



**CURRENT NEWS ON ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS AND GLOBAL HEALTH**

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**May 7, 2020**

Hi,

Since we are, really, just several weeks or a couple of months into the COVID pandemic and we are yet to really know and understand it and its impact, there are many who have valiantly given themselves to protect and help others, sacrificing their waking hours and, ultimately, giving their lives in the service of others. The number of nurses, doctors and other hospital workers and all other essential workers who have succumbed to the virus remains unknown. But, we know it isn't insignificant. I've heard that 50 doctors in Italy died of COVID, along with physician assistants and radiology clerks in the USA. And then there's the related suicide of a top physician in New York, the death of the Whistleblower doctor in Wuhan, two hospital cleaners and a personal support worker in Toronto and even reportedly six taxi/limo drivers from Toronto's airport. I know in my gut there are many more around the world and I'm profoundly shaken by it all.

So, I went for a walk around my neighbourhood in Toronto, doing about the only thing I can do outside the house these days, and while thinking of these martyrs I took pictures of flowers to send to them and their families (see End Shots). Today we dedicate this issue to all of them who have sacrificed their lives for us and to all those, many more, in essential positions who have contracted the disease but have survived.

I also share with you today, at a time nurses are celebrated around the world, a just discovered poem by my mother, written 83 years ago a student nurse. She, too, almost paid the ultimate price in the care of others in her final working years in Surrey, BC, but was saved from a nursing home acquired infection with a then experimental antibiotic. Her words ring true today:

## **The Nurse**

The world grows better, year by year,  
Because some nurse in her little sphere  
Puts on her apron and grins and sings,  
But keeps on doing the same old things.

**Taking the temperatures, giving the pills,**

**To remedy mankind's numberless ills,**

**Feeding the baby, answering the bells**

**Being polite with a heart that rebels.**

Longing for home and all the while  
Wearing the same old professional smile;  
Blessing the new born babe's first breath  
Closing the eyes that are still in death.

**Taking the blame for the Doctor's mistakes,**

**Oh Dear: what a lot of patience it takes;**

**Going off duty at seven o'clock**

**Tired, discouraged and ready to drop.**

But called back on special at seven fifteen  
With woe in her heart, but it must not be seen,  
Morning and evening and noon and nite  
Just doing it over and hoping it's right.

**When we lay down our caps and cross the bar**

**Oh Lord, will you give us just one little star**

**To wear in our crowns, with our uniforms new**

**In that City of God, where that Head Nurse is you.**

Jose Zakus, written as a Probationer (trainee) at Holy Family Hospital, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada (1937)

Do read on in today's **Planetary Health Weekly** (#19 of 2020), full of information, to continue to learn and build resolve to tackle all these issues head on, without delay:

- Coronavirus updates, including:
  - The myth of the disease-spreading migrant,
  - Tips for engaging people on low-resource settings,
  - Access to scientific preprints,
  - Multi-language infographic fact sheets,
  - SARS-CoV-2 in Children and Adolescents,
  - Getting vaccines ready in India,
  - Counting therapeutic trials underway and planned,
  - More deaths than being counted,
  - Lack of recognition for public health workers,
  - Post-COVID-19 care challenges, and
  - Brazil the next hotspot? then...
- Rwandan volunteers fight malaria,
- Third environmental activist killed this year in Mexico,
- Virginia going carbon-free,
- Carbon emissions falling,
- Oil production significantly down,
- 2020 on course to be hottest year ever recorded,
- Yosemite National Park being reclaimed by nature,
- Road charging test for trucks successful in Sweden,
- Defunding the W.H.O. - It should be the opposite,
- Fish bouncing back,
- Now more proof - mercury killed Grassy Narrows, Ontario residents,
- Wet'suwet'en agreement with Government of Canada,
- Music as a tool in the fight for our climate,
- When religion is dangerous for your health,
- Linking Cesarean delivery with obesity and diabetes,
- The advantages of being tall,
- A newish book by Kathryn Yusoff - "A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None",
- Learning from emergency studies for COVID-19 school closures and new models of education, and finally
- END SHOTS in memorial.

