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The following review will appear in the October 2016 issue of CHOICE. The review is for your internal use only until our publication date of 01 October 2016

Religion

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Aveni, Anthony. **Apocalyptic anxiety: religion, science, and America's obsession with the end of the world.**
University Press of Colorado, 2016. 252p index ISBN 9781607324706, \$28.95; ISBN 9781607324713 ebook, \$23.95.

Aveni (astronomy, anthropology, and Native American studies, Colgate) has written an illuminating discussion of “apocalyptic anxiety,” or, according to the subtitle, “obsession with the end of the world.” He organizes the book into four parts. In the first, “Episode 1, October 22, 1844,” he traces the history of apocalyptic thinking in the West and examines the Millerites, a 19th-century group that eventually became Seventh Day Adventists, and their anticipation of the end of the world in 1843. Part 2, “American Apocalypse,” comprises three chapters: “From Columbus to the Great Awakenings,” “Fin de Siècle Secular Perfectionism,” and “Spiritualism and the Veiled Synthesis of Science and Religion.” Part 3 covers new age religion and science—millennial thinking from the 17th century through roughly 1970 and various newer movements of the “Age of Aquarius” interlacing the discussion with flashbacks to pertinent antecedents. Aveni concludes with “Episode 2, December 21, 2012,” in which he discusses Y12, speculation about doomsday around the 2012 winter solstice. Aveni's conclusion, as stated in the preface, is that “the two basic ways of knowing—reason versus revelation—are irreconcilable.” This reviewer would argue that in making this statement, he overlooks the fact that all reasoning begins with assumptions, a proposition held without evidence.

--P. L. Redditt, Georgetown College

Summing Up: Highly recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty.