

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

The Student Movement v. 105 (2020-2021)

Student Movement

2-24-2021

The Student Movement Volume 105 Issue 9: Celebrating the Caribbean Impact on Black History

Caralynn Chan

Terika Williams

Jenae Rogers

Alec Bofetiado

Wambui Karanja

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/sm-105>



Part of the Education Commons

Authors

Caralynn Chan, Terika Williams, Jenae Rogers, Alec Bofetiado, Wambui Karanja, Jessica Rim, Masy Domecillo, Alyssa Henriquez, Celeste Richardson, Fitz-Earl McKenzie II, Hannah Cruse, Megan Napod, Joshua Deonarine, Sion Kim, Kavya Mohanram, Lyle Goulbourne, and Adoniah Simon

Celebrating the Caribbean Impact on Black History



Photo by Jackson John

News

NEWS

AUSA and BSCF Host The Dating Game

Caralynn Chan [02.24.2021](#)

On Monday, Feb. 15, the Andrews University Student Association (AUSA) and the Black Student Christian Forum (BSCF) hosted The Dating Game, a spin on ABC

network's show *The Bachelor*. It's moderately riveting to see individuals vie for the affections of one person while the producers influence drastic content to occur. There are fan favorites who unfortunately get sent packing, the villain who disguises her malicious intentions from the bachelor, and one clueless bachelor who has no idea of the drama that is ensuing behind the scenes. However, instead of the usual compelling catfights, betrayals, and gossip on *The Bachelor*, *The Dating Game* featured awkward pick-up lines, pauses, and overall cringe. A divider separated the individuals, and the contestants were revealed at the end.

For each round, there was one bachelor or a bachelorette who sat on one side of a makeshift divider and three eligible contestants on the other side. The bachelors and bachelorettes got to know the contestants by asking thought-provoking questions such as "If you could be a piece of furniture, what would you be?" and "If we were cooking macaroni and cheese, what spice would you season it with?" The other standard dating show game questions such as "what is your idea of the perfect date" were also asked. It was evident that many of the participants were not searching for long-lasting relationships, but for entertainment purposes.

Alyssa Susdorf (senior, psychology) was a winning contestant. She said, "even though it was nerve-racking, you could give your genuine, on-the-spot answer. I disliked how I could tell some of the voices, but unfortunately, a voice changer machine was not in the budget."

Many contestants buffered while thinking of intriguing answers and asking for the question to be repeated multiple times. The audience and the viewers online got to witness somewhat amusing yet nervous individuals. The interactions between the bachelors or bachelorettes and the contestants were refreshingly genuine and awkward, compared to the staged conversations that are engineered on televised dating shows today. On screen behind them was a slideshow featuring miscellaneous facts about the individual bachelors and bachelorettes.

Christian Sanchez (senior, computer science) was another winning contestant on his round. He expressed, "since everyone's so nervous, being funny lightens the mood. You have to say something clever and relevant at the moment. Take every chance you get to compliment a woman because she deserves it. Other than that, it's all about being yourself."

Rachelle Evano (sophomore, sociology) viewed the game online. She noted, "it was hilarious how awkward it made me feel. I enjoyed hearing some of their responses to the questions, and I am glad that some of the contestants I was rooting for won."

At the end of each round, the contestants revealed their identities to the bachelor

or bachelorette. The winners each received a rose and the ending pairs linked arms and escorted themselves out. Who knows what will happen concerning the longevity of these pairings.

NEWS

Honors Agape Worship Celebrates Beverly Matiko's Service

Terika Williams [02.24.2021](#)



Photo by Monique Pittman

On Friday, Feb. 12th, the Honors Program celebrated the upcoming retirement of Beverly Matiko, associate professor of communication and English, after 29 years of service at Andrews. Under the theme “Deeply Committed,” the Agape Worship honored Dr. Matiko's notable passion for writing and communication. Dr. Matiko attended Andrews and earned BAs in both English and communication, as well as an MA in English literature. She received her doctorate from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, in Canada. She has worked in the English and Communications department at Andrews university since 1992.

Over her 29 years of teaching, she has touched the lives of many students. L. Monique Pittman, professor of English and director of the J.N. Andrews Honors Program and Vanessa Corredera, associate professor of English and chair of the English department, read selections of the many tributes that came in from current students, alumni, former colleagues and friends. Dr. Pittman connected Dr. Matiko's attitude towards pursuing one's passions with 2 Corinthians 4:9-10. She shared that we have been, "cast down but not destroyed" as experienced through 2020 but we must remember to "bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ so that his life can be made manifest in us." This is to be our main passion.

Alexander Hess (sophomore, English) said, "After attending this year's Agape Worship, I was inspired to be deeply committed through the model of Dr. Matiko. Her life and career at AU really shows me how we, as good humans, should be deeply committed to God, others, and ourselves." After Dr. Corredera and Dr. Pittman's tribute, the audience was split into pods to discuss the topic, "Deeply Committed." Questions such as "What is your passion?" and "How can our passions help to promote the gospel?" were asked.

Elianna Srikureja (junior, English) shared, "I was really inspired to be deeply committed through the pod activity. My group, in response to the question "how do you define passions," answered that passions were things that someone enjoyed learning more about. However, we cannot approach our passions with passivity; we need to nurture our interests and engage with our passions. This really inspired me to recognize that to have a life of purpose means that I need to be 'deeply committed.'"

It is clear that the pods brought new insight on how to live a purpose driven life in 2021 regardless of how 2020 went. Andras Murayni (junior, biology) reflected on the event, sharing, "The worship helped make us really appreciate the blessings God has given us throughout the pandemic. Even through our struggles, we realize that there is hope beyond our present circumstances. Dr. Matiko's farewell helped show that there is a legacy in persevering through our difficulties. That is what we need to realize now more than ever." The legacy that Dr. Matiko leaves behind reminds us that we should pursue our passions relentlessly because it is our God-given purpose.

NEWS

The Andrews University Wind Symphony Performs “Stage & Screen” Concert

Jenae Rogers [02.24.2021](#)

On Saturday, Feb. 20, the Andrews University Wind Symphony performed their “Stage & Screen” Concert, conducted by Byron Graves, at the Howard Performing Arts Center (HPAC). It featured pieces from Broadway plays and Hollywood movies. Andrews University employees, the Enjoyment of Music class, music majors, music minors, and Andrews University students were allowed to attend in person with a limited seating capacity. Those who attended in person were required to wear masks and social distance. Others were able to watch the concert through live stream on YouTube and Facebook.

The first half of the concert featured pieces from several famous Broadway plays. To start, they performed selections from *Les Misérables* by Claude-Michel Schönberg and Herbert Kretzmer and arranged by Warren Barker. Next, they performed “Someone to Watch Over Me,” by George and Ira Gershwin and arranged by Warren Barker and featuring Beta Siritwattanakamol (senior, music education) as a vocal soloist. Selections from the famous *Phantom of the Opera* by Andrew Lloyd Webber and arranged by Warren Barker were performed next and featured an unexpected scream by Kaija Perry (graduate, music). Rekha Isaac (freshman, biology), flutist, said, “My favorite moment in the concert was the scream in *Phantom of the Opera*. *Phantom of the Opera* is one of my favorite musicals, and I loved being able to perform it!” To finish off the Broadway plays section, the Wind Symphony played pieces from *The Sound of Music* by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein and arranged by Robert Bennett. Following this section, there was a short 15 minute intermission.

