it is the discoveries in astronomy and cosmology that could be most important in the next millennium, in Reston's opinion, including the eventual proof that the Earth is not the only place where intelligent life resides.