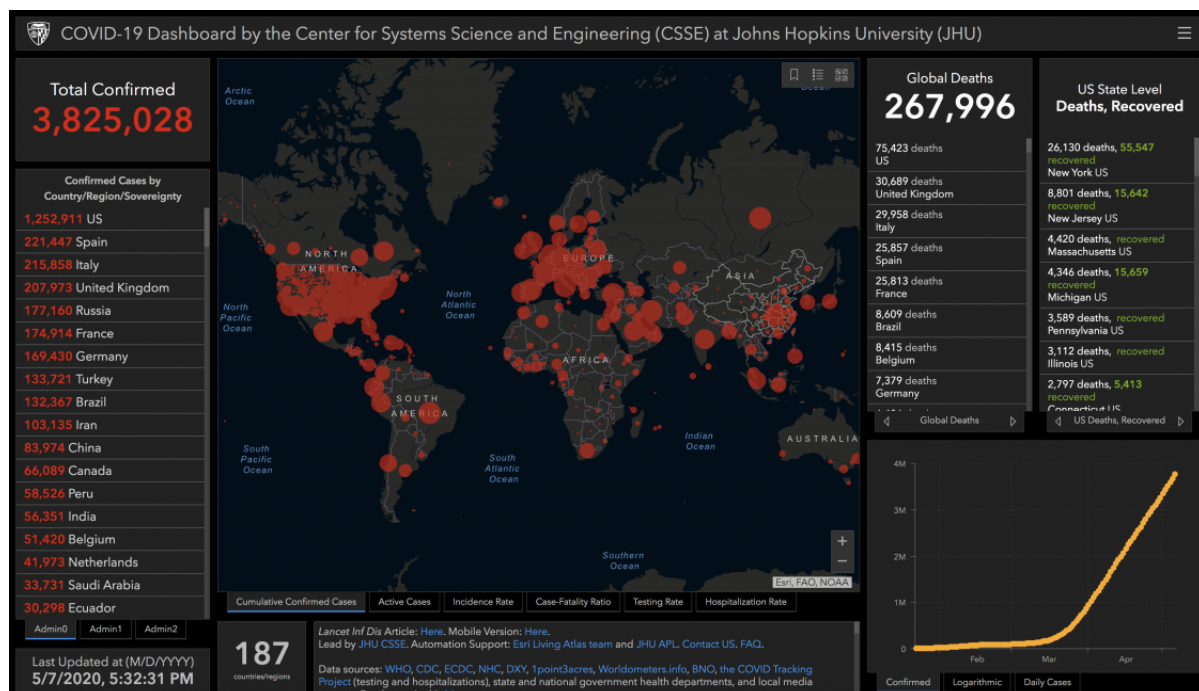
I hope you'll take a look.

Best, david

David Zakus, Editor and Publisher



## IN REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE FALLEN IN OUR SERVICE AND THOSE THEY'VE LEFT BEHIND



# SARS-CoV-2 & COVID-19 UPDATES



# The Myth Of The Disease-Spreading Migrant



Credit: Lourdes Medrano

The COVID-19 pandemic has renewed rhetoric on migrants as a public health threat. The science doesn't bear that out.

In a migrant shelter in Tijuana, Mexico (on the border with California close to San Diego) a municipal worker gathered children for a workshop while her colleagues, including two physicians, took their places at a long table in the centre of the room. They'd brought a box of medical supplies, including antibiotics, antihistamines and pain relievers. Soon, mothers started lining up for consultations. One 4-year-old boy who had been at the shelter for two months was experiencing an outbreak of hives. The doctors, suspecting an allergy to soap or laundry detergent, gave his worried mother medication to help with the symptoms. In Tijuana, respiratory illnesses, diarrhea, allergies, and skin rashes emerged as the most common afflictions among the more than 6,000 Central Americans who entered the city in late 2018. They didn't have the diseases that people thought they could have, like Zika, dengue and yellow fever.