Ms. Siritwattanakamol, vocal soloist and baritone saxophone player, commented, “We’re all very happy we get to continue making music together in these times, since not everyone gets to. Though the restrictions for ensemble playing have been difficult for us to adapt to, they ensure that we can keep

rehearsing together and they make us better listeners, players, and musicians in the long run.”

After the intermission, the concert continued with pieces from Hollywood movies. This section began with “Symphonic Suite” from Pirates of the Caribbean by Klaus Badelt and arranged by John Wasson. Then, “Over the Rainbow,” from The Wizard of Oz, by Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg and arranged by Warren Barker, featured Ed Tovar on the alto saxophone. Following the beautifully performed piece, the Wind Symphony played selections from Up by Michael Giacchino and arranged by Michael Brown. Nehemias Calsin (graduate, orchestral conducting) conducted “Lincoln” from Lincoln by John Williams and arranged by Jay Bocook. Finally, the Wind Symphony closed out the concert with a performance of “Symphonic Suite” from Star Wars: The Force Awakens by John Williams and arranged by Jay Bocook.

Overall, the concert was very enjoyable to listen to and featured many famous pieces. The video is available on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfOBSD9Pr-U>. Also, the Andrews University Choirs will be having a concert on March 6, on the theme “Chasing Away the Blues,” so be sure to tune in.

Pulse

PULSE

Black History Month: Favorite Media

Interviews by Alec Bofetiado **02.24.2021**

Darius Bridges (DB)

(senior, marketing)

Benin Lee (BL)

(senior, political science & Spanish)

What is one of your favorite pieces of media, or mode of media, that are either about or created by African Americans?

DB: I'm gonna go with cinema. You know, I love to read, I love music—I do—but cinema has had such a huge part in my life, not just my life but also in the progression of black people in America overall.

BL: One of my favorite pieces of media created by a black person would be this show I've been watching called Living Single. It's an older show from around the 90s, and it's just about a group of young black adults living in the city and experiencing adventures together. It's one of my favorite shows right now, and I'm rewatching it.

What makes you enjoy the aforementioned media?

DB: Whether you are talking movies, television shows, news, video, or anything, the media has been such a big importance, especially in the 60s, when you had Dr. Martin Luther King and all these activists walking across the bridge that got attacked by police officers. This had become such a huge moment in the Civil Rights Movement because that was something that hadn't happened before. You couldn't see black people getting kicked out of places, you couldn't see black people get arrested, but to see all of this happening had a really huge affect on the black people and the civil rights overall. Televisions and movies have been such a good catalyst to talk about black issues and to have conversations. Also, it's really allowed people to understand more and wake up and realize that there are so many experiences in the black community.

BL: I think I like it so much because it shows black people in their normal everyday life without any stereotypes, and I think that it is really important to show black people living their lives as not always a sad thing or a referent to the civil rights or slavery. Not to say that it avoids black issues, but I think it highlights the dynamics of black people when we get together since the Living Single characters are young people living in the city and adventuring while still being true to the black culture.

Black History Month: The Modern Heritage of Culture

Wambui Karanja 02.24.2021

Across the African diaspora, traditional customs and practices have been passed down and adapted to modern times. For example, in my own Kenyan-American household, there are certain dishes we would have made from scratch. Nowadays, however, we buy many of our ingredients pre-made for convenience. I interviewed a couple of students here on campus to examine what they have retained from their heritage, and how they have modernized it.

What are some traditions from your culture that have been passed down and have been adapted to modern times?

Drusilla Apola (freshman, speech-pathology) is from Kenya. She moved to the U.S. with her parents and younger sister in 2007 when she was four years old.

Ms. Apola says, “A big part of my culture is the aspect of respect, specifically for our elders. I was taught to be obedient, not talk back, and acknowledge my place as a child by adhering to the wisdom of my parents and their past experiences. When we moved, however, I noticed that the dynamic between elders and the youth was different here.”

She goes on to explain that while respect is still of the utmost importance, she feels as though there is more room nowadays for discussion and for her voice to be heard--especially as it pertains to topics that are important to her.

Jennifer Jean (freshman, biology) discussed the topic of praying and what that looks like in her Haitian household.

Ms. Jean explains, “I was always taught the importance of praying. We pray before and after everything. One thing about praying, however, is that I was taught that it had to be done in seclusion. Praying was always a big ordeal and done in private

between family/church members or alone. I have adapted that, however, and now I pray casually as well as formally.”

She talks about how the traditionally acceptable way of praying is not the only way to pray. She points out that, to her, praying is simply having a conversation with God and she should be able to do that anywhere and at any time.

PULSE

Lunar New Year: A Reflection

Jessica Rim [02.24.2021](#)

Nestled on top of school papers in each student’s mail slot, bright red envelopes with gold lettering and designs gleamed against the grey of the mailbox. Inside each envelope was a crisp one-dollar bill and a large chocolate coin, which was wrapped in a shining yellow foil that easily captivated young eyes. In my elementary school, this small paper goody bag always served as an appetizer to the grander festivities that would follow in celebration of Lunar New Year, which is also called Chinese New Year.

At the end of weeks of decorating, learning Korean and Chinese traditional New Year songs transliterated into English, and making animal puppets out of paper plates, everyone gathered in the school gymnasium for a stunning repertoire of dances and songs. Parents were awed by the fan dances and ribbon dance performed by the dance club, as well as the parade of colorful papier-mâché Chinese zodiac animals bowing to each other, symbolizing the progression of zodiac years and their respective animals. Students, many dressed in traditional garments, warbled through the songs while waving their puppets in time. As for the third graders, the highlight was their performance of a dragon dance: each student’s legs peeking out under the ornate and vibrant dragon costume were bent in succession, undulating the dragon’s body as it shook its head from side to side.

However, in my household, the first day of the solar calendar receives more fanfare than Lunar New Year because it has effectively replaced it by keeping Lunar New Year customs. I wear my hanbok (Korean traditional dress), eat rice cake soup with dumplings with my relatives, and perform a special bow to uncles,

aunts, parents, and grandparents to wish them a good year. When Lunar New Year comes along, it is a weak duplicate that includes eating rice cake soup with a lesser amount and variety of side dishes, making the hanbok optional to wear, and bowing unnecessary. With its main customs performed earlier on, Lunar New Year becomes somewhat redundant and half-heartedly celebrated.

At the same time, Lunar New Year gives another occasion to celebrate in a small way, especially if things are getting monotonous. This year, Lunar New Year fell on February 12, the day before a three-day weekend. As it was a good opportunity to honor the day and reminisce about past celebrations, I decided to make some New Year's decorations while singing Lunar New Year tunes, as well as eat a good meal, even if it was not a bowl of rice cake soup. I used as many colors as I could when coloring decorations to emulate the flamboyance of the animal costumes that so fascinated me in my elementary school Chinese zodiac parade. It was a miniature celebration that boosted my mood and creativity, bringing to mind many vivid scenes of cherished childhood memories. Despite the lack of others to celebrate with, I was still satisfied by my Lunar New Year activities that were accompanied by nostalgia.

Even though it may seem time-consuming or pointless, finding any reason to celebrate something is a good way to de-stress. It is even better to share an activity with a roommate or family member (particularly if one is taking classes remotely from home) as a way to create enjoyable experiences. Take your pick of any holiday or celebration that holds a lot of meaning for you or your family and commemorate it in a creative, individual way. Whether it is to remember more light-hearted times or a simple search for variety, celebrating holidays such as Lunar New Year is definitely worth your time.

