

HOW TO SURVIVE AN APOCALYPSE

1. Watch every Netflix show
2. Dance alone with no music
3. Learn to speak Zombie
4. Put on your favorite outfit
5. Try a new food you've never tried before
6. Do 1 push up
7. Walk your imaginary friend
8. Build a fire inside your house
9. Sleep on the floor with your dog
10. Try and nap with your eyes open
11. Walk on all fours
12. Have a board game night on Zoom
13. Learn how to shoot a bow and arrow
14. Read every book on your shelf
15. Stand on your roof to avoid people
16. Write a song about your kneecaps
17. Throw a tea party for your stuffed animals
18. Perfect your pancake-making skills
19. Learn a TikTok dance
20. Don't die

ZU Magazine

ISSUE 6

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ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

There are Saints among us

By Lauren Purdy



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hey readers!

Where do I begin? It goes without saying that as the school year comes to a close, things look much different than any of us ever expected. In our final (virtual) brainstorm session, themes of crisis and change/transition/disruption came up frequently. It's no wonder, with everything that's been happening in our world lately, that this sentiment is echoed around the globe.

At times it feels like our world is ending — or at the very least, put on pause. None of us expected this semester to end this way, but things like this force us to confront ourselves and our world in a different way. In doing so, there is a lot that can be revealed.

The theme for this issue is Apocalypse. No, not that kind of apocalypse. Last semester, I took a course on apocalyptic literature, where we learned that the term "apocalypse" doesn't actually mean "end of the world," as we have come to think of it. The Greek definition of apocalypse is more akin to revelation — "the disclosure of knowledge, the end of deception." Apocalyptic writing usually comes in response to a crisis.

With this issue, we explore different things that the pandemic is revealing in our world. We examine our response to this crisis on a personal and global scale and how it has the potential to reveal the broken parts of our healthcare and economic systems, as well as the superficiality of fame, celebrity and power. There are biblical aspects of the end times and revelation that are powerfully considered as well. We also poke fun at the traditional way we've come to think of "apocalypse." Is it the end of the world, or a cultural reset? And what comes after — a utopia or a dystopia?

As the end of my days as editor-in-chief at ZU Magazine approaches, I want to be sure to say thank you to editors Ruby and Cheyenne for always being at the top of your game. Art directors Sienna and Olivia, your design skills never fail to blow me away. And to the staff writers and contributors, I value having each of your unique voices bring this magazine to life. Thank you all for your hard work this semester.

Thank you also to ZU Media leadership, past and present, who are all stellar at what they do and are always a source of encouragement to me. Shoutout to fellow seniors Nate, Anna, Brenda, Channing and Jesse — as well as alumni Jamie, Mike, Steven S., Brandon, Elena, and Alyssa. To the workshopers, I can't wait to see how you take ZU Media to the next level. The passion you have for journalism is inspiring to me and I know each of you will go far. I'll always cherish the memory of our long nights in the newsroom.

And thank you to our faculty advisor, Kent Walls, who is the backbone of the journalism program, who taught us valuable multimedia skills, who always had our back, and who taught us how to lead with excellence. The fact that you were able to accomplish the vision you had for student media at APU in three short years and transform our newsroom never ceases to amaze me.

And finally, thank you to the APU community for lending your voice, for reading, for engaging and for being here.

Yours, as ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mikaela".



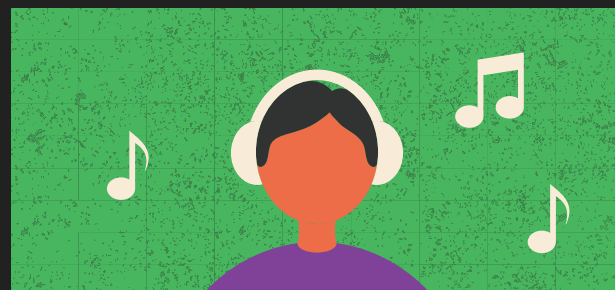
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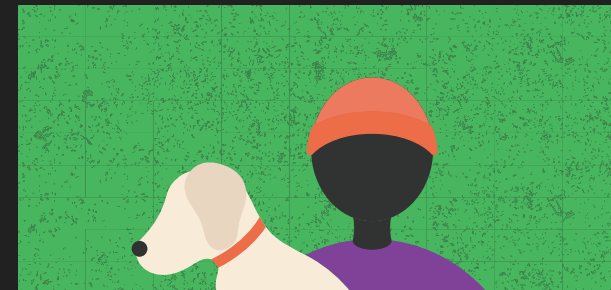


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WHAT HAS BEEN GOOD THUS FAR IN 2020?

Despite all the bad news surrounding the coronavirus, there are still some encouraging things going on around the world to be grateful for

By Raquel Banda-Gonzalez

It's only April, yet it feels like 2020 has been on a never-ending loop of negativity for centuries. Let's face it — with a lot of sad realities going on, it seems like everything this year has gone completely terrible.

Although it may be difficult, it's important to not lose hope for 2020. As we continue moving forward, it's essential to understand that, while we should not ignore what is going on, we shouldn't give up either.

Here's a list of some pretty awesome things that have occurred around the world this year:



The world's heroes

First thing's first: let's talk about some of the most amazing people in the world today. There have been thousands of healthcare professionals and first responders who have put themselves on the line to save others during this pandemic. Many of these heroes have had to stay away from their families for long periods of time to protect their loved ones from exposure to the coronavirus.

Not only have medics been saving the day, but people from your very own neighborhood, too. From ordinary to hero, many have been doing what they can to help each other through this challenging time. Whether it's helping at-risk neighbors with groceries or supporting others who no longer have a financial income, there have been cases all over the world that have shown the love, passion and unity that humans have for one another.



Street kids eat for free at Footpath Medical Dispensary

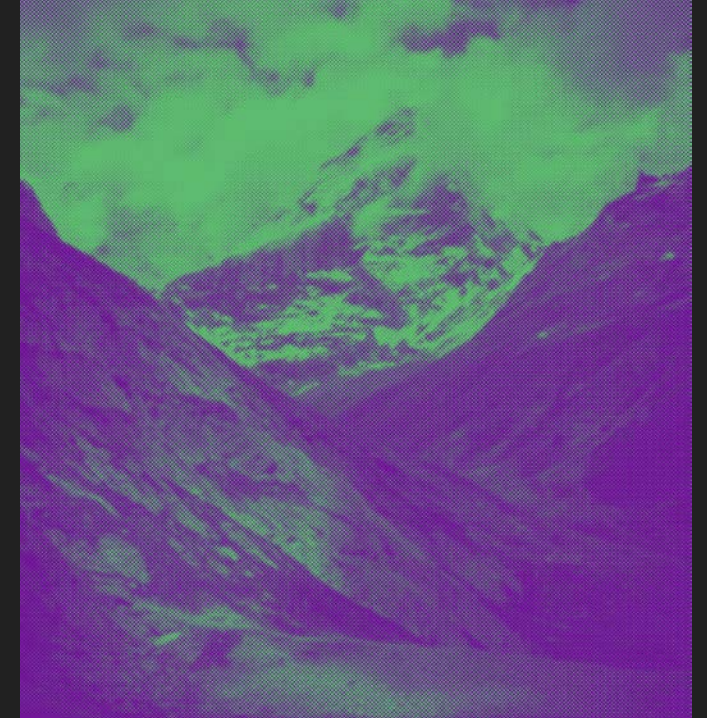
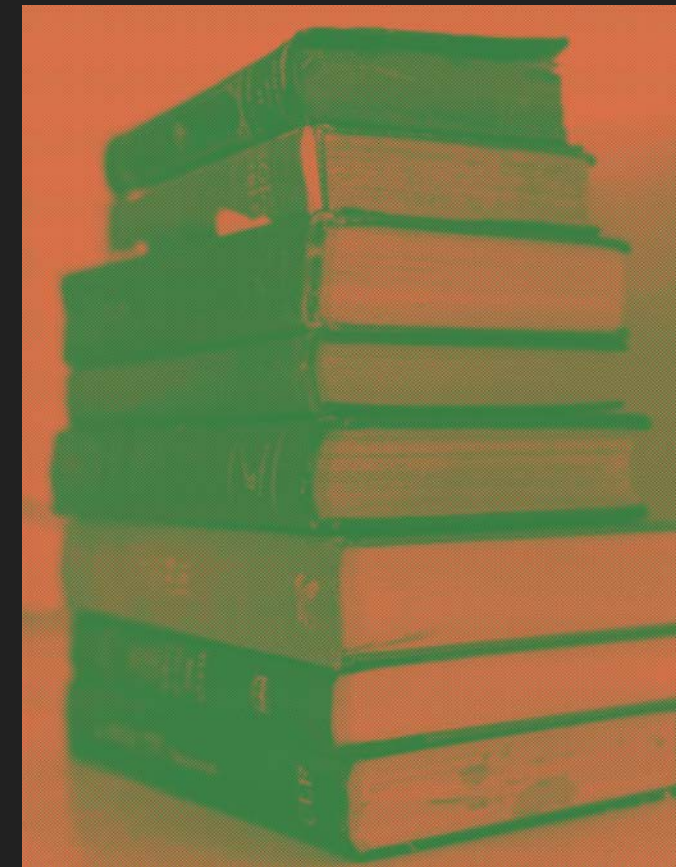
In Kolkata, India, when children get sick, many impoverished families don't take them to a hospital because they will lose a full day of wages, as they are unable to make ends meet. To combat this, a 41-year-old Engineering Professor Chandra Sehar has founded Food, Education and Economic Development (FEED) to distribute food to those in need.

Chandra Sehar has become determined to treat kids who come from impoverished homes and hopes to expand this initiative to treat kids all over India, leaving a positive impact on the country he calls home.

Bullied book-lover gets 100,000 followers on his book review account

13-year-old Callum Manning was dealing with cyberbullies who harassed him about his love for reading and reviewing books. Manning first started his Instagram page, Cal's Book Account, to share some of his favorite reads to close family and friends. When peers at his new school started to learn about his page, they had left very insulting messages in a group chat he was a part of.

His upset older sister took to Twitter to rant about the incident, leading to an overwhelming pool of support from thousands of strangers. A few days later, Callum's Instagram account had over 50,000 followers. He continues to do what he loves as well as prove to others that bullying should never be tolerated.



Air pollution decreases due to COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, cities have been forced to shut-down in efforts to stop the spread of the virus. For the last 30 years, the tops of the Himalayan mountains have been hidden behind smog from the high population and traffic emissions of the city.

Now that everyone is forced to be inside, air pollution rates have been lower than ever, and the beautiful tops of the Himalayan mountains can be photographed from as far as 125 miles away. Twitter and Instagram users who have experienced the view have shared a strong sense of appreciation to such things that may often be overlooked.

Jane Goodall's latest documentary set to premiere on Earth Day

National Geographic has officially released the trailer for Jane Goodall's two-hour documentary, "The Hope," during the first week of April.

"In 1977, she founded the Jane Goodall Institute to inspire hope through action around the world and for generations to come," says the Good News Network.

The trailer showcased a glimpse into the phenomenal story of Goodall's 60 years of activism and hard work to promote the message of a strong hope for saving and caring for the Earth. For those of you who care about the wellness of the Earth, this is the perfect and uplifting documentary to watch during our time in quarantine.