What research does show is that migrant and refugee children often suffer from anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Read more: [at Undark](#)

**SEE ALSO:**

**At Google Document:** [Tips For Engaging People In Low-resource Settings Remotely And In-person](#)

**At Connect:** [COVID-19 SARS-CoV-2 Scientific Preprints From medRxiv And bioRxiv](#)

**See This Infographic In Many Languages at University Of Illinois, School Of Public Health:** [COVID-19 Fact Sheets For Local Health Departments](#)

**At JAMA Network:** [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 \(SARS-CoV-2\) Infection in Children and Adolescents - A Systematic Review](#)

**At Economic Times:** [Pune \(India\) Company Plans To Ready 20-40m Vaccine Shots For Launch By Sept-Oct](#)

**At Economic Times:** [72 COVID-19 Therapeutics Trials Underway, 211 In Planning Stages: FDA](#)

**At Futurism:** [COVID May Have Killed Way More Americans Than We Think](#)

**At University of Toronto:** [Even During The Coronavirus Pandemic, Public Health Workers' Role Is Unrecognized](#)

**At VOA News:** [WHO Adviser Asks US to Rethink Funding Suspension](#)

**At The Guardian:** [What If Covid-19 Isn't Our Biggest Threat?](#)

**At The New Yorker:** [The Challenges Of Post-COVID-19 Care](#)

**At Economic Times:** [Brazil Edges Toward Being Next Big Coronavirus Hotspot](#)

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## **In Rwanda, 'Human Bait' Volunteers Help Battle Malaria**



Credit: Melody Schreiber

As the late afternoon sun hovers over the horizon in the Rwandan village of Mareba, about an hour from the capital of Kigali, Innocent Bizimana prepares for the mosquitos to arrive. He settles onto a bench inside his neighbour's house, spreads a tarp beneath his bare feet, and rolls his pant legs above his knees. He arranges little glass vials, empty and clinking, on the tarp around him, along with tufts of cotton that will serve as stoppers. And then he waits for darkness.

Bizimana is one of 12 villagers who are paid about \$3 a night to serve as bait for mosquitoes, which they trap and transfer to technicians at a nearby entomology lab that serves the whole district of Bugesera, one of the [most malaria-prone regions](#) in Rwanda. Many of the mosquitoes carry *Plasmodium falciparum*, a species of malaria parasite capable of killing within 24 hours of the first sign of symptoms if not treated.

Bugesera's human bait volunteers are on the front line of malaria research in Rwanda, one of only four high-burden countries — along with India, Ethiopia and Pakistan — that managed to see a significant [decline](#) in malaria in 2017. All four relied on similar strategies, according to Ren Minghui of the World Health Organization, [writing](#) in the journal *Infectious Diseases of Poverty* last year: preventing the spread of malaria with bed nets and pesticides; rapidly testing and treating malaria cases; and “significantly” strengthening malaria surveillance.

Rwanda, along with a handful of other countries, has established a strong entomological surveillance program. Health officials don't just monitor the places where people become sickened with malaria; they keep track of the mosquitoes themselves. [Read More at Undark.](#)



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## Third Environmental Activist Killed This Year In Mexico



*Credit: AP Photo/Marco Ugarte*

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The U.N. human rights office in Mexico issued a statement Monday condemning the killing of an environmental activist in the violent Gulf coast state of Veracruz. The office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights said Adán Vez Lira was shot to death on April 8 while he rode his motorcycle in the township of Actopan.

Vez Lira was a longtime supporter and organizer at the La Mancha bird-watching reserve on the sparsely populated stretch of coast north of the Veracruz state capital. “Adán Vez Lira was a recognized environmental activists whose voice and leadership had played a notable role in several environmental defense causes in Actopan,” the office said. [Read More at AP News.](#)

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## Virginia Becomes The First Southern State With A Goal Of Carbon-Free Energy



Credit: Bob Brown/AP

The coronavirus is scrambling Virginia's budget and economy, but it didn't prevent Gov. Ralph Northam (D) from signing legislation that makes it the first Southern state with a goal of going carbon-free by 2045. Almost all the state's coal plants will have to shut down by the end of 2024 under the new law. Virginia is the first state in the old Confederacy to embrace such clean-energy targets. Under a separate measure, Virginia also becomes the most Southern state to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative — a carbon cap-and-trade market among states in the Northeast. [Read More at The Washington Post](#)

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## Carbon Emissions From Fossil Fuels Could Fall By 2.5bn Tonnes In 2020





Credit: National Geographic Image Collection/Alamy

Global carbon emissions from the fossil fuel industry could fall by a record 2.5bn tonnes this year, a reduction of 5%, as the [coronavirus](#) pandemic triggers the biggest drop in demand for fossil fuels on record. The unprecedented restrictions on travel, work and industry due to the coronavirus is expected [to cut billions of barrels of oil](#), trillions of cubic metres of gas and millions of tonnes of coal from the global energy system in 2020 alone, according to data commissioned by *The Guardian*.