PULSE

The Slump

Masy Domecillo [02.24.2021](#)

As the semester draws on, midterm season further entrenches students with projects and tests. This constant onslaught of deadlines and examinations may create a sense of burn-out, and a lack of outside stimuli may fuel this general dread. In addition to academics, many individuals also must juggle extra-

curriculars, such as work, sports, and social obligations. The sheer amount of responsibilities on a person's plate can serve as a motivating force to continually propel forwards. Nonetheless, with managing all these tasks, it is far easier to give way to the dreaded student's downfall: the slump.

No student willingly falls into this rabbit hole, but it is far too easy to fall into this trap. A single missed assignment can easily cascade into an avalanche of obligations, until the workload appears indomitable. Nonetheless, even within this tangle, each student has the ability to remedy their situation. Here are several suggestions for vanquishing the slump.

Communication. Once a student has realized that they are behind, they should have an open line of communication with their professors. This should assist with creating a plan to get back on track, and to inform the professors of where one is with the coursework. In addition, students should communicate where they are at with a trusted group of friends. This allows for a support system, which motivates the individual, and if others are also in the same situation, forming a study group could be extremely helpful.

Organization. To get out of the slump, the student should list all the tasks they must complete for each class or project. These should include the aimed completion date; a manner that may be helpful is to list out each separate objective within each task. Completing certain assignments step-by-step will help visualize progress better. Furthermore, each task should be listed out in a reasonable manner, as setting unlikely deadlines will not serve to boost morale.

Revitalization. A key component of getting back on track is managing one's schedule and creating a balance. Although academics are undoubtedly the first priority, overloading oneself can stunt progress as well. There should be scheduled breaks in which the student plans to completely relax in order to be revitalized for the tasks at hand. This could include reading, playing or listening to music, as well as simply getting some sleep. In order to conquer a large workload, adequate rest and a clear mind are essential assets.

There is no shame in getting into a slump. Each student has undoubtedly experienced this within their university career, and the focus should be on getting out of the slump. Reaching out to faculty and friends, opening lines of communication, will allow an individual external support and guidance. Careful organization will allow each objective to be completed in an efficient, yet reasonable manner, and revitalization through other hobbies is key to refreshing

an overworked individual. The slump is conquerable; one simply must have the willpower and support to surmount it.

Humans

HUMANS

February Freshmen Spotlight

Alyssa Henriquez [02.24.2021](#)

Andre Canubas (AC)
(computer engineering)

Adam Henriquez (AH)
(computer science)

Andre Canubas and Adam Henriquez are two freshmen who attended BSCF and AUSA's "Dating Game" on February 15. This is a blind dating game where a contestant asks three potential "dates" questions behind a curtain, and then picks the candidate with the best responses. The winner and the contestant then go on a date at a later time. In this spotlight, we take a look at Andre and Adam's experiences starting college and find out what exactly happened at this year's Dating Game.

How did it feel to start college in the middle of COVID? Was it hard to make friends in this environment?

AC: I kind of expected it to be not as lively and social, so I guess it was. It was actually pretty easy to make friends because I already had some that were here, and I made more friends than I thought I would.

AH: A lot of my friends are at colleges that aren't in person, and they're having a miserable time, so this was an overall good experience.

What are some of your hobbies?

AC: I like playing piano and violin, going to the gym, and playing basketball.

AH: I like to make music, work out, and sleep. I also like basketball.

What are you studying, and how did you pick your major?

AC: I'm a computer engineering major because my parents wanted me to do something outside of the medical field, and I was intrigued by engineering and creating new things.

AH: I am a computer science major, because my dad studied computer science, and he introduced me to it awhile ago and I thought it was interesting. And they make a lot of money.

How did you end up participating in this year's Dating Game, Andre?

AC: The hosts were looking into the crowd trying to find somebody, and our friend Bassam shouted Adam's name.

AH: And I immediately pointed to Andre.

AC: He immediately pointed to me, and then we played a game of rock, paper, scissors to figure out who would participate in the game.

AH: That was the most intense game of rock, paper, scissors of my life.

AC: I won the first one, he won the second one, then we tied like five times, and then I lost the last one.

How did you feel when they called you to come onstage?

AC: I didn't know exactly how to feel; I was shocked.

What was the most challenging question that the contestant asked you?

AC: Well, they asked me about my hobbies, my major, and something I wanted to say to the crowd. That last question was probably the hardest. I ended up saying "wear your mask."

How did you feel when you found out that you won the game? Did you anticipate that happening?

AC: I was shocked. If you watched me on stage you would see how surprised I was.

Did you schedule a time to go on a date yet?

AC: Not yet; that's still being worked out.

HUMANS

Senior Spotlight: Brandi Seawood

(senior, biology)

Interviewed by Celeste Richardson 02.24.2021



Photo by Brandi Seawood

What have been some of your favorite moments at Andrews?

I've enjoyed exploring Michigan when it's not cold. I love the fall season and exploring different places and of course going to the beach is nice as well. I've loved just the little things, hanging out with friends, going roller skating, as well as the barn parties. Another thing that I really loved is DMC, which is Deliverance Mass Choir if you don't know. I've been in DMC all four years of college and I've thoroughly loved it. We've gone on trips, we've done choir retreats, we've done concerts, and it's just been a lot of fun, and I've made some really good friends. It's really like a big family and I love music so it's a great way for me to express myself, and also connect with God. I have also enjoyed volunteering, specifically in H.E.L.P.—which stands for Human Empowerment Life Project. Hanging out with the kids there and teaching them and mentoring them has really been a life changing experience, and has helped me to learn to look beyond myself and find ways that I can help others and serve my community.

How have you adjusted to the increasing workload as a bio major over these last four years?

I've picked up on new study techniques and the way that the biology program works here at Andrews is that you start off with a lot, taking Foundations of Biology, but it's pretty much only that one biology class for your first year. So as the years progress, you start taking more biology classes at a time, and things do get more difficult, but I feel like they gradually build you up and work your way up, so that it's kind of not even noticeable that the classes become more difficult because of the increased workload. The Biology program here is really great and I think that it's difficult and challenging but they don't make it impossible for you to succeed. I feel like for those that really give 100% and work with their professors, they'll be able to find success.

Are there any particular study hacks that have helped you succeed?

Yes, I have picked up a few tips and tricks. One of them has been taking condensed notes. So I started taking condensed notes my sophomore year and it's basically really simple. You just take all the material and condense it into notes so that you have a few pages of notes. I really love this method because usually professors have a lot of slides, like for example, in one of my classes now one chapter will be like 87 slides, but then I can condense it down to a page or two. I'm just taking out the key information, and really making it easier for me to memorize so I don't feel too overwhelmed. Another method I've used is using online flashcards, specifically Anki. So Anki is a program that allows you to do spaced repetition of flashcards. For example, one card will pop up one day and then it'll pop up within the next three days or the next five days, according to how well you know the information. It's really useful, because it's like a way of self quizzing yourself and you know you're not cheating yourself by just assuming you know it. It really challenges you and requires you to really use active recall and that's really the best way to learn. Another study hack I've learned which is also quite simple, is to always find a partner to study with or two people, not too big of a group. This way you can quiz each other right before the test and you can share notes or resources and send each other quick facts right before the test. It's a good way to just engage yourself. Everyone has a different take on a different information and a different way of learning. So it's extremely useful to see how others learn and to kind of get their take on the information because oftentimes they'll know something that you don't, and they'll help you succeed and you'll help them succeed.