This year has been made up of a lot of unfortunate events, but it's important to keep moving forward and remembering all the little blessings we take for granted every day.

A QUIET ROOM

Our alternative world is their ordinary

By Kelsey Arvidson

The sun rises and she wakes, her circadian rhythm acting as a natural alarm. She is met by a warm embrace from the fluffy robe, providing her comfort as she shuffles into the kitchen. It is early, and the sun's rays are struggling to peek through the paned windows; the shadows cover the room.

The daily plastic organizer with colored pills awaits her on the counter. Each pill crying out to temporarily help an ache in the body. While her mind is still sharp as ever, her own body becomes a trap.

The quiet hum of the refrigerator fails to mask the reality of the situation — isolation is lonely. The day creeps along, the dull hum becoming louder. By lunchtime it is clear that there are few tasks to complete during the day: make meals for one, tidy and watch TV.

The screen of the TV glows over the living room and the chair that has a permanent imprint from hours of staring at the news. A couple of phone calls from the family helps occupy the day in between the mundane time-fillers.

Some afternoons are lucky when warmth prompts a day in the garden. The tree in the back has grown, unrecognizable from 20 years ago. The leaves take over the yard, each one adding a layer to the collection that lays at the trunk. With each leaf that falls, the clock keeps ticking and these days sound unbearably slow.

This story feels familiar because of quarantine. While the time spent in isolation for most feels unorthodox, there is a population that would consider the weeks ordinary.

How have we felt during this time in isolation? Scared, bored and desperate for human connection? Now is time to move forward with an empathetic understanding for those who live in a constant quarantine.

The U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) claims that there is a “loneliness epidemic.” The primary population that is affected by this epidemic are senior citizens.



The Campaign to End Loneliness has done research on the universal effect that loneliness can have on all ages. Loneliness has an effect on emotional experiences, but also physical health that can lead to fatal results.

The Missing Million report has 62 pages dedicated to finding out more about the loneliest communities. They state that “51 percent of all people ages over 75 and over live alone.” Senior isolation has gotten worse in the past decade and hasn’t shown signs of stopping.

The statistics and empathy about feeling isolated now resonates with everyone. So, what can we do? Sadly,

the world can’t change overnight. Start out small with people you know who face isolation as a regular part of life — not just because of the quarantine. Senior isolation can be combated with simple means of offering help with transportation, companionship, prioritizing time and active listening.

Isolation felt slow, like it was exciting to see a bird fly by the window, slow. There is an opportunity to take this time to change the norms. Don’t waste the lesson!

HUMAN KINDNESS

What the virus has taught us about the kindness of humanity

By Rose Hoos

In difficult times, it is easy to get distracted by all the hard things that are going on. Yet it is in these difficult circumstances that we get to see the better side of humanity — the side that cares for those that are facing isolation, illness or difficult choices. This does not make the effects of the pandemic less difficult, but taking the time to celebrate these people for all the good that they do brings hope in the midst of tragedy. It calls attention to people in our society that are not always considered particularly heroic, but during this period of isolation, their contributions have been recognized and valued.

It would be impossible to write an article on this topic without recognizing the work being done by healthcare workers around the globe. They battle a lack of basic medical supplies and protective equipment, yet they cover their faces with makeshift or reusable masks, wear goggles so tightly they develop bruises on their faces, walk into hospitals to care for those who are sick or dying, and try to do as much good as they possibly can.

These healthcare professionals face overcrowded hospitals where they are overworked and often cannot go home to their families. Sonja Schwartzbach, a New Jersey nurse and doctoral student, started compiling anonymous responses from nurses talking about the condition of these hospitals. In these accounts, many of which she has discussed with the media, she reveals the horrible conditions that health care professionals work in to keep us safe and healthy. Their work should be recognized and celebrated even though many of us, thankfully, will not need to witness it first hand.

Another important group of people are caregivers that work with older or immunocompromised individuals. These workers often quarantine from their families in order to continue to care for their patient’s physical needs. Yet, they still struggle to protect their own health and provide for the needs of their families in a time when many have lost their main source of income.

And these are not the only people displaying human kindness. Many family members have begun to care for relatives who are most at risk by picking up their groceries and ensuring they stay safe and healthy. For those who are older and do not have a family to care for them, many churches are putting together packages with essential items and delivering them to their houses.

Essential workers are another group to note. They return to their jobs daily to ensure we have the food, cleaning supplies and equipment we need to continue to work from home and successfully quarantine. They clean and stock the shelves in stores, deliver food to our doors and ship packages of fulfilled orders, ensuring that we do not need to leave our houses.

All of these people show human kindness every day, ensuring that everyone who can stay at home, does. In these difficult times, when it is so easy to get caught up in the pain of missed opportunities, increased social isolation or financial insecurity, it can be helpful to pause and look at those making our safety their top priority. These are the heroes of the coronavirus pandemic.



ABANDONED APU

A visual diary of the emptiness that haunts APU in the wake of the campus-wide shutdown

By Anna Savchenko

There is something eerie, yet beautiful in seeing the campuses of Azusa Pacific so empty.

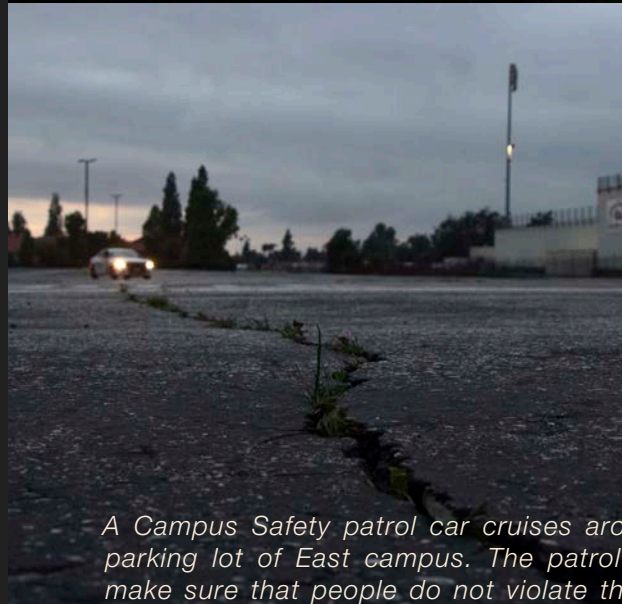
The places that used to bustle with noise and foot traffic now appear to be desolate even though finals week is just around the corner. With the students gone, it seems as if they took all meaning with them as well. There's no one left to enjoy the abundance of nature which has closely followed in the footsteps of the approaching summer heat.

Student dwellings and parking lots look smaller than when they were filled to capacity. Campus Safety patrol cars slowly drive around East and West campus in the same way that students used to crawl around the parking lots, waiting impatiently for someone to free up a spot.

And just like that, everything that used to be electrified by the movement of time, nature and people stands still, similar to the way that life at the university has been halted by the spread of COVID-19.



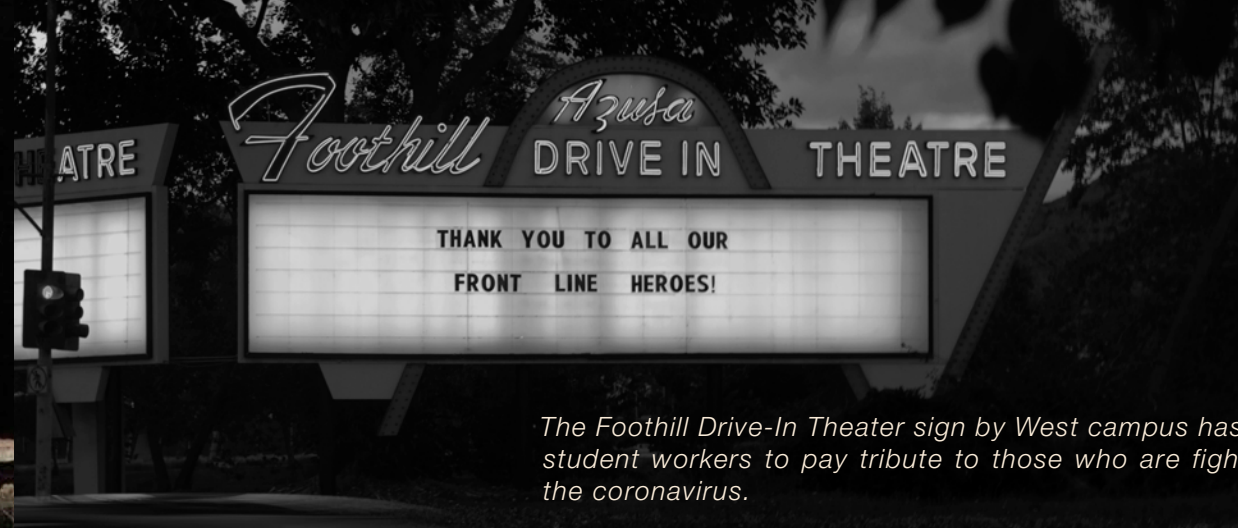
The Munson and Bavougian Tennis Complex stands empty on West campus after a storm. The recent bad weather has left the university looking gloomy and disheveled. Yet, there is still hope that things will return to normal at some point in the near future.



A Campus Safety patrol car cruises around the parking lot of East campus. The patrol officers make sure that people do not violate the social-distancing guidelines that the university has set out for the few students that remain on campus.



Students used to fill the study places in Hugh and Hazel Darling Library that overlook the reflective pool and West campus common area. But even with the final weeks of school approaching, the library remains desolate.



The Foothill Drive-In Theater sign by West campus has been updated by some student workers to pay tribute to those who are fighting on the frontlines of the coronavirus.