This would lead to the fossil fuel industry's biggest drop in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on record, in a single year eclipsing the carbon slumps triggered by the largest recessions of the last 50 years combined. Climate experts expected global carbon emissions from fossil fuels and cement production to rise in 2020, from an estimated 36.8bn tonnes of carbon dioxide last year. Instead, [emissions may fall by about 5%, or 2.5bn tonnes](#) of CO<sub>2</sub>, to its lowest levels in about a decade. Dr. Fatih Birol, head of the International [Energy](#) Agency, has warned, however, against viewing the steep decline in emissions from fossil fuels as a climate triumph. [Read More at The Guardian](#).

#### See Also:

**At The Guardian:** [Major oil-producing nations agree historic 10% cut in output](#)

**At The National Observer:** [Oil and gas drilling forecast in Canada revised to 49 year low](#)

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## Meteorologists Say 2020 On Course To Be Hottest Year Since Records Began



Credit: Carlos L Vives/Alamy

This year is on course to be the world's hottest since measurements began, according to meteorologists, who estimate there is a 50% to 75% chance that 2020 will break the record set four years ago. Although the coronavirus lockdown has temporarily cleared the skies, it has done nothing to cool the climate, which needs deeper, longer-term measures, the scientists say.

Heat records have been broken from the Antarctic to Greenland since January, which has surprised many scientists because this is not an El Niño year, the phenomenon usually associated with high temperatures. The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [calculates there is a 75% chance](#) that 2020 will be the hottest year since measurements began. The U.S. agency said trends were closely tracking the current record of 2016, when temperatures soared early in the year due to an unusually intense El Niño and then came down.

The US agency said there was a 99.9% likelihood that 2020 will be one of the top five years for temperatures on record. A separate calculation by Gavin Schmidt, the director of the Nasa Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York, [found a 60% chance this year will set a record](#). [Read More at The Guardian](#).

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## GOOD NEWS

# Coyotes, Bobcats And Bears: Wildlife Is Reclaiming Yosemite National Park



Credit: Carolyn Cole/Los Angeles Times

Yosemite Village, California in Yosemite National Park is normally a crush of humanity and traffic congestion. Lately it has been peaceful like few times before — the only sounds coming from the wind and the few local residents. A young bobcat ambled by the nearly abandoned administrative buildings, while ravens prattled and danced in the empty parking lots, and coyotes trotted along the valley's empty roads and walkways.

Tourists aren't allowed in California's most popular national park, but if they could visit, they might feel as if they had been transported to another time. Either to a previous era, before millions of people started motoring into the valley every year, or to a possible future one, where the artifacts of civilization remain, with fewer humans in the mix. [On March 20](#), the national park was closed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus — leaving the 7.5-mile-long valley to only a skeleton crew of 100 to 200 park service employees and an unknown number of concessionaire workers.

April is typically a busy month in Yosemite with about 308,000, out of the almost 4.6 million tourists that visited the valley in 2019. But on this spring day, the air was crystal clear — not a hint of diesel or exhaust tainted the sweet, spring breeze. And the valley was nearly silent, except for the rushing waters of the Merced River and the wind blowing through the ponderosa pines. [Read More at Los Angeles Times.](#)

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## MORE GOOD NEWS

# World First In Road Charging Test For Trucks Successful, Highway Speeds Next



Credits: Green Car Reports

Initial tests of in-road charging for electric trucks on a stretch of Swedish road have been successful, according to project managers. The scope of testing will now increase, encompassing more vehicles, additional stretches of road and higher speeds. The project, dubbed "Smartroad Gotland" got underway in November 2019 with the installation of inductive charging equipment on a stretch of road between an airport and the town of Visby, on the Swedish island of Gotland. The charging system consists of rubber-wrapped copper coils buried a little more than 3 inches deep, connected to the grid. Vehicles are equipped with receivers that allow them to draw current.