Do you have any advice for incoming freshmen or freshman starting off as bio majors?

Yes. My biggest piece of advice: if you are religious, definitely keep on top of your religion, whatever it may be. For those who are Christians keep God #1, and He'll definitely help you along the way. It's encouraging to know that there's someone out there that's helping you when you feel like you don't have enough to give. It helps when times get tough, and they will get tough, to have a higher purpose and a higher calling to know that you aren't just your grades and God has a purpose for you. Another piece of advice I would give to freshmen is definitely start strong your freshman year, literally give it your all, and try to figure out a plan for what you're going to be doing years after. I'm not really big on planning super far into the future but I feel like for college--well I know for biology majors--the way that the pre-medicine and pre-dentistry paths are set up you need to plan very far in advance because you have to do shadowing, you have to take certain exams, and you have to take certain classes, so it's best to just try to figure it out early. I know it's tough to figure out, but if you have an idea, try to figure out a track that you're going to follow, and then start off strong. Start off strong because no matter what path you take, your future self will look back and thank you for getting those A's in freshman year, when you have to write down your grades on grad school applications. Your senior self will look back and thank your freshman year self for getting in those shadowing hours or being that officer of that club or doing the small things. So just start off as strong as possible. You don't want to have to build up your GPA, you want it to just be high, and then have room later on in case you ever get a low grade.

What are your plans after graduation?

So I'm very excited to say that after graduation, I will be attending University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry. I will be attending dental school for four years and will be moving to Alabama, so I'm really excited about that.

How was the process of applying to dental school and studying for the DAT?

So this kind of goes back to my advice for the freshmen, because the process for applying for dental school really starts freshman year. I started off undecided but I was still taking some biology classes so thankfully I was able to get everything done in four years. It started off with taking biology classes, shadowing several different types of dentists in different specialties to get volunteer hours for your applications, and leadership positions, such as being a club officer for the pre-

dental club and things like that. Then the summer of my junior year was when everything really was kind of hardcore: I registered for the DAT, which is a Dental Admissions Test, and I started applying for dental schools. I had to make a list of dental schools and start selecting which ones I was interested in. I studied for the DAT this past summer for 10 weeks and I took my DAT on August 4, so basically I was studying all summer. While I was studying I was also working on my applications, which is a very lengthy process, but luckily I was able to submit them in July. After that, it was just a waiting game until I started hearing back from schools. They started contacting me and thankfully I got some interviews. So during this past fall semester, I had a lot of interviews and meet and greet sessions to attend, and then during winter break, December 15th, was the first day that schools could get back to us. Thankfully I heard back from some schools, so that's when I first got my acceptances. Then after that, throughout the break, I was trying to compare pros and cons with different schools to decide which school I was going to attend. Then in January sometime after arriving back to school for spring semester, I selected UAB. So as you can see it was a very lengthy process. There's a lot of steps, but I was really happy to have mentors who supported me and helped me along this journey.

Tell us about your blog. What inspired you to start it, and where can we follow?

Thanks for asking! So my blog is actually on [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#). I was inspired to start this blog because one of my goals as a future dentist is to help inspire people, especially minorities, to pursue dentistry, because right now only 3.7% of dentists in America are black. I really want to help motivate other minorities to pursue dentistry and show them that people like me can do the same thing. I didn't see a whole lot of minorities with dental blogs, so I decided to start one. I post vlogs on there and just all sorts of fun stuff, so you should definitely go check it out. The handle is @drseawoodloading. Please follow me, I'll follow back. My goal is to document my journey, so I started this summer, capturing some of the pre-dental journey and then I'm going to be capturing my journey through dental school as well. So stay tuned!

HUMANS

Updates on 2020-21 Graduation Ceremony

Interviewed by Fitz-Earl McKenzie II [02.24.2021](#)



Photo by Darren Heslop

Christon Arthur, PhD
Provost of Andrews University

How has the process been trying to plan a graduation ceremony in such an ever-changing environment?

The process has involved looking at the recommendations from the state of Michigan and the CDC. Our mitigation efforts are working. Even though we're in a pandemic, we want to give students every opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments. It's a matter of trying to balance the quality of things: to give students a chance to celebrate their achievements, they must have moments of celebration, even if it is only for their mental health, but also to feel good about

their accomplishments. We are also in an environment where we want to keep the state's guidelines and those of the CDC foremost in our minds.

Before we decided, I had conversations with the Graduate Student Association president, the Undergraduate Student Association, and the president of the graduating class. We've collected a list of graduating seniors and graduate students. **In the next week or two, look out for a town hall meeting with our students to share our plans and to gather input.**

What specifically spurred the decision to hold the graduation in person instead of the option that Andrews implemented last year when the pandemic initially hit?

Good question. Last year in March, right around spring break, all of our students, for the most part, went home and were remote. There were some exceptions, notably with international students and some other students that made the case that campus would be a safer environment for them, but the majority returned home. Having sent our students home and having remote learning for the rest of the spring semester, we thought it was unwise and not feasible to bring them back for graduation. There were no students on campus, and the virtual ceremony made sense because they were already scattered throughout the United States.

This spring, our students are here. We brought them back. We have classes in person. In some cases, this decision leads to difficult conversations with the plans to come back to campus because everything is still not 100%. Amid the pandemic, having decided to host in-person classes, we tested our students. We had a week or so before the first classes started. We felt pretty safe that based on the tests that we did and the week or so of a quasi-quarantine, it was okay to begin face-to-face classes. Because our students are here with us, we thought that using the protocols that we have established for the classroom environment, we could celebrate graduation with students already here.

How different will this graduation ceremony and the festivities afterward be compared to years past, and will these changes be standard going forward?

Some things will be unique to this year, but there are also some things that we do now that may become part of the future. Usually, for our typical graduation ceremonies in the past, PMC would be crowded for graduation. We would give students up to six or seven tickets per graduate to invite family members and friends, and we'd have those persons sitting shoulder to shoulder within PMC. But

in this environment of physical distancing, that's not going to happen. Also, we have decided that it might be unwise and unsafe to open the campus for graduation. So faculty members and graduating students are the only ones who are physically in the graduation space.

The reason that we decided not to open up graduation to family members, friends, and loved ones at this point is really because of logistics. **We would have to figure out how to ensure that those persons have been tested when they come to the Berrien Springs area, and they would need an appropriate time to quarantine.** But there's no way I could monitor whether another person quarantined when they arrived. There is no way we could have a central screening location to make sure every person had a negative test. The logistics of that are just too much.

We anticipate that in future years this restriction on the graduation ceremony will not be in place. We'll go back to the days when family members and friends could be part of the graduation. **So, we're planning that for Spring 2022, any student who graduated during the pandemic: Spring of 2020, Summer of 2020, Fall of 2020, Spring of 2021, possibly even Summer of 2021, when we had limited and restricted celebration moments, can come back for this May 2022 graduation.** They can walk if they want to; they can bring their friends if they're going to; and they'll have a chance to celebrate, because we know that even if we had a virtual ceremony, and now a face to face ceremony for this May, we couldn't have celebrated the way we wanted to. So our plan is for any student who graduated during this time period to come back and be part of a grander celebration in 2022.