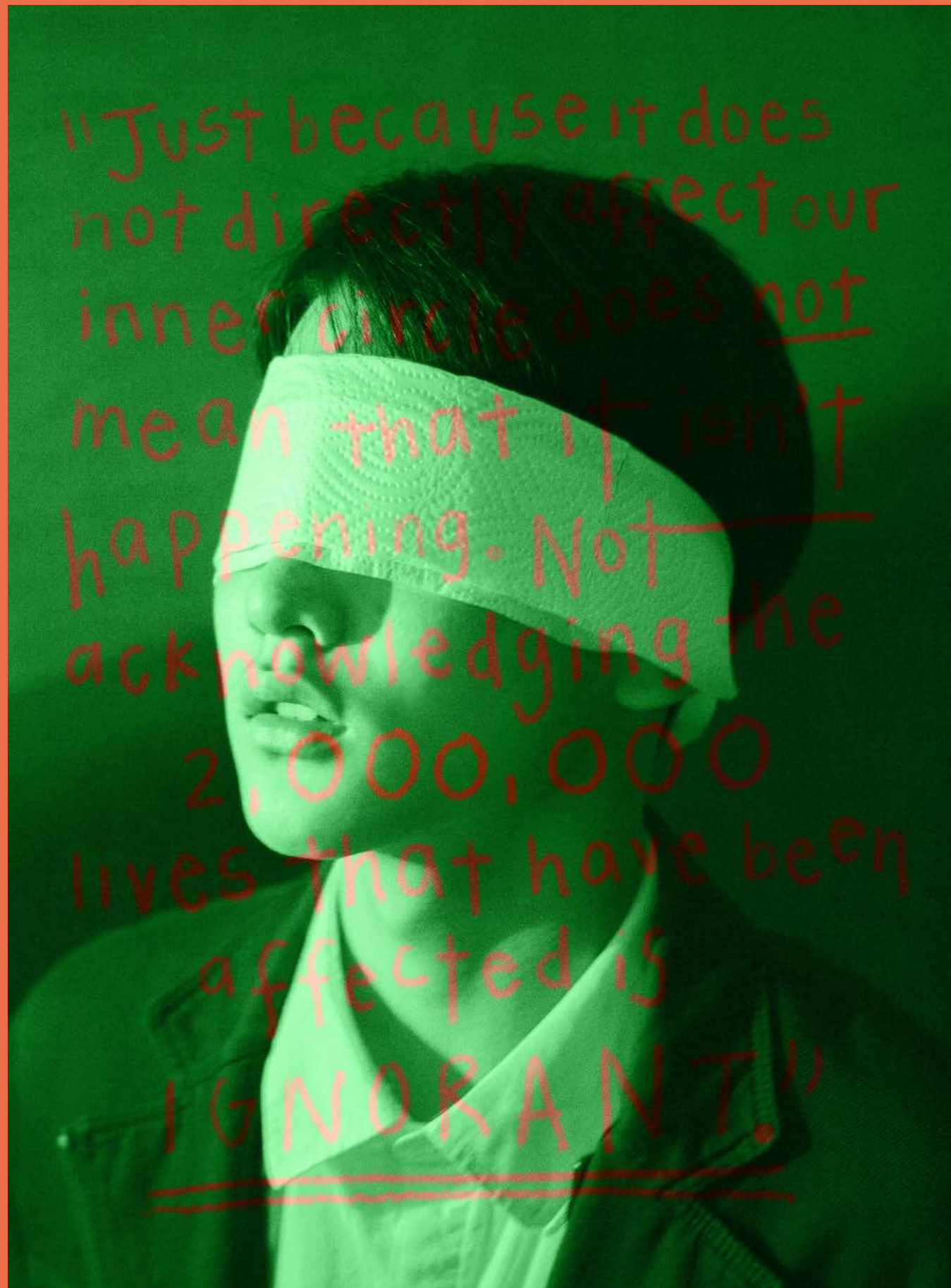


The university's transportation vehicles stand lined up on East Campus. Usually, they can be seen scattered around the university premises or in use by athletic teams and campus clubs.



The university's trolleys, which usually transport students between East and West campus, now stand collecting dust behind the Cougar Athletic Stadium.





FROM IGNORANCE TO SOLIDARITY

Listening humbly to unexpected changes

By Maria Echeverri

It's April and we are still bottled up at home. We are a blink away from summer — but what will our lives look like then?

Cases of the virus continue to spike and more lives are being lost. How is it possible that we have not come to the realization that it's going to take more than just a few weeks of quarantine to beat this virus. The whole country needs to be in sync if we want this situation to change.

This could have been prevented; it didn't have to get this far. But, we ignored the warnings and looked past the precautions. Did we think that it would have been placed on hold, there are many that continue to live as if nothing were going on. Until recently, the beach was flooded with people even when we were advised to stay away.

It's hard to understand something we can't see — I get that. We only see the effects of this reality through the news and media. But, just because it does not directly affect our inner circle does not mean that it isn't happening. Not acknowledging the two million lives that have been affected is ignorant.

Understanding the magnitude of this situation is crucial. More importantly, we must understand that

this virus hasn't just affected us, but the whole world. There was a huge gap in the time between where we realized this virus was a serious crisis and when we finally decided to take action. This gap gave the virus the strength to persevere.

Each person has the power to make this better or worse. How we choose to live during this time dictates what the future will hold. We need to start thinking about everyone and not only ourselves. This global pandemic calls for human solidarity.

We have all been connected by the virus. Though “connected” seems odd to say in the midst of social distancing, it has impacted us all regardless of where we are in the world. It will take a huge act of solidarity from all of us in order to endure what lies ahead. Once we begin to act for the common good, we will start to see the change we all want.

Solidarity means accepting this new reality and plans that have changed. Solidarity means that we are willing to tolerate our new circumstances for as long as we need to if it means it will help others. Solidarity will lead to unity. But, this unity will only happen if we choose to listen humbly and act unquestionably.

“How we choose to live during this time dictates what the future will hold. We need to start thinking about everyone and not only ourselves.”

WHY DO WE FEAR THE RAPTURE?

In the wake of the coronavirus, some Christians fear that Christ may return soon

By Brandon Gonzales

When I was ten years old, I heard a minister loudly proclaim, “Christ is coming soon! Pray for His return!” but I did not feel any religious, moral or lawful obligation to do so. As a matter of fact, I did not want to. Why was that? The honest truth is I had a consuming fear of missing out on what this world had to offer me.

The 10-year-old version of myself desired similar things to what the 20-year-old version of myself desires: to have a fulfilling career, to marry my sweetheart, to have children of my own, to be used by God in ministry, to be successful and so much more. But all of these desires, both those of altruistic nature and those of egocentric nature, are to be counted as dregs (Philippians 3:8).

We, as followers of Christ, are to place all of our worldly desires behind us and give our full attention, adoration and affection to Christ alone. The truth is, many followers of Christ do not follow this principle and therefore lose sight of what they were created for.

God created us to worship Him (Isaiah 43:21). This worship is not exclusively offered when a local congregation gathers together to sing praises, but is a continual praise that is performed in spirit and in truth (John 4:23).

Our praise on this Earth is nothing compared to what our future praise will be like in heaven. We are going to be glorified to a state in which we can worship the Lord freely, without the impediment of our carnal flesh (Romans 8:30). We will worship him perfectly and forever be in awe of the unfathomable creator of the universe. We will worship him under the light of his brilliant iridescence, alongside legions of flaming angels as the elders of heaven

lay their crowns down before the feet of the Lamb (Revelation 4:10-11).

Stop reading this article for a moment and picture the grandeur of this magnificent scene in heavenly places.

The images you conjured up in no way compare to the awesome power and glory of God that we will experience when we are caught up in the clouds with Him. The Earth will pass away along with every single one of our failures, shortcomings, diseases and transgressions. Our slate will be wiped clean and we will have no need to worry or cry any longer.

This truth is proclaimed in Revelation 21:4: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Even in spite of these wondrous, prescient truths, there are many Christians who believe that if they are raptured up to be with the Lord, they will somehow be sorrowful for what goals they did not accomplish here on Earth — for never getting married, for never owning a home or perhaps for never graduating. I know these things to be true because I myself longingly desire them.

The lulls of this world so frequently cloud the glory of our God, rendering his luminous majesty into translucent murkiness at best, and an opaque cerulean blue at worst.

In our finite minds, we conjure up images of heaven and wonder, “How can that be fun? Shouldn’t God put in a Disneyland or Six Flags for us to have a good time at? Are there going to be dogs? What about churros?”

I have these questions, too! However, the verdict is out. Either God is the eternal being which we will be blessed so incredibly by that we have no choice but to fall upon our knees in the deepest, heartiest worship imaginable (Revelation 1:17), or we substitute him for aspects of this temporal life we so childishly deem vivacious and attractive.

Many of us fear the rapture because we do not understand God’s glory, and we never will. Yet this glory, which is an aggregate of such characteristics as His grace, aseity, holiness and omnipotence, is what is supposed to spur on our hope of His redeeming return in which He will take His ransomed bride to be with Him for eternity, ridding her of Satan’s constant plays that plague this earthly life.

Let the church no longer be concerned about our lives here on Earth, for that inhibits our steps to those of an infant, but let the church be so consumed with God’s glory that we live our lives for Him completely — fighting for righteousness, feeding the poor, helping the widow and greatly anticipating the day when He returns for His unblemished bride.



INTROVERTS, EXTROVERTS AND THE IN-BETWEEN

Being stuck in a house all by yourself is boring... or is it?

By Kane Casillas

Quarantine and lockdown are hard to vibe to. Constantly staring at the same walls, watching the same shows and doing the same thing every day for a month? To some, this sounds like purgatory. For others, this is paradise.

I, of course, am talking about introverts and extroverts. These two types of personalities are different from one another in how they interact with people. Introverts gain their energy from being alone, while extroverts feed off the energy of other people. The extroverts tend to be more social while introverts keep to themselves.

These personalities cope differently when being trapped in a house for a month. No hanging out? Only FaceTime? To an extrovert, this can be a nightmare. A bunch of time to read or watch their favorite shows? This is what an introvert has been waiting for.

Such is the case with Kiele Casillas, who is an introvert according to the Myers-Briggs personality test.

"I'm an introvert in the sense that I like my alone time and I'm most comfortable when I'm dealing with things by myself," Casillas said in an interview. "I am an incredibly independent person. I'm not shy or unfriendly, I talk to people and have a decent amount of friends, but I find myself needing a lot of time by myself to 'recharge my social battery,' if that makes any sense."

While Casillas revealed she does miss her friends, she explained that she has other ways to remain productive during this period of isolation.

"I miss my friends because I love them, and I do miss seeing other people's faces every day. I don't miss seeing everybody, like at school, but at the least I miss my small group of friends," Casillas said. "I'm still talking to friends. Everyone else, I'm noticing, I only talk

to while in school and that's perfectly fine because I like breaks from people."

For Casillas, this pandemic seems to have given her an opportunity to relax and do more things she enjoys.

"When I'm alone, I like to keep busy, all of my hobbies are indoors," said Casillas. "Sometimes I just sit and stay on my phone or computer, I'll write stories or draw something. It depends."

While Casillas has been able to sit back and enjoy her lockdown as best as she can, extrovert Chris Pantel is having a harder time.

"The thing that I feel most deprived of is the energy that arises from spending time as a group of friends doing a fun activity," Pantel said in an interview. "I miss doing fun activities with friends and I miss meeting loads of new people at the most random places in public."

Nevertheless, Pantel finds ways to keep himself busy. In an interview, he said, "When I'm alone, I enjoy playing, working out, playing video games, or going on a bike ride and exploring nature. Personally, I find loads of pleasure in the activities I do during my alone time, as it's not often that I'm not surrounded by people."

While Pantel is bummed out, he seems to be doing what he can to be productive, whether it's by himself or with friends. While Casillas and Pantel both seem to find pleasure in activities, Casillas does tend to be alone while doing such activities. Pantel, on the other hand, is still productive but longing for that social connection once again.

What about ambiverts? An ambivert is someone who is both introverted and extroverted. They have some qualities of an introvert and some of an extrovert, but these qualities vary from person to person.

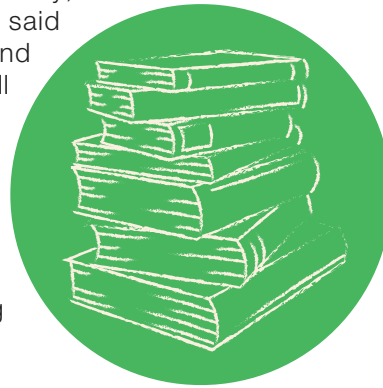
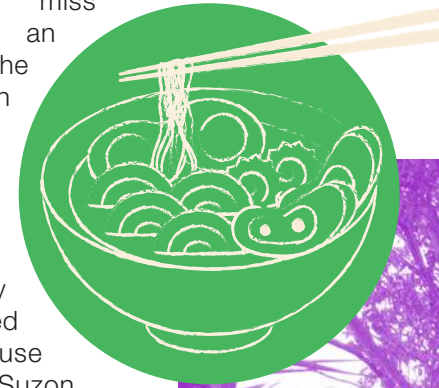
Enter Nessa Suzon, an ambivert dealing with quarantine as well.

Suzon seems to miss interaction, like an extrovert. However, she finds convenience in being alone, as an introvert would.

"It is frustrating that I'm not able to interact with my friends and my loved ones directly because of the pandemic," Suzon shared. "However, despite the unfortunate situation, it is also convenient for me to not be able to put in the effort in speaking to others just to attain trivial information that I need since it's easier to type rather than physically meet people. I have been less social now because of the pandemic and have been unable to communicate as effectively as I have before," continued Suzon.

"I mostly call people to talk when I have nothing to do," Suzon said. "But most of the time, I read and find something to entertain myself with such as games. Sometimes I find texting people requiring a lot of effort that I'd prefer to avoid and utilize the energy to do something for myself."

Ultimately, whether you miss people or enjoy not having to exert so much energy in conversations, it becomes clear that everyone is doing what they can to get through this time.





IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

*With our schedules empty,
we are able to pinpoint
what we miss most about
everyday life—for me,
that is sports*

By Tessie Scavone

Amid a build-up of anticipation in the sports world, the coronavirus hit home. With empty schedules due to the coronavirus outbreak and social distancing measures, this pandemic has given people the time to reflect on how we choose to fill our calendars and what we value in our day-to-day lives. For me, my mind went to sports.

In the coming months, sports fans were looking forward to March Madness, the Major League Baseball season, the National Football League Draft and the 32nd Summer Olympic Games.

According to Forbes, about 100 million people tuned into March Madness in 2019, the MLB drew in nearly 110 million fans each season, CNBC tallied 180 million viewers for last year's NFL season and Statista.com found that 3.6 billion people watched the 2016 summer games. This is not including the millions of fans physically present at the games. Many people in our world delight in sports, but from tee-ball to the Olympic Games, no sporting events are taking place during this time.

I can see why so many gather to watch sporting events, throw parties in honor of their favorite home teams, spend thousands of dollars on season tickets and vow to never miss a game. Sports bring excitement to many people's lives. Cheering on your favorite athletes, wearing your team's logo and conversing with other fans is what puts a smile on billions of people's faces daily.

Our world has a lot of hurt and brokenness, yet sports has the ability to bring people together. With 7.8 billion people living in the world today, it is incredible that there are aspects of life that can unite people. The love of sports brings both athletes and fans happiness, it cultivates community and can give people a sense of belonging in a world where everyone strives to feel included.

This has affected me personally as well because it includes my sport: swimming. I am a Division II collegiate athlete, and even though I was able to finish out my season before this pandemic, it is easy to say that my days are not the same without the feel of the water.

I have been swimming competitively since I was 10 years old and over the past 10 years, the longest consecutive break I have taken from the sport has been three weeks. Because gyms and pools are shut

down, I am currently going on my fifth week since being in a pool. This may not sound long, but for me, it has felt like forever. Swimming not only brings me an insurmountable amount of joy, but it also allows me to attend an incredible university, be physically active and has put people in my life that I will cherish forever.

To get where I am today, I have spent countless hours practicing, competing and devoting the vast majority of my time to this sport. Now that I am unable to swim, the first feeling I experienced was fear. Questions raced through my mind: "What if I get substantially slower? What if this leads to my scholarship being taken away? What will happen if I can't swim in college anymore? How long will it take me to bounce back from this?" Since the mandated shelter in place has taken away my freedom to swim, I have realized how much of what I do revolves around this area of my life.

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Swimming has become more than just a sport to me. It has provided me with a support system, a community, life-long friends, mentors, has taught me so much about who I am and opened up the talents that God has given me. Not only is swimming good for my mental health, but it has improved my physical health, giving me the ability to move my body and remain healthy.

I miss the way swimming makes me feel; I miss my community; I miss the sense of accomplishment it brings me. I now can see why our society puts so much emphasis on sports and all they have to offer.

I believe it is okay to enjoy the little things in life, whether it is sports, art, music, writing, or whatever else brings a person happiness. I am reminding myself daily that they are not the end-all-be-all. Even though swimming is a huge part of my life, as a follower of Christ I know that what we will experience in Heaven is far greater than anything we will experience on earth. I have a hope knowing that the joys of this world are just a taste of what is to come.

For all of the fans and athletes that cannot wait to get back to doing what they love, this season will only allow us to gain a greater appreciation for sports. They can be a healthy outlet and escape for people during the challenges that come with life. So when games, meets, races, and competitions pick back up again, I know myself and all the sports fans out there will cherish the unity, passion, and enjoyment that come from being a part of the world of sports.

QUARANTINE WITHOUT TECHNOLOGY? ENTERTAINING THE SOMEWHAT IMPOSSIBLE THOUGHT

In a world that relies so heavily on electronics, the thought of enduring a pandemic without them can bring newfangled gratitude

By Channing Reid

Our new normal has everyone feeling different. As we remain stuck within the walls of our homes or apartments, life can get lonely and boring. Our daily routines and work schedules have been stirred. There is no question that our lives are suddenly filled with uncertainty.

With that uncertainty, feelings can emerge unprovoked. Since I arrived back home in Arizona, I have been struggling with motivation to complete various assignments and a canceled graduation does not seem to help.

This quarantine has given me time to reflect on a lot of things, considering there isn't much else to do. One major revelation that I had since being home is that although plenty of things have been taken away from us, one thing has not. And it happens to be technology.

It has become a part of everyone's lives and it is almost impossible to think of a life without it. However, people once lived in a time when radio and colored television didn't exist.

With the dreadful Wi-Fi connection at my house, I am provided with an ongoing struggle to stream movies

and shows to avoid boredom. When it affected my ability to have efficient Zoom calls, which has made up 95 percent of my social interactions, I began to entertain this revelation.

Many of us have heard how important it is to unplug and take time away from electronics, but in a time like this, I believe that many of us are thanking technology.

Can you imagine if the coronavirus affected our electronic devices? What would you do? What would this quarantine be like without the luxury that technology provides?

As the entire country is ordered to stay home and social distance, I am not entirely sure what I would do if I didn't possess my iPhone, laptop or TV.

And it appears that two of my friends think the same.

I spoke with Michael Embry, an Azusa Pacific alum, in a lengthy discussion. I asked him what he would do during this time if he could not fall back on technology.

"To be honest, life without technology seems difficult to comprehend, realistically and existentially," Embry said. "Even though I try not to use it a lot, I still find

myself using the majority of my day consumed by mobile devices. Without those, I would write letters and write in my journal."

Caelin Nelson, a senior cinematic arts major at APU, admitted that although she is not trying to accumulate too much screen time, technology has a new meaning to her in this quarantine.

"For me personally, I'm trying not to be glued to my screens too often, so I'll go for a walk, sketch, paint, tidy up or work on my scripts," Nelson said. "The main purpose of technology for me at this point is to stay connected with others since physical contact was cut off."

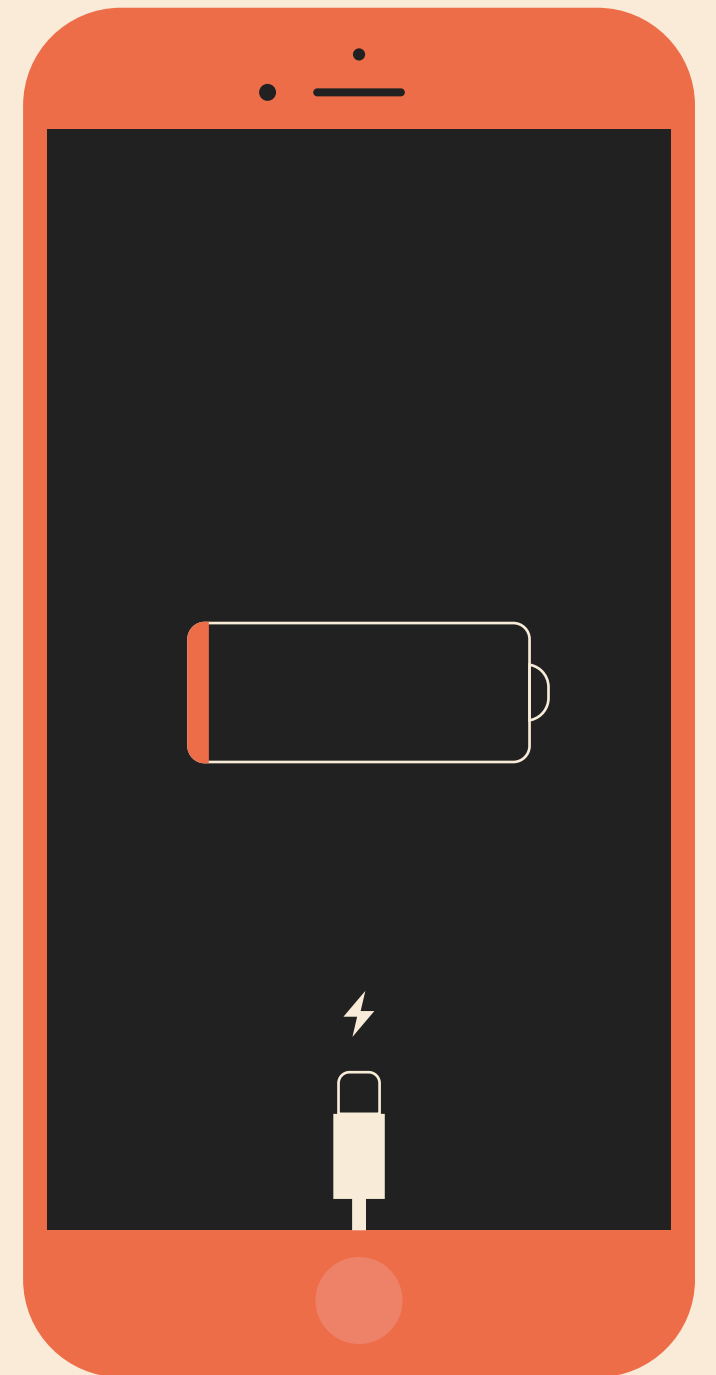
During a time where social interaction is limited, it can be easy to forget some of the activities we can do without relying on technology, which Embry summed up nicely.

"Journaling is a healthy way to get your thoughts on paper while still utilizing your self-expression and creativity," he said. "In addition to this, I would enjoy singing, as it is a good creative escape and gives your vocal cords a good workout too. After all, famous musical pieces come from the response of a plate or as a result of being locked away in one's own home."

This is also a time when we can enhance our spiritual lives and spend quality time with family.

"More recently, my parents and I have made time to do devotions together and sometimes play board games," Nelson shared.

This season may bring about a flood of emotions, but it is important to recognize the blessings that we have. Quarantine would be much harder without technology and I believe that when we come out of social distancing, we will look back with a newfound appreciation for it.



WHY ARE WE OBSESSED WITH THE APOCALYPSE?

How human empathy affects scary stories

By Brenda Covarrubias

We all like to believe we are good people. Whether we live virtuously or not, we always find a way to justify our actions, point out our good qualities and look at the bright side — but what if there was no bright side? What if the only choices available were bad and worse? Would we still be “good people”?