Sourced from Israeli firm ElecReon, the system is designed to be scalable. Coils can be embedded in longer stretches of road if needed, and vehicles can be equipped with multiple receivers (the truck used for testing had five of them). Testing took place over a week and a half in winter conditions, with snow and rain. The truck was able to charge both while stationary and while driving over a 164-foot section of road at speeds up to 18 mph. The system was able to charge the truck at a rate of 45 kilowatts. [Read More at Green Car Reports.](#)

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## OPINION

# Donald Trump Wants To Defund The W.H.O. - The World Should Do The Opposite



Credit: PETE MAROVICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Donald Trump is often wrong, but sometimes he's just a little bit right. And when it comes to the World Health Organization, there are some morsels of truth in the U.S. President's heaping bowl of error. Unfortunately, his preferred solution leans entirely on what he gets wrong. All multinational organizations are to some extent liable to pressure from the states that fund them. The WHO does not appear to be entirely exempt from this reality. And by cutting off American funding (~20%), the U.S. President is unwittingly proving the point. He thinks the WHO has a problem: that it's been insufficiently independent of China. He is not the first person to have suggested this, though by his actions, he's trying to make the problem worse. Earlier this year, the WHO was slow to warn the world about the nature of, and appropriate response to, the emerging COVID-19 situation. Much of that was due to Beijing being less than truthful with foreign health officials. (Or with its own people: Early in the outbreak, Beijing arrested Chinese doctors who raised the alarm.)

The WHO can't be blamed for how Beijing rolls. A certain degree of skepticism about any and all official Chinese government data doesn't prove you're a conspiracy theorist. It proves that you're awake. But aside from being a victim of information



suppression, the WHO may also have been reluctant to offend one of the world's superpowers. That's an institutional hazard of multilateral organizations, and a truth about human relations as old as time: People paying the piper tend to act like they should be calling the tune. Absent safeguards of musical independence, pipers are always at risk of having sheet music forced on them by those signing their paycheques. [Read More at The Globe And Mail.](#)

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## SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY

# With Boats Stuck In Harbour Because of COVID-19, Will Fish Bounce Back?



Source: SMITHSONIANMAG/ Menhaden fishing (NOAA)

The commercial fishing industry has hit rough seas. In Croatia, fishing boats bob listlessly at the docks while 80% of the country's whitefish remains unsold. In France, safety rules designed to stop the spread of COVID-19, coupled with reduced demand because of unemployment and closed restaurants, have forced fleets to stay in port. Border closings prevent Greek fishermen from getting their fish to market. Satellite data and observations indicate activity is down as much as 80% in China and West Africa.

“The demand for fresh fish as well as the selling prices have collapsed,” the Mediterranean Advisory Council, a European NGO that advises on fisheries. Even where there is demand, such as for canned tuna in the U.S., travel constraints on crews, supplies and equipment keep the boats in the dock. “And some ports where the boats would offload or transship fish are simply closed to them,” says Bill Gibbons-Fly, with the American Tunaboat Association. A global slowdown of the commercial fishing industry is bad news for anyone who makes their livelihood from the sea, and fishermen will no doubt suffer. However, for the world’s beleaguered fish populations—and the scientists trying to revive them—this unplanned fishing pause presents a research opportunity, one that could demonstrate a better, more sustainable way to manage the oceans in the post-COVID-19 era. [Read More at Smithsonian Magazine](#)

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## SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS

### Mercury Levels Higher In Grassy Narrows Residents Who Died Young, New Study Finds



Credit: Toronto Star

The people of Grassy Narrows First Nation, in NW Ontario have long faced doubts that the industrial mercury dumped upstream years ago made them sick. Despite their tremors, slurred speech, impaired hearing, tunnel vision and lost muscle co-



ordination, doctors and governments have been reluctant to acknowledge the symptoms were caused by the neurotoxin. Now, Chief Rudy Turtle says, they have the kind of evidence that skeptics will find tough to ignore.

The new study published in the journal *Lancet Planetary Health* concludes that Grassy Narrows residents who prematurely died before the age of 60 had five times more mercury in their body over the years they were studied, compared to those who lived to be older than 60. “This confirms what we have long known in our hearts. Mercury has taken our loved ones from us long before their time,” Turtle said. The key evidence had been there all along, sitting in a government database since the late 1990s. [Read More at The Star.](#)

**See Also at the National Observer:** [Wet'suwet'en Agree To Deal With Government Over Coastal Gaslink Pipeline](#)

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**Credit: George Monbiot**

## Quote Of The Week

**“One of the rather alarming revelations I had last year was that climate breakdown, and I call it 'climate breakdown' because calling it climate change is like calling an invading army 'unexpected visitors' — is such a ridiculously neutral and passive term for the existential crisis we face. Climate change is only the third most urgent environmental issue that we confront. This is not because it's become any less urgent, far from it, but because I realized that two other issues are happening with even greater speed and force than climate**

breakdown is happening. Those are the ecological cleansing of both the land and the sea by the food industry – the extraordinarily rapid destruction of whole ecosystems, of the species that inhabit those ecosystems, of the ecological structure and function of those places, and also, often, of the very physical resources upon which both ecosystems and human survival are based.”

George Monbiot, from a December 2019 lecture at Falmouth University, U.K.

**GEORGE MONBIOT (MON-bee-oh)** is a British writer known for his environmental and political activism. He writes a weekly column for *The Guardian*, and is the author of a number of books, including *Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain* (2000), *Feral: Searching for Enchantment on the Frontiers of Rewilding* (2013) and *Out of the Wreckage: A New Politics in the Age of Crisis* (2017). He is the founder of The Land is Ours, a campaign for the right of access to the countryside and its resources in the United Kingdom. His "political awakening" was prompted by reading Bettina Ehrlich's book, *Paolo and Panetto*, while at his prep school.

See more at Wild Culture: [Shoveling Out The Dregs Of Neoliberalism: A Crash Course by George Monbiot](#)

See video of the lecture at Wild Culture: [How To Really Take Back Control](#)

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## Upcoming Events

- May 21st - 23rd: [Indigenous Health Conference: Building Our Future](#) (Niagara Falls, Canada) - Postponed
- June 16th - 18th: [Cities In A Changing World: Questions Of Culture, Climate And Design](#) (Virtual/ New York, USA)
- November 9th-19th: [2020 UN Climate Change Conference](#) (UNFCCC COP26) (Glasgow, Scotland) - Postponed for one year!

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**FYI#1 SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA:**

# Music Is A Powerful Tool In The Fight For Our Climate



Music is powerful. We are deeply impacted by the music we listen to. It can influence our moods and shape our behaviours. This is especially true for younger kids and teenagers. My grandchildren can sing every word to their favourite tunes. They pay attention to the music around them.

This post includes a collection of five musicians who are taking on the climate crisis. It is sourced from the Climate Reality blog. Though this list is far from exhaustive, these are some of Climate Reality's top musicians discussing climate today. Across generations and genres, musicians worldwide increasingly recognize the threat of climate change and are expressing themselves as they know best: through their music.

