

A BULLETIN FROM
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**A New Century Dawns As The “Youth Yearn!”
Movement Culminates Atop Australia’s Ayers
Rock With 100,000 Singing, Praying**

BY TOM BROWN

Porter Malone says he honestly did not know what he would be starting. The buoyant Australian youth says he was only “trying out an idea” when he posted a videomessage on The Internet last March inviting 100 teenagers from every country on the planet to a “Youth Yearn!” celebration on Ayers Rock tonight, New Year’s Eve.

“Come and join hands and sing together — for world harmony!” his Internet announcement said. And since his video missive allowed people to see his face as he made the proposal, one could see the sincerity in his simple suggestion.

What hath Porter wrought? Seemingly overnight, student campaigns were begun in 87 different countries to raise the funds to send students

to Australia for the event, now dubbed the “Rock of Ages.” Ultimately, all 191 countries also sponsored similar events.

Then the electronic buzzline got wind of the plan; major media started converging on Ayers Rock a few days ago — along with Nobel prize-winning poets and scientists, rock band and movie stars, and a handful of powerful CEOs. Beyond the notables, hundreds of Australians and other citizens have booked up virtually every hotel in the huge Australian continent, spilling over to do the same in New Zealand.

Since there are relatively few suitable accommodations near the rock, most of the thousands will be either not sleeping at all tonight — or lodging in lightweight Velaesium tents, which are waterproof and highly insulating. However, the weather within hundreds of kilometers of Ayers Rock is picture-perfect. Thus, no one knows what the true size of the crowd will be; conservative estimates range beyond 100,000.

“All I know is that there will be 19,100 students here tonight — and we will join hands — and we will sing in the new century!” Porter said in a morning news conference, sporting the same broad grin which has now become a trademark of all Australia. Porter isn’t given to speech-making; he smiles when he hasn’t anything of import to share.

By contrast, the philosophy and opinions of many of the more-outgoing youths planning to attend “Youth Yearn!” are being reported by their home-country media with the same expansive coverage usually accorded to heads of state or other major personalities.

Porter, however, remains an understated figurehead for the “Youth Yearn!” movement. His few words at an ultra-brief morning press conference, however, reveal the makings of a future statesman.

“The world has come so far since 2000, but the nations have yet to see that only cooperation can truly bring a worthwhile future for the planet,” Porter said.

“There’s still disease. And famine. And senseless hostility. The youth of this world want to come together to end all that is negative on this planet.

“That’s what we will be singing for tonight. That’s what the youth on Ayers Rock will be praying for when the clock hits midnight and the 22nd Century arrives.

“We have come all this way just to say that the world still has a long way to go.” |<

digital art by dave pierson