Modern apocalypse stories ask these very questions, forcing the consumer to question their true identity and morals. A major theme among popular apocalypse stories is the protagonists, not the villains nor the literal issue at hand. In fact, many such stories could be read as allegories to other issues.

For instance, “The Walking Dead” is an apocalyptic show that lasted nearly a decade. The story follows a sheriff named Rick Grimes who awakens from a coma to discover the world has been overtaken by zombies, known as walkers. Now, in this new, chaotic world, Rick has to reevaluate his life, ethics and identity. Is he still a sheriff if there is no law? Is he still required to keep the peace if there is no peace? Is he justified in protecting strangers if it puts him and his loved ones at risk?

The show had a massive following. By season five, “The Walking Dead” broke records as the most-watched cable show of all time, according to Forbes. Despite this, the show began to falter. Fans

commonly believe that the pitfall of the show was due to killing off too many main characters, bringing in unlikeable new characters and focusing on human violence over that created by the zombies. In short, it no longer resonated with people.

Rick was the moral backbone of the show, doing the right thing even when the odds were against him. If he committed a crime, such as killing another human, it weighed heavily on him even if it was in self-defense. His empathy and sense of justice were so high that even when he had to kill in order to save his young son, he cried. This unbearable display of human love was something everyone resonated with.

The show not only asked if we would do the right thing, but how we would cope with the aftermath of it. As such, the zombies were not the true focus of the story. Rather, “The Walking Dead,” like so many other apocalypse stories, was an allegory for human nature and morality.

Another popular apocalyptic story is “The Road” by Cormac McCarthy, which has parallels to “The Walking Dead.” In it, a nameless man and his son wander aimlessly to survive after an apocalypse. The story never says what happened to them, or why things were as bad as they were. It simply focuses on the relationship between the two characters.

The man and his son are bonded by their love for each other, though they are starkly different from one another. Where the man is calloused, the boy is sweet. Where the man is cruel and selfish, the boy is pure and giving. The man would do anything to protect his son, no matter the cost. But the boy only wishes for a better world and to help strangers.

The story follows the man’s perspective, and so it implies that the boy is wrong to trust other people. According to the father, if it were not for him, the boy would die. But from the boy’s perspective, others may have already died because they didn’t help them.

Throughout the story, the boy is fixated on one question: “Are we still the good guys?”

Are they the good guys if they turn their backs on strangers? Are they the good guys if they kill in self-defense? Are they the good guys if they see evil happening around them and do not try to stop it? Are they the good guys if they run away?

By the end of the story, the father dies of an illness that has overtaken him. Before he dies, he tells the boy to stay safe and reminds him not to trust strangers. But in a final act of disobedience, the boy walks out into the middle of the road and meets a family with a son his age. The family is kind and adopts him, giving hope to an otherwise hopeless story.

Much like Rick’s son in “The Walking Dead,” the boy from “The Road” opposes his father in many ways. There is a generational divide between those who were forced into the apocalypse and those who were raised in it. With this difference, there is also a difference in morality. Rick and the father lost their way, but their sons never did. If it were not for the sons, the world would not change.

There are countless apocalypse stories around the world and in different forms of media. Not all stories are the same, but many from the apocalypse genre pose philosophical questions that force viewers to re-contextualize their opinions about the world, ethics

and humanity. Importantly, they also propose a thesis: If it were not for the innocent at heart, the pure and the beloved, the world would be doomed.

The reason we love apocalypse stories, no matter how gruesome they may be, is because they put hope in our hands and force us to remember that the outcome of the world is shaped by the actions we take. We can be logical, calloused and self-preserving, like the father in “The Road,” or we can mourn the bad things around us like Rick and try to always do the right thing, like the boy. Either way, our future, and our souls, are based on how we treat others in times of hardship.

REVELATION: A BOOK ABOUT DOOM AND HOPE

How the book of Revelation can surprise you

By Charissa Enns

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death,” said Revelations 21:8.

The words spoken here are intimidating. The fear of Revelation is ingrained into our culture, from references to the number 666 to Armageddon. It is universally known as a book about the apocalypse.

However, Revelation is more than that. The theme of hope can be seen, too, which is something people do not readily think of when considering the fiery judgment of the world. The book is full of rich symbolism and helps one better understand the nature of God.

“The context of Revelation was written to Christians who were undergoing persecution. The focus isn’t how or when Jesus is going to come back, but that he is in the midst of all circumstances. All of this is still under his sovereignty and it really gives us hope,” said Michael Medeiros, college pastor at Cornerstone Bible Church.

Revelation goes beyond beasts or final battles. The definition of apocalyptic literature brings the joy found in the book to light.

According to PBS, “The word ‘apocalypse’ refers to a genre of literature like the Book of Revelation itself. They are pieces of literature that start by revealing something or seeing visions or having individuals be taken up into heaven where they can see what’s going on from that vantage point.”

Outside of secular interpretation, apocalyptic literature is associated with prophecy. It is something that cannot always be understood. Revelation reveals the belief that Jesus is coming back. Life is finite — one day all evil will end and a new heaven and earth will be created.

“People misunderstand apocalyptic literature all the time. People seek to bend it to their own biases. Even some of Jesus’ words in Matthew and in Daniel. Some people just

don’t apply good hermeneutics. Not every symbol can be interpreted and understood, people will think within their finite view and cultural context,” said Medeiros.

This is how Revelation is taken out of context. It is about the end of the earth, but there is also so much more to it. It is about victory over evil and the hope to be found within that. The symbols are so bizarre it can be confusing at times; however, not everything can be understood.

PBS said, “Things that are typically associated with end-time prophecies and typical language actually are not found in Revelation at all ... Notably, there’s no reference whatsoever to the Antichrist.”

People are often surprised by what the book is about, seeing as many have been led astray by culture. For example, “The Left Behind” series had a profound impact on what people believed to be in Revelation.

Revelation 1:3 said, “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”

John, the author of Revelation and a disciple of Jesus, is blessing those who read the book. It is meant to bring hope to those who put their faith in Christ.

In our current context with COVID-19, it seems as though one cannot help but think of end times. However, every generation must have felt this way at one point in time, with the Depression, World Wars I and II and 9/11.

“The tie into what is happening is that God is our center and he will weather the storm. We don’t deserve anything and he is gracious. Easter and Good Friday should remind us of that,” said Medeiros.

So, the next time you open Revelation, remember that the book was written to bring hope to Christians who were being persecuted; therefore, Revelation conveys the promise that all will be put right. We can find joy in that.

“METROPOLIS”: DYSTOPIAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND HEART

What does a 1927 silent German film have to do with our current situation? Maybe more than you think

By Jordan Green

This is not a new reaction. For centuries, mankind has developed a sense of fear when faced with adversity. Of course, this sense expands through multiple extremes. Fear rises before taking a midterm, interacting with a crush and in basic everyday actions. Yet, fear can also become a worldwide response, especially when experiencing dramatic moments of change.

There have been crises when the fear and desire for protection was warranted. Financial crises take millions of jobs. National disasters destroyed acres of property. Unjustifiable acts of terrorism claim thousands of innocent lives.

As you sit here and read this, you are currently facing such a crisis. A pandemic is keeping you from seeing loved ones and forcing you to leave your house while wearing a mask and rubber gloves just to purchase a gallon of milk. Truly no one could have imagined such drastic measures occurring when the virus first crept into the country. At a time like this, it is hard to not expect the worst. It feels as if we are living in a dystopia of sorts.

When considering dystopia, I think of Fritz Lang's silent film "Metropolis." Lang is a German director and is often distinguished as one of the first exceptional filmmakers of the 20th century. His skill set was on full display in this 1927 film.

The work was developed during a time of torment in Germany — a time of political and economic frustration due to World War I. There was fear amongst the German people and a lack of trust aimed towards the ruling powers of the country. Lang took these observations and placed them in the film, developing a city, known as Metropolis, which was meant to represent a futuristic German atmosphere. The result was a city where the rich overpowered the poor, the working class was

exploited and a violent revolution from the victims was near fruition.

Of course, this commentary can apply to nearly all power structures within the United States. But when dissecting the plot of this film, two themes tend to surpass the rest: consciousness and heart.

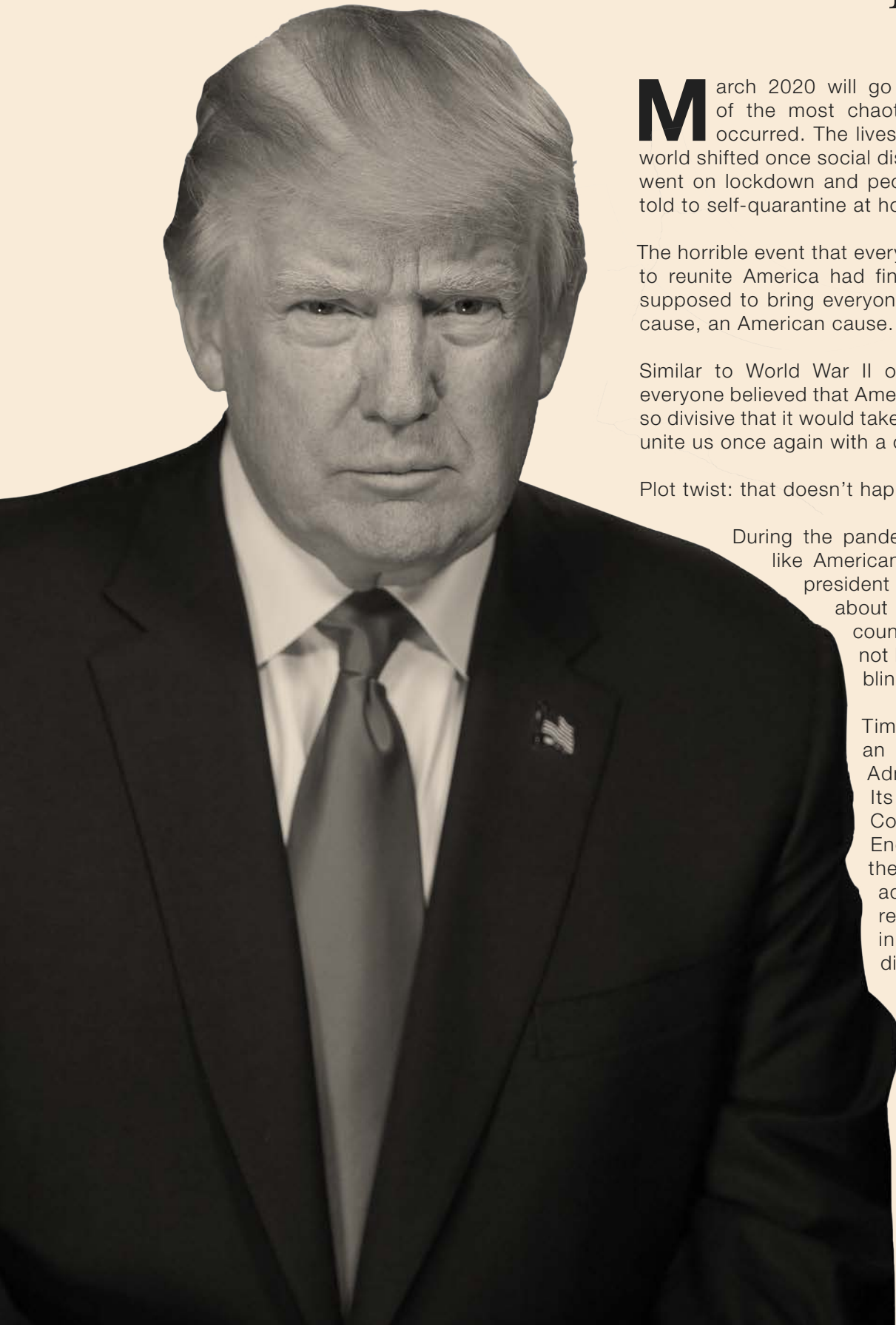
The main character, known as Freder, is the son of the city's master. Growing up in a climate of privilege, he became aware of the mistreatment of city workers who lived in a city below Metropolis. He meets his counterpart, Maria, and they attempt to play the role of mediator between the elite and marginalized. (Spoiler, they eventually do at the end of the film).

Why is this applicable to today's circumstances? Well, from a surface-level perspective, the film fails to be. Nevertheless, the backbone behind Freder and Maria's journey is based upon recognizing the need for change and acting upon it.

In any case, when the world seems to be stuck in a dystopian scenario, these steps are essential. While there is little we can do in terms of eradicating the virus, we have the duty to restrict it. That means staying at home, keeping our distance and taking what state officials are requesting us to do into consideration. These are the proper steps towards abandoning the dystopia-like conditions we are facing today.

Certainly, the concepts of utopias and dystopias are overplayed. The world will always find a way to be placed in that middle ground. And whether the human population seems to be in a spot of dismay or of complete contentment, the human responsibility will always be to make our current situation better. Freder and Maria teach that. Lang teaches that. The possibility of a dystopia of greed teaches that.

THE SECOND INVISIBLE ENEMY



March 2020 will go down in history as one of the most chaotic months to have ever occurred. The lives of every individual in the world shifted once social distancing began, countries went on lockdown and people of every nation were told to self-quarantine at home.

The horrible event that everyone thought was needed to reunite America had finally happened. This was supposed to bring everyone together for a common cause, an American cause.

Similar to World War II or the aftermath of 9/11, everyone believed that American politics had become so divisive that it would take a national catastrophe to unite us once again with a common purpose.

Plot twist: that doesn't happen.

During the pandemic's infancy, it seemed like Americans might rally around the president and heed his warnings about needing to shut down the country. Unfortunately, this did not last long. Before we could blink, the attacks erupted.

Time Magazine published an article titled "The Trump Administration Fumbled Its Initial Response to Coronavirus. Is There Enough Time to Fix It?" In it, they discuss how the current administration failed to respond to the virus with initial quick action, as they did not see it as a big deal.

Political commentators from both sides of the spectrum are arguing over whether or not Trump had a delayed response in responding to the CDC, or if he

Why the saddest reality of COVID-19 is that not much can actually bring Americans together

By Jasmine Campos

was receiving faulty information from the World Health Organization.

Now, as Trump claims he wishes to reopen the economy as soon as possible, people believe he is trying to fire Anthony Fauci, who has been his leading medical expert regarding COVID-19. The White House continues to deny these claims, but others want to push that Trump is ignoring medical advice to boost the American economy.

With attacks from Joe Biden on Trump's decision to ban travel too soon, attacks from the president regarding the way Biden would have handled the situation, and the media festering this situation at every turn, it does not look like Americans will receive the return to unity they thought.

This has serious implications for the future of our nation.

If a national disaster lacks the ability to bring all Americans together for a single purpose, I fail to see that anything has the power to supersede the political lines that we have drawn in the sand.

There is psychological proof that suggests that the stress of going through disasters tends to make people bond in unusual ways, and therefore brings people together. It has proven true throughout history and should have proven true now.

Before this crisis has officially ended, the American media and politicians have already returned to their ways of attacking one another. This says two things about what we are experiencing as a nation right now.

First of all, it should provide some hope. If the media has time, once again, to attack the president, or as CNN decided, to not cover press conferences that

he holds, that means that the news coverage can finally slow down on the coronavirus. If the virus is not the only thing to talk about, it might finally be winding down.

Secondly, and equally important to the future of our nation's political system, is the implication this has on politics. The fact that either party can use this global pandemic to win political points is both disgusting and disturbing. During this time, how is

it even possible to be concerned with a re-election or demeaning the leader of our nation as he guides us through one of the most troubling times in recent history?

How can we not call on politicians right now for unity? This is not about who wins the vote, it is about how many lives we can save. If politicians cannot see that, I don't see future hope for America.

We need to step back and realize that politics cannot, in fact, must not, cloud our judgment in everything we do. Politics is not the end-all-be-all of this world and it does not need to be at the center of every decision or conversation. Some things are simply bigger than elections and political schemes.

This is my call to action: take a break from the partisan nonsense and realize when something is bigger than a party or a side. The president deserves to be rallied around when he is facing a crisis. The media deserves to be defended when they are reporting the facts.

It is scary that this crisis has again resulted in parties attacking one another and blaming one another for how we are reacting. If we cannot realize that we are people above party, then once, when we get past COVID-19, we will see we have another very large problem on our hands — and it, too, is an invisible enemy.

“How can we not call on politics right now for unity? This is not about who wins the vote, it is about how many lives we can save. If politicians cannot see that, I don't see future hope for America.”

MY SIDE OF THE GLOBE: SAN PEDRO, CA

How COVID-19 is affecting the port of Los Angeles

By Sienna Hicks

I am from San Pedro California. We are now home to the “Mercy” hospital ship. I am going to be sharing with you my mom’s experiences working in a hospital during the COVID-19 crisis, as well as how I’ve seen the locals reacting to the quarantine.

The Mercy Hospital Ship

San Pedro, the port of Los Angeles and my home, is now the host of the Navy’s “Mercy” hospital ship. It is here to take the pressure off of hospitals who have an overflow of COVID-19 patients and will only be serving patients with non-COVID-19 related illnesses. It is now the largest hospital in Los Angeles County with 1,000 beds and 800 doctors and nurses.

I wanted to drive by the ship, but apparently a lot of other people had the same idea. We were turned away. But what does this mean for San Pedro? Are the sick from all over Los Angeles going to be brought here to be treated? Will this be good for the city? I hope that bringing in the ship will provide help to the hurting and that we can all get on board with the relief it brings to the hospitals under pressure.

Mental Health

Ingrid Hicks, my mother and alumni of Azusa Pacific’s Graduate School of Psychology, earned her Masters degree in Marriage and Family Therapy in 2002 and is now a licensed marriage and family therapist. She currently works as a psychiatric social worker in the Inpatient Psychiatric Unit at San Pedro’s Providence Little Company of Mary Hospital. She is keeping up with her clients using a website called Doxy.me, a HIPAA compliant telehealth program that doctors and therapists use.

She is the only one in my family still going outside the house and working. She has seen a steady influx of mental health patients in the Inpatient Psychiatric Unit.

“We are seeing patients having psychiatric crises directly related to COVID-19,” Hicks said. “We had an international student who was abandoned by her roommates due to COVID, and she had a breakdown because she couldn’t fly home to Saudi Arabia.”

Ironically, the small hospital hasn’t been admitting many COVID-19 patients. The more serious cases are being sent to their sister hospital in Torrance because they are more equipped to treat serious patients.



During the beginning stages of preparing for the pandemic, there was an increase of anxiety amongst the staff due to a shortage of masks, barriers to COVID testing and the fear that the hospital would become overwhelmed with COVID patients.

“Now that we are one month into the quarantine, our supply of masks and gloves is fulfilled, and now there is access to COVID testing at the hospital so the mood amongst the staff is much better,” said Hicks.

The hospital has been making changes in the Inpatient Psychiatric Unit because of COVID-19 to keep patients and staff healthy.

“We are having to make a lot of adjustments in our psychiatric unit to practice social distancing and have had patients wash their hands a lot,” continued Hicks.

“We are shifting our focus with our patients on how they can cope with anxiety about the Coronavirus. Most of our resources are closing their doors and no longer servicing our patients. No rehabs are open, no crisis residential programs to send them to. We are doing the best we can but it is definitely impacting mental health treatment,” said Hicks.

Locals’ Behavior

My family has been trying to take care of our grandparents by bringing them groceries and meals, which is something we never did before. We have also started working out and walking our dog for pleasure instead of necessity.

When we take the dog for a walk, we now see an abundance of people out and about in the neighborhood. Kids out on their front lawns playing, elderly individuals walking hand-in-hand, people driving slower. It’s becoming more of a community; commiserating about the same problems and coming out on porches to talk to each other.

A council member even made a Facebook group called COVID-19 updates in San Pedro which features restaurants of the day and offers boxed meals for seniors.

It’s beautiful to see humans being humans again; exercising, being outside, being kind, helping a neighbor in need. Our humanity is coming back.



BE AWARE OF MENTAL HEALTH DURING THIS PANDEMIC

By Mia Nishanian

As the coronavirus pandemic continues, it brings about mental health burdens for people who struggle in times of stress. With social distancing being heavily practiced throughout the United States, the repercussions of such actions are soon to be felt. The Center for Disease Control has even set up a page on its website to help bring guidance to those who may be struggling.

Mental health issues are heightened in times of stress; when times seem uncertain, it becomes even worse. Taking the time to take care of yourself can be a big step for positively moving forward. The CDC recommends making time to unwind, finding a way to keep your body sound and connecting with others.

This can include finding ways to have face-to-face contact. It may be hard these days, but platforms like Zoom and Netflix Party are given new meaning during these uncertain times. Forms of entertainment can also be utilized. This can include virtual games, puzzles and game boards.

The New York Times has further addressed the harms of social isolation for those with mental health struggles. In a recent New York Times health story, “Julianne Holt-Lunstad, a psychologist, found that social isolation is twice as harmful to a person’s physical health as obesity.”

Because of this, staying constantly aware of your mental state and finding someone to check up on can go a long way. The American Medical Association advises to “Monitor yourself for symptoms of depression/stress disorder such as prolonged sadness, difficulty sleeping, intrusive memories and/or feelings of hopelessness. Talk to a trusted colleague or supervisor. Be open to seeking professional help if symptoms persist or worsen over time.”

The closure of schools has heightened mental health issues as well. A college freshman who studies communication at Grand Canyon University shared what it was like for her first year of college to be cut short.

“It was a stressful time having to walk to class and see students panicking around me as they were quickly packing up their cars,” said Kathy Martinez. “I was also nervous about transitioning to an online community since I enjoy being in class and listening to professors.”

On a personal note, I started to realize the ramifications of social distancing shortly after California’s “Stay at Home” order was enacted.

I have battled with an overwhelming sense of loneliness that is made better with interactions. I have learned to lean on the people that support you and appreciate the little interactions in life. I used to work for Campus Life office and every time I came into the office I felt a sense of warmth. The little discussions I had I realized made my day better and made me confident during the day. My loneliness was temporally relived through my work life.

During difficult times, society needs to become increasingly more aware of mental health struggles. And for anyone who may be struggling, I hope you know things will get better.

I wanted to write this as a word of encouragement and provide information to those who may not have anyone to lean on. I hope mental health awareness is brought to light during these times. The pandemic will live on in history and understanding how these situations affect you can help you get through future tough times.

MODIFICATION

Did it take a global pandemic for the world to modify into something better?

By Jazzy Nickels

We have been hit drastically by the COVID-19 pandemic and it has taken a huge toll on the world. Being told to stay at home and to keep six feet apart from each other is not taken lightly. Businesses are closed and you can't go near loved ones; the uncertainty of what will happen next is frightening.

Is the world ending or is this pandemic giving us the capability to modify into something more superior and self-sufficient?

Since we have been locked in our homes blocked off from everything, there have been people taking matters into their own hands. Women are now buying nail and eyelash kits, making their own clothes and cutting/dying their own hair. They have taken to Amazon to buy their supplies and show off their final product on social media platforms like TikTok.

Those individuals have modified to handle their needs for themselves instead of relying on someone else to do it for them. Could accomplishing things on our own be a potential benefit of the crisis?

We have relied too much on others to handle our needs, but the coronavirus has made us realize our ability to modify ourselves and the world. This is the time to think about how we can modify it into something greater. We want to walk out of this crisis with all of the knowledge quarantine has given us.

Having the capability to grow yourself is something to look forward to when this quarantine is over. While locked in your home, you are able to learn how to become a nail technician, hair stylist, designer, cook or a fitness trainer. This has already been done by so many because instead of needing a helping hand, they became a helping hand.

We take for granted all the hard work others do for us. We may not emerge from this being able to perfect nail art, hair or cooking, but at least we're trying to modify into something superior and self-sufficient. By the time quarantine is over, there is a possibility

that we will stop taking those for granted that put in that extra work for us. We will come out of this understanding that those who take care of our special needs are superior in their hard work.

I hope we start to better acknowledge those who have limited access to basic needs. It has been difficult for us to live like this — stuck at home, not able to go anywhere. Let's not take time, or life, for granted because the unknown is frightening and you never know what will happen next.

Let's come out of this time with a new passion to modify our lives into something better.



WHY COULDN'T WE GIVE BACK BEFORE?

Do we need to be in a state of crisis to give back?

By Julie-Ann Tolar

From the death of Kobe Bryant to the coronavirus pandemic, it is safe to say that 2020 has not been our best year. While many are still mourning the loss of our idol and all of us are enduring COVID-19, there are many that experience struggles such as these, or much worse, every day.

According to Benjamin Oreskes of the Los Angeles Times, there are over 50,000 individuals who are homeless in the county alone. While there have been bills passed and grants given, the progress toward homelessness aid has proven to be a slow-moving process.

In 2018, Mayor Garcetti created the "A Bridge Home" program. According to Oreskes, the goal was to have "at least one temporary [homeless] shelter in each City Council district." However, as of January 2020, there were only a total of nine shelters built.

We can see the consequences of the coronavirus impacting our daily lives, but what about those who were already in need before?

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus, there has been an exceptional amount of progress made toward helping not only those that are homeless but also those who've become recently unemployed and medical professionals.

As of this month, there have been "Fifteen thousand hotel and motel rooms for some of the state's 151,000 residents experiencing homelessness," said Alicia Victoria Lozano of NBC News.

With the largest homeless population in the state, Los Angeles has taken temporary housing efforts to a new level, hoping to provide over 15,000 beds to those living on the streets.

Local churches, pastors and congregations have set up "some version of food pantry, soup kitchen, or delivery to those in need," said Ed Stetzer of Christianity Today. "Most noted explicitly of their efforts to maintain social distancing. More than a few adjusted their ministry to offer to drop off groceries or supplies," continued Stetzer.

Reconfiguring outreach opportunities in order to continue ministering to the public is a vital shift in today's climate.

Churches are not the only ones making changes to help the public. Small businesses are doing all they can to continue to serve.

Switching from dine-in to takeout, creating a new family catering menu and offering delivery services are all ways in which small restaurants have evolved to stay afloat and feed the public. These alternatives benefit both the businesses and the consumers, and, if continued after the world goes back to "normal," could benefit those who are still unable to travel on their own.

Shifting production from profit to protection is a common theme during times of crisis. Similar to small businesses, big companies such as Tito's, Crocs and Ford are using their resources to produce supplies for the public and the medical professionals that are hard at work.

Tito's and Ford have changed their production lines from vodka and cars to hand sanitizer and respirators. David Hessekiel of Forbes mentioned that in addition to respirators and ventilators, Ford "will also assemble face shields and use its 3D printing capacity to produce parts used in other personal protective equipment."

While the Crocs company did not need to change their products, they have used what they already had to make a difference. By donating "10,000 pairs of shoes each day to healthcare workers," Crocs is making a difference in the lives of medical workers and staff who are fighting this battle on the front line.

All of these helpful changes have made an unfortunate circumstance a bearable one, but what happens after? Will the homeless be left to sleep on the streets? Will the businesses who are working so hard to help the public wipe their hands and go back to business as usual?

It is amazing to see how our country can support one another during this time when all are in need, but will we still be better people once COVID-19 has been eradicated?

There was a need yesterday, there is a need today and there will be a need tomorrow. Who will continue to rise to the challenge?

DANCING TRASH, AND OTHER EVERYDAY APOCALYPSES

I have a confession to make: I have a secret Instagram account called @dancing_trash. Yes, it's private. No, I will probably not accept your request to follow it.

This account's existence will probably come as a shocking revelation to my friends, who were annoyed when I deleted my main account a year and a half ago and then started actively hating on the toxicity of Instagram.

But it all started out as a joke, see. Last semester, I took a grad course on "apocalyptic" literature. The term "apocalypse," my professor explained, didn't actually mean "end of the world"—it means an "unveiling, revelation, or demonstration of something that was hidden but will take place."

In that class we watched a scene from the 1999 film *American Beauty*, where a man named Ricky Fitts shows someone a video he recorded of a trash bag floating in the wind (cue Katy Perry).

"It was one of those days where it's a minute away from snowing, and there's this electricity in the air, you can almost hear it. This bag was just...dancing with me, like a little kid, begging me to play with it for 15 minutes," Fitts said in the film. "That's the day I realized that there's this entire life behind things, this incredibly benevolent force that wanted me to know there's no reason to be afraid, ever. It's a poor excuse, I know, but it helps me remember. I need to remember. Sometimes there's so much beauty in the world, I feel like I can't take it. And my heart is just gonna cave in."

Through that otherwise mundane experience, Fitts felt that some sort of divine message was being relayed, that he had seen a glimpse into the "life behind things." The ordinary trash bag became the mediator for a revelatory, apocalyptic experience that shifted Ricky Fitts' entire outlook on life, and let him know that there was no reason to be afraid. There are instances of these kinds of ineffable moments of revelation throughout literature, from Moses and the burning bush to Flannery O'Connor's "Revelation."

So I began @dancing_trash ironically by taking pictures of trash on the ground, custom license plates or stickers and graffiti, and posting them with long, ironic and pseudo-intellectual captions for my three followers. I am Ricky Fitts meets Caroline Calloway. This is digital apocalyptic memoir literature at its finest, I'd think, lovingly mocking my professors.

But then something happened. I am usually the type of person who will plow on ahead without giving myself any time for reflection, but as I began chronicling the things that stuck out to me in my everyday experiences, I realized I kept taking photos of the same types of symbols: a lone cloud in a clear sky, a shadow across an empty space, lemon trees and orange trees, street art featuring halos; and in correlation, that the same themes were popping up in my captions: chaos, witness, desire, redemption.

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Contemporary artist Gabi Abrao writes, "The subconscious and the invisible communicate in symbols. If you need answers to who you are, step back and look at the physical reality you're in. What have you created in the physical reality, and what has been given to you in the physical reality? How do all those objects and manifestations make you feel? People, places and things all hold spaces for feelings and revelations."

This practice of mine, ironically initiated, quickly became earnest. Capturing these moments, processing my perspective shifts by writing about them, and attaching them to symbols helped me recognize them for what they were: little apocalypses; moments of clarity; revelations of grace. My Instagram account helps me bear witness to them, and to the transformation occurring in me.

Once I began looking for it, I found that my day-to-day was punctuated with these small, miraculous moments. Writer David Dark writes that, "by announcing a new world of unrealized possibility, [the] apocalyptic serves to invest the details of the everyday with cosmic significance while awakening its audience to the presence of marginalizing forces otherwise unnamed and unchallenged."

Dark goes on to write that apocalyptic literature is "a radical declaration concerning the meaning of human experience. Its job is to reflect, in a deeply liberating fashion, the tensions and paradoxes that constitute our understanding of reality." I have become preoccupied with that tension, those paradoxes, and the messiness of what it means to live in this world.

Former APU president Jon Wallace said something during my freshman year that stuck with me. He said, "I believe God has planted us here to engage, to live in this messy

A Senior Memoir

By Micaela Ricaforte

middle. Not to walk away from what we believe to be true in Scripture and how we are called to live, but also not to walk away from others who hold a different point of view. We tell our students that one of the marks of an APU graduate is somebody who can hold contrary positions at the same time without letting go of truth."

Mind you that all of this apocalyptic talk of mine is done with the conviction that held inside that delicate tension between the symbols and the message — the seen and the unseen — is faith. Faith that is rooted in knowing God's word, the Truth and His character.

So why the obsession with the symbols and mediators? Media theorist Marshall McLuhan once said, "the medium is the message." I think part of the reason God has been using these things to speak to me is to break down my tendency to put God in a box. For the longest time, I thought that I could only hear from God during my morning prayer or devotional times, and would get frustrated if I didn't hear a super profound word from God during those set-aside periods. But I've learned that even when I don't see or feel anything, God is doing a work in me (Phil. 1:6), and that He has more ways of speaking to me than just the one I expect from Him.

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Of course, here's a bigger-seeming "apocalypse" right in front of our faces: the coronavirus pandemic, which forces us to put life as we know it on pause. This time is ripe for a shift in perspective. And while I pray and wait with expectation for mountains to move, I also can't help but notice that the small, everyday apocalypses seem more pronounced—I feel my heart soar when I stand at the top of a hill and take in the glory of creation, or when I laugh unexpectedly, or when I hold someone I love, or when I experience kindness from a stranger. These things might be commonplace, but they are no less miraculous. God is filling our days with moments like these, pouring out His Spirit, just like He promised.

And as this school year comes to an end, so does my senior year at APU. It's been messy, but it's been beautiful. As I reflect on my four years here, I am able to see that among the milestones I've experienced in my college career, the most formative moments were those small moments of grace that touched me throughout my journey; even as I asked of the Lord, where are you? I can see now that the answer was, always, in all things.



photo by Alexa McClurg

FRAGILITY

How the U.S. went from a superpower to a shell of itself and how it can recover

By Nathan Foster

As each day of quarantine passes, hundreds of millions of Americans around the country are stuck in their homes asking the same question: how did we get here?

The United States prides itself as being one of the best, if not the best, countries in the world. We have remained at the top of the world's economy since 1871, and our GDP makes up almost a quarter of the global economy. Yet, in just two months, the economy crumbled as nearly every day for weeks brought about record losses. The Dow Jones fell from an all-time high of \$29,551.42 on Feb. 12 to \$18,591.93, the lowest it's been since Donald Trump was elected president in 2016. It has since climbed back up a fair amount, but many economists are skeptical of how long it will take to readjust.

The U.S. is also considered the cultural epicenter of the world. Hollywood produces countless big-name movies and shows every year. It's closest competitor is Bollywood, which produces far more movies, albeit with far fewer profits and cultural acclaim. The top music artists, for the most part, also reside in L.A., or elsewhere across the U.S.