There are some aspects of this year's graduation that we may take into the future. We have some students who cannot come to campus to be part of the physical celebration, and what we're planning to do is have a hybrid graduation. Those who are here in Berrien Springs will be there in person, and those who cannot be here in Berrien Springs for the ceremony could attend virtually. What we'll do is put a picture of the graduate on the screen, announce their degrees, and maybe have some commendations about this person who is graduating virtually. It'll be a way to showcase those students and still acknowledge them in the graduation, even if they're not here. Possibly, moving forward, we'll always have a virtual moment in our graduation ceremony to celebrate the accomplishments of those who couldn't be there physically. It might be a lesson from COVID that we'll take with us: to celebrate students' accomplishments who cannot be physically in the ceremony, but to still acknowledge them in our celebrations. Right now, the pre-COVID

procedure would have it that those persons would have been listed in the program but never mentioned in a graduation ceremony.

Are there any preparations for December Graduates and Remote Students to walk and receive their degrees here at AU?

This spring, we will include December and remote students, but that inclusion will most likely be in a virtual setting because we want to limit face-to-face interactions to persons who are cleared to be on campus. Some students who were cleared to be here will have to leave near the end of February or sometime in March to go through clinical placements, but if they're graduating, they will be allowed to return to campus. These are students who chose to come to be with us face-to-face, and them leaving to go to clinicals is not an individual choice but a program requirement. We felt, "why limit the public participation when the choice was not theirs totally?" So, when they're finished with their clinicals, they'll come back and go through the process of being tested again. We'll wait for the test results, and then they will be able to re-join us as part of the campus community.

What is the rationale for preventing parents from attending graduation but allowing parents to help students move out for the semester?

At the beginning of the year, when parents came with their children to move them into the residence halls, they arrived, made sure their children were settled safely at the residence halls, and then left. Those parents were never integrated into the campus. We are planning for the same thing to happen at the end of the semester: the parents will come, their children will check out of other rooms in the residence halls, they will transport them back home, and they will never be integrated into the campus. We see graduation as a full ceremony that they would be a part of, which could last for a few hours. It is more than merely coming to check in and out and leave. **It's no different as to why we did not have the typical parent convocation at the beginning of Fall Semester: to us, that is integration into the campus, and the fact that we couldn't have every parent tested, and we couldn't have every parent go into quarantine as it did for our students, presents a risk.**

Our students were tested a week before face-to-face classes started; we can't create that same buffer period for parents in order to have them integrated into campus life. That is what led to the decision of saying: "only the persons who are currently integrated into campus will be part of the ceremony." Now, this is difficult. I understand the need for parents to celebrate, but we have to balance that with the health risk to the campus.

Graduation usually takes place over three days, so we took this into account when considering the number of events and the length of the service. The usual mitigation practice is six feet of distance between persons unless you're part of a cohort in a classroom setting. However, even if you're wearing a mask, and even if you have six feet of distance, both the Berrien County Health Department and the CDC suggest that you should take action regarding others present in the room when the exposure is prolonged. Think about what would happen if we had two parents per graduate: we're talking about potentially a couple thousand persons on campus. Let's suppose they remained six feet apart, but were in a ceremony for three hours. If there were one or two persons within that setting who had the virus, the level of contact tracing we would have to do would be very challenging. Could we have pulled it off? I guess theoretically, yes. But trying to make sure that every person is safe in a setting like that was a bit of a challenge. The risk of what could happen is too high for me to be comfortable with it.

Is there anything else that you would like the student body to know?

I want the student body to know that we'll set up a meeting in the next week or two to talk with any person who has planned for graduation, especially those who are worried about the virtual part of the ceremony and those who want to include friends and parents in their celebration. I'm also willing to have a town hall with parents to talk about that. But I think it's helpful for students and parents to know the thought process behind our decision: it was not just "oh well, it's an easier decision for me." We're weighing all the different things that have happened.

We're always reviewing our safety protocols, making sure that they're practical, current, and up-to-date with the guidelines of the CDC. Dr. Anthony Fauci, who I trust in this area, stated that it would not be until July before enough people have access to the vaccines that we'll reach herd immunity for the country. If the assessment were that we could have people vaccinated by April and attain herd immunity, there would have been a different decision about graduation. The fact that vaccination efficacy and vaccination availability will not have a large enough effect until July informed our decision regarding May graduation.

We will keep monitoring it, and if conditions change, we will adjust. Whether they're graduating or not, any student who has questions about why we behave in particular ways can talk with AUSA or AUGSA. **We'll talk about our position; we are open, we are available, and we are always willing to talk.** We'll speak with small groups, one on one, and large groups. We will listen. We've been listening to AUSA

leadership and AUGSA leadership as we tried to make our decision, and they have been very helpful and have given ideas. So we're open to the ideas and suggestions from students.

Arts & Entertainment

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Black Artists I Recommend

Hannah Cruse [02.24.2021](#)



Photo by Public Domain

Music is the interstitial fluid that fills the gaps between our day. The music we love now in America would not exist without the influence and guiding hand of black artists and the influences garnered from African traditions. They have single-handedly created and continue to influence jazz, blues, hip-hop, funk, soul, rock, and so many more genres beyond the ones listed. This is a list of 10 black artists I love and some songs to start with if you haven't listened to them before.

1. Ella Fitzgerald owns my heart. The soft, light texture of her voice effortlessly glides over the notes, never strained. I get amazed every time I

hear her sing. I especially like the contrast between her smooth tone and the raspy gruffness of her long-time collaborator, Louis Armstrong. The songs from her that I recommend are “Misty” and “Cheek to Cheek.”

2. There is something about Muddy Waters and the Chicago Blues that makes me want to listen to him on repeat. I love the sound of the harmonica and the electric guitar wailing, backing the forlorn verses. Muddy Waters inspired rock artists like The Rolling Stones who named their band after a song of his. “Hoochie Coochie Man” and “Mannish Boy” are the songs you should start with.

3. Celia Cruz is the undisputed queen of salsa. Her catchphrase “¡Azucar!” is the easiest way to identify her music along with her strong alto voice. “La Negra Tiene Tumbao” and “Quimbara” are the songs to check out.

4. Chloe x Halle is the sister duo of dreams. I love how their distinct tones mix to make the most heavenly harmonies. They are multi-talented and produce much of their own music. The songs I recommend are “Cool People” and “Baby Girl.”

5. I can’t remember how I found Lous and the Yakuza, but I’m glad I did. Her music is a genre blend of hip-hop, R&B, and trap and is sung in French. The songs I like best are “Amigo” and “Dans la Hess.”

6. Labrinth’s colorful electronic fever dream is one you do not want to miss. His music is consistently beautiful, so much so that he has composed for HBO’s series Euphoria and the Netflix movie Malcolm and Marie. “Miracle” and “Imagination” are two of my favorites.

7. If you have not listened to Frank Ocean before, then now is the time to start. His songs are simple in form yet beautiful in lyrics. His wide range and longing tone will enchant you, making you want more and more. His songs “Cayendo” and “Godspeed” are sheer perfection.

8. Earth, Wind, & Fire may be known for “September,” but this funk band has so much more to offer. Their falsetto layered backing vocals are so tight and make up one of the best bands I’ve listened to. “Boogie Wonderland” and “That’s the Way of the World” make me want to sing and dance every single time.

9. The New Respects is an up-and-coming pop-rock band based in Nashville that gives the feeling of sitting in a pool chair in the middle of summer. I’m a

fan of bands with female fronts and they do not disappoint. “Trouble” and “Something to Believe In” are the songs to listen to.

10. FKA twig’s ethereal soprano voice captivates me every time I return to her music, which can be just as dreamy. Her genre-bending work is a treasure trove of enticing songs. The songs I listen to the most are “cellophane” and “mary magdalene.”

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Creative Spotlight: Be of Good Cheer with Itumeleng Gabasiane

(junior, pre-physical therapy)

Interviewed by Megan Napod [02.24.2021](#)

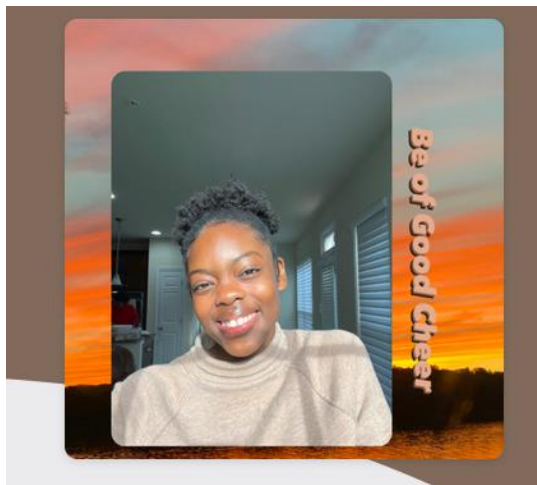


Photo by Itumeleng Gabasiane

What is the name of your podcast and the meaning behind the name?

The name of my podcast is Be of Good Cheer. When I was born I was given the name Itumeleng, which means “be of good cheer!”

What inspired you to start a podcast?

First of all, I enjoy talking and having conversations with people. I also spend a lot of my down time listening to podcasts and I have learned so much from them. I was inspired by others to start one of my own and share my life experiences. My mission and hope for this podcast is to inspire others to grow, dig deeper into who they are, enjoy moments of laughter, and learn more about God.

What genre or niche do you consider your podcast to fall under? What audience are you hoping to reach out to?

I'd say it falls under the spirituality category and a bit of lifestyle as well. I try my best to incorporate God into my lifestyle, so there isn't really an episode that I wouldn't find an opportunity to let His light shine.

I am reaching out to any individual, I wouldn't say there is a specific age limitation! I believe teenagers, young adults, and adults can benefit from what I may have to say.

What are some of your short-term and long-term goals for your podcast?

To be more consistent with producing episodes, and creating an interesting platform for those listening to the podcast.

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone who is looking to start a podcast or anything creative that they're passionate about?

Just go for it! I used to tell myself I did not have the right equipment and make excuses why I can't start, but once I snapped out of that I used what I had and I am thankful I took that first step!

Where can we check your podcast out?

You can find it on Anchor, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, etc.

<https://anchor.fm/itumeleng-gabasiane>

<https://open.spotify.com/show/5KV1YB43kM7hDgKxBpWvkq?si=cWMGhAaFSv-FQXTFJlITZw>

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Tesla, To the Moon!

Joshua Deonarine [02.24.2021](#)



Photo by Public Domain

On January 27, 2021, Tesla announced that they will be releasing their new Model S that will start shipping in late 2021. This newly designed Tesla features up to 520 miles of range (best-in-class), a newly designed interior, and the controversial “yoke-style” steering wheel which was originally designed for competitive driving in Formula 1 race cars rather than daily commute in a sedan. Even at the price of \$75,000, eager EV buyers are pre-ordering their Teslas, preparing to wait the 8+ months it takes for their car to be delivered.

Why is Tesla so sought after? Teslas are known for their futuristic design, large interior display, and innovative electronics, but it would not be where it is today without Elon Musk, the current CEO of Tesla. Musk, who is currently in a race for the richest man in the world, has revolutionized the car industry with the release of best-selling Teslas like the Model 3, which outsold every other electric car in 2020. This surge in electric cars has pushed car manufacturers like Ford and Porsche to create their own electric cars, intent on competing with Tesla.

Although you would think a carmaker would be popular for its cars, another reason for Tesla’s fame is because of its stock. Back in March, Tesla had a stock

price of about \$80. During quarantine, Tesla's stock shot up to its current price today of \$781, even after a split—when a stock's price is split into several parts, decreasing the individual value of a stock. Investors, both amateur and professional, jumped onto this hidden gem, and made millions. With this infusion of profit, Tesla continued to produce more cars, beating sales expectations during the 2020 quarantine, one of the worst selling periods for automakers.

Tesla is literally on the fast track to becoming one of the biggest automakers in the world. With hype, both for the car and the stock, Tesla will have both the market and the capital to create more Teslas. Who knows? Maybe one day, we'll all have Teslas.

References:

Dorian, Drew. "2021 Tesla Model S Review, Pricing, and Specs." *Car and Driver*, 28 Jan. 2021.

"TSLA Interactive Stock Chart | Tesla, Inc. Stock." *Yahoo! Finance*, Yahoo!

Ideas

IDEAS

Harlem Jazz and Louis Armstrong: His Life and Impact

Sion Kim [02.24.2021](#)



Photo by Public Domain

This month, the month of February, is officially observed and celebrated as Black History Month. It is also known as the African-American History Month - the time when we remember and celebrate the history and the accomplishments of numerous African Americans who are recognized in various fields. Jazz is one of those accomplishments that are widely recognized and appreciated by people all over the world. It has greatly impacted people and music since the 1920s and it continues to do so today.

The genre of jazz blossomed in the 1920s, after when the era of Civil War (1861-1865) and the era of Reconstruction (1865-1877) ended. During this time period, African Americans who had previously been enslaved were still treated horribly with inequality and racism. Many of those who were living in the South of

the United States moved to the North, searching for a better life for themselves and for their family. This moving from the South to the North, which continued for about 50 years, is called the Great Migration. It led the African Americans who gathered in the North to begin the Harlem Renaissance in the city of Harlem, Manhattan, New York. The Harlem Renaissance was “a blossoming (c. 1918-37) of African American culture, particularly in the creative arts, and the most influential movement in African American literary history” (Britannica). One of the pioneers and the most well-known African American musicians of this time period is Louis Armstrong. He and his music inspired and influenced other African American artists of the Harlem Renaissance.

Louis Armstrong was a jazz trumpeter, bandleader, and a singer. He was born in 1901 in New Orleans, Louisiana to a couple suffering from poverty. His family did not last long because his father abandoned his family and his mother did not take care of him. Instead of his parents, he was raised by his grandmother and he had to quit school in 5th grade in order to support himself. In 1912, he was sent to the Colored Waif’s Home for Boys because he got arrested by a police officer for firing his stepfather’s gun in the air during a New Year’s Eve celebration. Interestingly, his love for music began there. While staying there, he was given music lessons and taught how to play the cornet, which is a brass instrument similar to the trumpet. After being released from that place in 1914, he sought to begin his career as a musician as he worked to support himself.

Despite his unfortunate conditions, with the mentorship of Joe “King” Oliver, Armstrong continued to grow as a musician and got to join a band in Chicago in 1922. His musical career expanded as he joined Fletcher Henderson’s Orchestra and recorded multiple solos with the jazz orchestra. In 1925, he formed a band named Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five. He became well-known for his solo recordings and for his songs such as “La Vie En Rose” and “What a Wonderful World” which are still greatly loved and listened to by people. Moreover, Armstrong became famous for his rhythmic style called swing and became the first African American jazz musician to write an autobiography and to host a nationally sponsored radio show.

Just like Louis Armstrong did, numerous African American artists such as Langston Hughes, Nina Simone, Earl Hines, Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington and Bessie Smith left their mark. They have led the way to begin the era of African American artistic and cultural bloom in the United States of America. By doing so, they showed the world that they are talented intellectual beings who deserve to be treated as full human beings when the others were telling them otherwise. Their

music continues to impact people all over the world and their legacy remains for us to celebrate.

Sources

Hutchison, George. (2019, August 19). "Harlem Renaissance." Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/event/Harlem-Renaissance-American-literature-and-art>

History.com Editors. (2021, January 21). "Harlem Renaissance." Retrieved from <https://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties/harlem-renaissance>

IDEAS

How to be a Black Community Ally

Kavya Mohanram 02.24.2021

Suppose your grandpa was playing monopoly with your black friend's grandpa, but your grandpa would make all the moves and take all of your grandpa's money for the whole game. Finally, the grandparents get tired and hand the game off to your father and your black friend's father. This time, your father allows him to make moves, but only your father is allowed to buy hotels and places with expensive rent. At the end, they also give up and hand it onto you and your black friend. Both of you play fairly, but you already have so much so you end up winning. This is basically the economic history of African Americans. They were enslaved and received no money, then were only allowed certain privileges. Now, they are free to do what they want, but African Americans are still affected by past disadvantages (Collins, 2017). On top of this, many non-black people do not understand how slavery and past discrimination have present consequences. So this begs the question, how do we as a society work to bridge the gap and work to better understand what black people go through?

The first step is to understand what small things create discomfort for Black people and learn to correct those actions. Most of these things go under the idea of microaggressions. Have you held your belongings closer to your body when you've seen a black person? Have you asked to touch a black person's hair? Have you

touched it without asking? These things can be quite dehumanizing.
<https://sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/microaggressions.pdf>

Examples of Racial Microaggressions

Theme	Microaggression	Message
<i>Alien in own land</i> When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	"Where are you from?" "Where were you born?" "You speak good English." A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language.	You are not American You are a foreigner
<i>Ascription of Intelligence</i> Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race.	"You are a credit to your race." "You are so articulate." Asking an Asian person to help with a Math or Science problem.	People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites. It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent. All Asians are intelligent and good in Math / Sciences.
<i>Color Blindness</i> Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race	"When I look at you, I don't see color." "America is a melting pot." "There is only one race, the human race."	Denying a person of color's racial / ethnic experiences. Assimilate / acculturate to the dominant culture. Denying the individual as a racial / cultural being.
<i>Criminality – assumption of criminal status</i> A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race.	A White man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes. A store owner following a customer of color around the store. A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.	You are a criminal. You are going to steal / You are poor / You do not belong / You are dangerous.
<i>Denial of individual racism</i> A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases	"I'm not a racist. I have several Black friends." "As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."	I am immune to races because I have friends of color. Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression. I can't be a racist. I'm like you.
<i>Myth of meritocracy</i> Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes	"I believe the most qualified person should get the job." "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."	People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race. People of color are lazy and / or incompetent and need to work harder.
<i>Pathologizing cultural values / communication styles</i> The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant / White culture are ideal	Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud / animated? Just calm down." To an Asian or Latino person: Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal." Speak up more." Dismissing an individual who brings up race / culture in work / school setting.	Assimilate to dominant culture. Leave your cultural baggage outside.

Theme	Microaggression	Message
<i>Second-class citizen</i> Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color	Person of color mistaken for a service worker Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a White passenger Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer behind you "You people ..."	People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn't possibly occupy high-status positions. You are likely to cause trouble and / or travel to a dangerous neighborhood. Whites are more valued customers than people of color You don't belong. You are a lesser being.
<i>Environmental microaggressions</i> Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels	A college or university with buildings that are all names after White heterosexual upper class males Television shows and movies that feature predominantly White people, without representation of people of color Overcrowding of public schools in communities of color Overabundance of liquor stores in communities of color	You don't belong / You won't succeed here. There is only so far you can go. You are an outsider / You don't exist. People of color don't / shouldn't value education. People of color are deviant.
<i>How to offend without really trying</i>	"Indian giver." "That's so gay." "She welshed on the bet." "I jewed him down." "That's so White of you." "You people ..." "We got gypped." Imitating accents or dialects Others?	

Adapted from:

Wing, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, Esquilin (2007). Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice. *American Psychologist*, 62, 4, 271-286

The above list shows a variety of microaggressions diverse people go through on a day to day basis and what message they portray. This is a great tool to use to

assess the ways you might be unwittingly doing microaggressions.

Secondly, when talking about the income gap between black people and white people in America, the way we can support black people at the individual level would be to give back to black businesses. The app, “I Am Black Business” in the Apple and Play Store locates black businesses in your area. It’s personally helped me to find businesses to support. Online, there are many social media accounts that promote black businesses to buy from, such as @blackbusinessgoalz on Instagram. By doing this, we are investing money in black people, which allows for a better future for them and their kids.

Thirdly, speak up. When you see microaggressions or any behavior that is racist, politely tell people that what they are doing is wrong. Try to have conversations about race with different people. Listen more and educate yourself about topics and experiences you are unfamiliar with. Amplify black voices by implementing diverse media into your day to day social media world and reposting. The more the topic is discussed, the more change can occur from the bottom, up. Your voice matters in changing the world. As Andrews University says, “World Changers Made Here.” This is a step to change the world. The past year has seen a lot of change in terms of treatment of black people. Some police officers are being held accountable for the deaths of black lives such as George Floyd. Statues of those who enslaved African Americans were taken down. Juneteenth became recognized as a holiday. Multiple companies affirmed that fact that black lives matter, and celebrities and sports teams showed their support (Somvichian-Clausen, 2020). In this way, we can change the world slowly, as we take steps to become genuine allies to the black community. Let’s help create a more equal world.

Works Cited

Collins, W. J., & Wanamaker, M. H. (2017, May). *African American Intergenerational Economic*

Mobility Since 1880. Retrieved February 21, 2021,

from

https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w23395/w23395.pdf

Examples of Racial Microaggressions. (n.d.). University of Minnesota. Retrieved February 22,

2021, from <https://sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/microaggressions.pdf>

Somvichian-Clausen, A. (2020, November 1). *What the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests have*

achieved so far. The Hill. Retrieved February 23, 2021, from <https://thehill.com/changing-america/respect/equality/502121-what-the-2020-black-lives-matter-protests-have-achieved-so>

IDEAS

The Plans and Hopes of the Biden Administration

Lyle Goulbourne [02.24.2021](#)



Photo by Public Domain

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was sworn into office in the midst of the Great Depression, the country was in crisis with one quarter of Americans unemployed. By the end of his first 100 days, FDR had led the passage of 15 various bills overhauling the nation and laying the foundation for a strong economic recovery. Nearly 100 years later, President Joe Biden has inherited the nation at one of its weakest moments in history. Issues he must confront include the coronavirus

pandemic that has left 500,000 Americans dead and 10 million unemployed, a severely divided political landscape, climate change, immigration, a nation reckoning with racial justice, the increasing power of China and its crimes against Uighur Muslims, growing wealth inequality, and many more. To combat these issues, Biden has proposed a wide variety of solutions that he plans to enact within his first 100 days in office.

To combat the coronavirus pandemic, Biden has pledged to ramp up production and distribution of the approved COVID-19 vaccines. His goal is to administer 100 million doses by the end of his first 100 days. He has also purchased 200 million additional doses, bringing the total number purchased to 600 million, which should fully vaccinate 300 million Americans. He vowed that any American who wants a vaccine will have access to one by the end of July. Biden also reversed the planned pullout of the U.S. from the World Health Organization, which was supposed to take effect in June.

Joe Biden also called for unity in America, as America seems to be more divided than at any point in modern history. In a recent town hall, Biden claimed America is not as divided as it seems, for many Americans share common ground on certain issues. This claim does hold some water, i.e. 70% of Americans support marijuana legalization, 78% support stimulus checks, 67% support increasing the federal minimum wage, and 70% of Americans agree that “the government does not represent the America that I love.”

Joe Biden has signed several executive orders that aim to combat climate change, which include rejoining the Paris climate agreement and pausing new oil and gas leasing on federal lands and waters. But it is important to note that all of Joe Bidens’ executive actions can be rescinded by future presidents, so the most meaningful changes must be passed by Congress. Joe Biden wants America to have net-zero emissions by 2050, but he faces an uphill battle in getting any legislation regarding climate change through Congress. Democratic senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia (a prominent coal-producing state) is the new chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, and he will wield much power in determining which climate legislation sees the light of day.

Democrats on Capitol Hill have revealed a new immigration plan that would provide a path to citizenship for millions. Based on Biden’s immigration proposal released during his first few days in office, this bill focuses around an eight-year path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in America (for context, the population of Michigan is around 10 million). After passing background checks and paying taxes, they could live and work in America for 5

years before they receive a green card, leading to citizenship 3 years after that. However, it will be difficult to win over the 10 Republican senators needed to overcome a filibuster in the Senate and pass the bill.

Regarding China, Biden has voiced several issues he has with their unfair trade practices and human rights issues, but he has given few concrete details yet on how he will engage with China during his term. To combat growing wealth inequality, Biden plans to pass trillions more in economic stimulus due to the pandemic. He also aims to pass an infrastructure bill that he hopes will create more blue collar jobs, and he plans to roll back Trump's tax cuts for the wealthy and for corporations.

It is exceedingly clear that Joe Biden has big goals for his next four years in office, combatting a wide range of issues starting on the day of his inauguration. However, it remains to be seen whether he can successfully pass any meaningful and long-lasting legislation through a congress that can quite easily upset his plans.

The Last Word

THE LAST WORD

The Mountain, The Tree and You

Adoniah Simon [02.24.2021](#)

When people ask me how I'm doing, and I respond with the ubiquitous "I'm good," it means more now than it ever has. It's not that up until recently I made the decision to lie when I said I was good. Not always, at least. I just didn't know how much better my good could be. The past few months and years I've been fighting to find the joy of the Lord, and the strength that comes with it. More than anything, I've been seeking His peace. There were beliefs about myself and doubts about Him that I had to contend with and settle in order to receive that which I craved more than anything else. This change was gradual and sudden, easy and difficult. I made the decision to seek, and yet I was surprised at what I found. The two metaphors I've adopted are that of the mountains and the tree. I see them as two sides of the same coin.

There are moments we can experience in our lives when we come to the awareness of something great, awesome and profound. When we've finally arrived at a destination we've had our sights set on for some time. We can have such an encounter with a beautiful wilderness, or a beautiful work made by human hands, an experience of such deep joy, peace, love. Such things are a shot to the heart, one that pierces past our own darkness and blindness, breaks past our hearts of stone, and touches our souls. There are moments in our lives that dramatically change us. After ascending a mountain, there comes the time we arrive at a summit.

There are times in which the lessons we have been learning all along the way finally sink in. Sometimes it is a dramatic revelation. Others it is a quiet sigh of relief: thank God I don't have to believe that anymore. In any case, these realizations shift our paradigm, how we see ourselves, the world, and our place within it. There are the lessons of youth: don't touch a hot stove, and look both ways before you cross the street. These are the fruit of a magnificent fruit tree that a child collects with ease. There are fruits above it: my parents can be trusted and respected, and cars on the road can hurt you, or kill you. Still above it are these fruits: sometimes my parents and my elders know better than I do, even when I don't think so, and it is not someone else's responsibility to keep me safe, I must keep my wits about me. There are the simple lessons, the sweet berries of youth that color your fingers and lips with red, purple and blue. There are the lessons of a lifetime that tower above them, beckoning us towards them. The examples I shared reflect the lessons I learned, but it may not reflect yours. Perhaps your caregivers proved themselves to be absent, unreliable, or even volatile and dangerous. Other lessons had to be learned to ensure survival. This doesn't change the fact that there is a tree still to be scaled, and good and healthy lessons to be learned.

These are the mountains, and this is the tree. I could go into detail to describe fruit I've harvested, and the summits I've climbed, and the views I've seen endeavoring for both. I don't think this would accomplish what I hope it would. This isn't really about me. All these words are an attempt to convey a few things I've learned and am learning still. This is actually about you, about all of us.

It is our duty and task to remember the summit and the lowlands, the fruit and the branches and boughs we traversed to reach them. These are the monuments of our lives that we can return to if only we remember them. These moments are a focal point. They are reminders of the fact that life, that existence is bigger than

our subjective experience of the world. It is more than “I”. Our remembrance can bring to our awareness the fact that God was there all along, and is here still.

All along the way to these grand summits and realizations are the moments of the everyday - the “mundane”. Every moment can be a time and place in which we remember that there is more to life than us as the subject of it. Within every moment we can find the footholds that will help us scale the mountain to a new encounter, or the branches to a new realization.

There are the jagged wastelands, and soured fruits hanging from broken tree limbs. These moments, they can be painful, present reminders of past loss, wrongdoings, and trauma. Although they can never be forgotten, with the help of the right professional, they can be transformed. They can loosen the hold they have on our lives. As you endeavor towards healing, you are moving closer to God, the restorer of our souls.

There is so much we have to offer, so much experience that we have been given, and to whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48). All that is really required is to share what we’ve learned, letting our lives speak for themselves. Our witness and our lives are the gift we give to the world as we remember. These moments are not for us alone. They are to bolster our spirits, enliven our inner courage and help us to be the people we’re meant to be in the world. This is all in order to shape our unique witness in the world. Our remembrance is what unearths the richness, the goodness that undergirds all that we’ve experienced. We only have to tolerate a bit of muck.

There are the mountains and there is the tree. The higher reaches of these that feel impossible now can be ascended in time, through effort, and with patience. There will be times where it feels as though the journey has reached its apex, and the lesson learned is the greatest you will find. It may feel like you’ve peaked, and that it's all downhill from here. Trust and know that there is more to taste and see. You may arrive, but never get there. The journey is lifelong, and as intimidating as that sounds, that’s actually the saving grace of it. It’s never too late to trek the heights of the mountain, or the tree, nor it is too late to remember how far you’ve come, and recall the sweetest lessons of your life. Keep ascending the mountains, journey through the lowlands. Scale the tree and gather the fruits that you can. Learn to love the views. Enjoy the journey for its own sake. You are not alone in it.

See the good in all of it, the opportunity. I pray that you see and know that God is with you in it all.