However, even celebrities are not impervious to the effects of the coronavirus. All of the major movie theater chains across the country have closed, as the closure of thousands of box offices cost Hollywood millions of dollars in losses. Broadway, home to the most prestigious plays and musicals in the world, has shut down indefinitely as actors struggle to make ends meet. Even musicians, both small and large, have been affected since they are unable to perform in concert. Countless concerts and festivals have been canceled or postponed. According to John Ochoa of Grammy.com, "the financial fallout is virtually immeasurable at this point."

America's other biggest form of entertainment, sports, has also suffered massively during this time. For sports fans across the country, the calendar year revolves around the four seasons of basketball, baseball, football and hockey. Minor sports, such as tennis or

soccer, have their place too, but the big four produce more than \$34 billion per year.

Then, one-by-one, all the major sports leagues shut down. The NBA postponed the rest of their season, some 259 regular-season games and the playoffs. MLB canceled the rest of spring training and postponed the beginning of the season indefinitely. The NHL postponed the rest of their season which was nearing its end, and star players don't think it'll resume. Although football season doesn't start again until August, NFL teams are suffering and the second biggest event in football, the draft, was moved to a virtual format. Many experts don't think sports will start again for a long time, and when they do, they may be in front of empty audiences.

All of these institutions seemed rock solid at the beginning of 2020. The economy was at an all-time high yet now it may be in a bear market. Prominent national cultural events, from basketball games to Coachella, were scheduled to proceed as normal, yet are now postponed indefinitely or canceled. In mere weeks, the U.S. went from the superpower of the world to the country most affected by COVID-19.

However, like all things, the coronavirus too, shall pass. When it eventually does, hopefully sooner than later, the U.S. will rebuild itself. Herein lies a silver lining. While the U.S. seemed unsinkable, much like the Titanic, it was rather fragile underneath the surface. Recovering from the coronavirus may take years, but it allows us to take a deep look at how we can improve our systems for the future.

On a personal level, individuals have the opportunity to examine their lifestyle. Maybe they didn't have nearly as much money saved up as they thought. Maybe they only had enough toilet paper to last a few weeks. Maybe they spend too much money on things like coffee every morning and drinks every night. While it is different for each person, people will certainly need to examine their lifestyle and what changes they need to implement. Individuals will also have the opportunity to make a fortune on stocks as the market rebounds.

On a business level, employers have the opportunity to create a more solid infrastructure. So far, nearly 17 million people have filed for unemployment. While businesses could not have anticipated the impact of COVID-19, they could have had a more stable model that allowed them to retain their employees for at least a few weeks or months. It may not be feasible for every business to do so, but those who make a significant profit can set aside money for an emergency fund should another pandemic or catastrophe destroy the economy again.

On a cultural level, celebrities and organizations can change the way they operate to ensure they have stronger foundations. Musicians might consider a trade-off of cheaper tickets to attract more fans. Theaters might offer special screenings to attract millions of Americans away from Netflix and other streaming services. Sports leagues may shrink their schedule to reduce the risk of their seasons being impacted. Cities may reorganize themselves to be more environmentally friendly.

Pandemics, by nature, are unpredictable. The last major pandemic (on a similar scale) happened more than 100 years ago, when the Spanish Flu swept across the world, claiming more than 50 million lives. The next one may happen in a matter of years or a matter of centuries. We cannot control that. What we can control is how we prepare for it. The response to COVID-19 has been almost purely reactive. If we are proactive in how we approach it, the next pandemic might not have nearly as harsh of an impact on the country.

RESTORING GLORY TO GOD

The pandemic threatening our world has opened up a space for restoration

By Ruby McAuliffe

Interacting; eating; communicating; learning; shopping. Those are only five ways COVID-19 has altered our world. The world we knew a few months ago has shifted drastically. What once was taken for granted and unthought-of is now missed and longed for.

The unfortunate circumstances that run across our world have also affected our worship. Most churches are now closed and the gospel is being communicated through Wi-Fi and laptop screens.

With this new medium, worship has shifted from seats full of hundreds of people to parking lots full of cars. Online church services are the new norm and Zoom bible studies are now the definitive mode of fellowship.

I come from a family who regularly worships the Lord through music. We gather in a home and sing songs of praise. However, these worship sessions now consist of video recordings and technology.

The changes listed no longer strike disbelief, as we are accustomed to a new standard. And while this new standard brings along a stream of unfortunate circumstances, it also brings a restored form of worship.

Allowing Time for Reflection

With these modifications, we now have a heightened responsibility to act. This is because motivating elements of an in-person worship experience have been removed from the equation.

There is no longer a physical church service to show up late to. Before, showing up late meant walking down the aisle and whispering “excuse me” as everyone silently sat listening to the sermon. To disregard Wednesday night bible study, all you have to do is ignore the link and no one will think otherwise. If you don’t want to stand up during virtual praise and worship, no one will be around to see.

Like everything else, we are now in our own spaces, removed from the communal aspects that used to surround our lives. The social constructs of worship are now peeled back and all that’s left is our own motivation and pursuit of our faith. These alterations are allowing us to evaluate our

responsibilities when it comes to our faith rather than basing our walk on the social constructs of the church.

Redefining the Church

When we think of the church, our minds often resort to a building, a gathering of people, and hugs and handshakes. But that has all transformed.

Since social distancing has taken the reins, we are forced to acknowledge the true nature of the church. The church is not defined by physical surroundings or experiences that fit our mold. Instead, the church is composed of individuals who live according to the gospel. While this is not a new concept, we sometimes forget the beauty of the simple church.

This ties into the reestablishment of fellowship. We now have the opportunity to see the value of the church. The Zoom calls, text messages and phone calls are recreating what it means to do life together. We long for those connections we once took for granted and acknowledge the joy fellowship brings.

Understanding the Spread of the Gospel

As believers, we are called to the Great Commission. Depending on one’s own experience, this can be acted out by passing out pamphlets on the sidewalk, inviting your friends to a youth beach day or talking to a customer about Jesus in a coffee shop.

Those tactics encompass the unifying thread of face-to-face interaction that weaves through the Great Commission. And rightfully so, as connection is vital when presenting such life-altering hope. However, that thread has been temporarily cut off due to current circumstances.

Does that mean we stop spreading the gospel? No.

It is God who allows for such interactions to occur and it is God who uses us as His vessels to bring forth His goodness. This current human tragedy cannot stop God’s all-powerful nature. This time in history is allowing us to recognize that the gospel has no bounds and can certainly prevail beyond the typical standards in which we are accustomed to. The pandemic has presented many changes, both outside and inside of the church. But a new space is now prepared to bring forth a restored form of glory to God.

THE END OF THE WORLD, OR SIMPLY THE BEGINNING?

By Taylor Meckley

In ways that are both devastating and surprisingly positive, the coronavirus is drastically changing our world. Environmentalists made it clear that 2020 would be a “critical year” to limit the long-lasting impacts of global warming and to hopefully prevent the irreversible damage caused by climate change.

COVID-19’s impact is felt by millions as restaurants and bars shut down, air travel is restricted and stay at home orders are being enforced across the globe. The surprising yet largely unreported result of social distancing is the extremely drastic dip in global pollution levels, as well as the improvement of air quality in many major cities.

Venice, Italy is experiencing canal water so clear that fish can easily be seen. The capital of India, a city known for its extremely polluted air, has such blue skies that many locals can see the Himalayan Mountains for the first time. Compared to last year, New York is experiencing pollution levels reduced by nearly 50 percent. In China, air pollution levels have dropped by roughly 25 percent as coal power plants and other industrial facilities are shut down.

Lauri Myllyvirta, lead analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, stated “It is an unprecedented dramatic drop in emissions. I’ve definitely spoken to people in Shanghai who said that it’s been some of the most pristine blue skies that they remember over the winter.”

With these environmental changes drastically reducing the impact of global warming around the world, it begs the question: Are these changes temporary, or here to stay?

And if they are purely circumstantial, what can they teach us about our environmental impact and how we should reduce our carbon footprint for good?

Li Shuo, senior climate and energy policy officer at Greenpeace, said that the environmental impacts of the pandemic are “hardly a sustainable way to reduce admissions.”

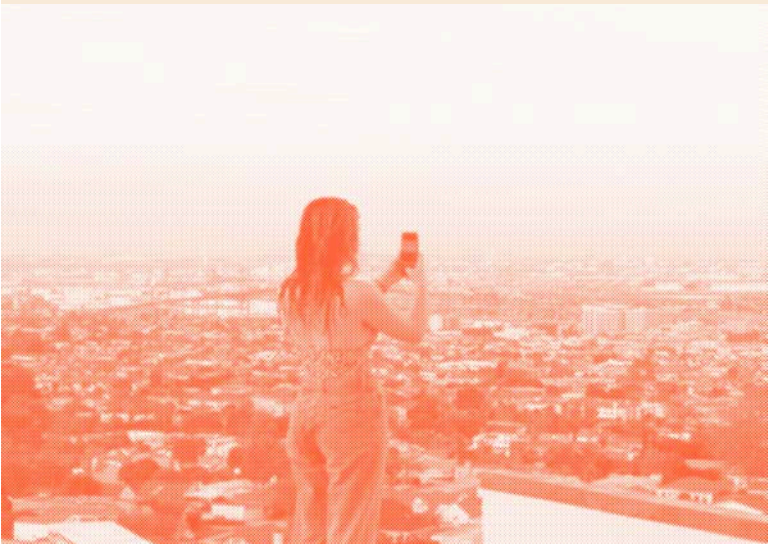
Although these changes are wonderful developments in the fight against climate change, scientists are predicting that it will be difficult to make these improvements last after the pandemic is over. Though it is clear from the cleaner skies and clearer waters that social distancing is making a difference in our world, the economic pull on companies to get going and get back to work may overrule the environmental element.

In an effort to kickstart the economy, companies may come back with lighter and more forgiving environmental policies rather than working with coal and other harmful fossil fuels. The Scientific American reported that “In 2009, the Great Recession pushed global emissions down almost 1%. The next year CO2 levels rose by roughly 5%, as governments around the world enacted stimulus measures to prop up their economies.”

If history repeats itself, it could mean without the help of governments around the globe, our planet could fail to learn its lesson and prove our environmental situation to be well beyond sustainably fixable.

Although planet Earth will not likely leave quarantine with long lasting environmental benefits, we can learn from the current situation and see what our world would look like when major changes are enacted. Executive director of the U.N. Environmental program, Inger Anderson, said that “Only long term systemic shifts will change the trajectory of CO2 levels in the atmosphere.”

In order to witness any sort of a long term effect on our environment, governments, companies and consumers need to do their part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on both local and worldwide scales. Learning from our current circumstances could be the only way to save our environment and see positive change come from an extremely negative situation.





SOFT GRASS AND ROLLING HILLS

Strawberry Hill, Agoura Hills, CA

By Rose Hoos

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ZU Magazine is a publication of ZU Media, a multi-media student voice of undergraduate Azusa Pacific University. Our stories seek to bring people together while impacting our readers. We provide narratives, inquiries, and dialogue in a Christian academic setting that value individuals' stories as well as community concerns. Our writers are student journalists interested in crafting articles that connect with readers and challenge them to grow as people.