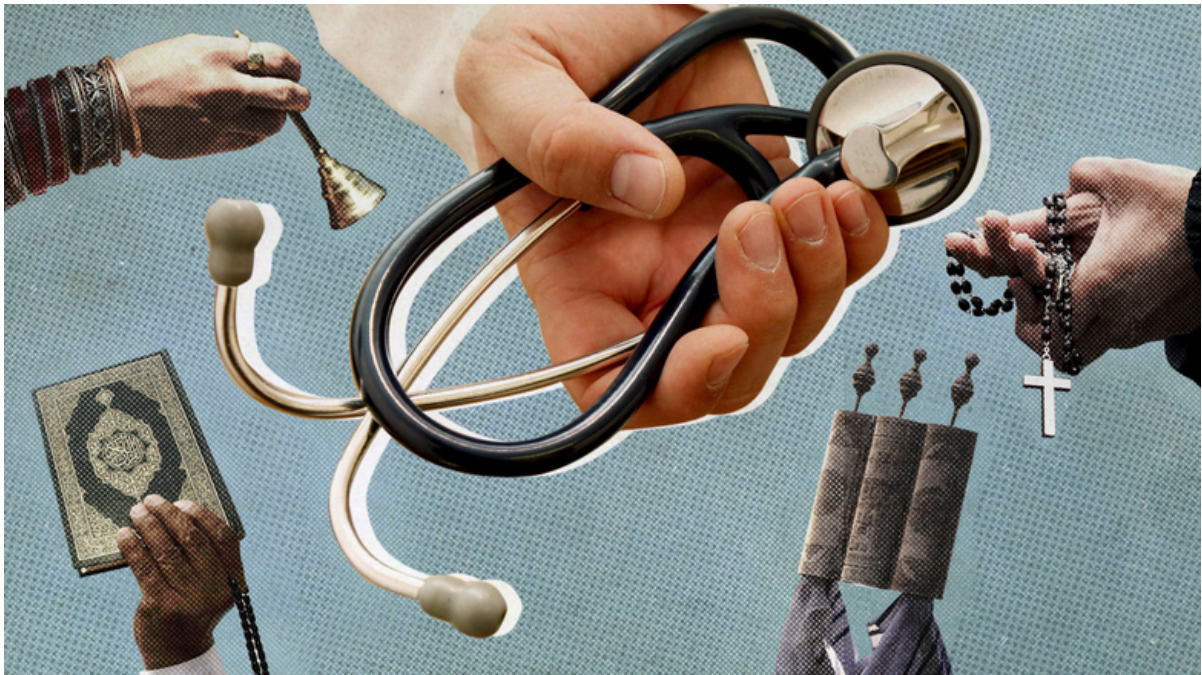
Watch at Below2c

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**FYI #2**

## When Religion Is Dangerous For Your Health





Credit: CNN

The coronavirus pandemic has brought out the best and worst aspects of religion.

Faith has inspired countless acts of generosity and goodwill while helping believers get through an extraordinarily scary and difficult times. But some believers, from Christians to Hasidic Jews, have flouted social-distancing guidelines, insisting that God will protect their congregation. And as in previous pandemics, some have gone looking for scapegoats to explain why God would allow such immense suffering. Jeff Levin, an epidemiologist and observant Jew who comes from a long line of esteemed rabbis, has studied -- and lived at -- the intersection of medicine and religion for decades. The Baylor University professor's new book, *"Religion and Medicine: A History of the Encounter Between Humanity's Two Greatest Institutions,"* is a comprehensive and fascinating look at the complex relationship between spirituality and healing.

CNN recently spoke to Levin about how religion can both heal and harm, and how we're seeing both aspects play out during the pandemic. CNN: The way you write about the relationship between religion and medicine -- how close they were at first and how far apart they seem now -- made me think of a bitter divorce.

Levin: That's a really good analogy. You can't really tell the history of medicine without the history of religion and vice versa. Concerns about the healing of people go back to the origins of religion, and religions have been involved in the training of healers of both body and mind. As this relationship has evolved, we've seen the good, the bad and the ugly...Faith is a positive force when it motivates people to think outside of themselves and be of service. When it makes people strike out at others and look for demons to blame, it's doing a great disservice. Honestly, we have seen both (lately).

There are terrible messages from the pulpit warning about Chinese immigrants and, on the other side, some people are acting incredibly compassionately and ethically.

[Read more at CNN](#)

### FYI #3

## Association Of Birth By Cesarean Delivery With Obesity And Type 2 Diabetes Among Adult Women



Credit: Getty Images

This prospective cohort study compared the incidence of obesity and Type 2 diabetes between birth by cesarean delivery and vaginal delivery among 33,226 women participating in the Nurses' Health Study II who were born between 1946 and 1964, with follow-up through the end of the 2013-2015. Participants' mothers provided information on mode of delivery and pregnancy characteristics. Participants provided information every two years on weight and diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes.

Main Outcomes and Measures Risk of obesity and incidence of type 2 diabetes.

At baseline, the participants' mean (SD) age was 33.8 (4.6) years (range, 24.0-44.0 years). A total of 1089 of the 33,226 participants (3.3%) were born by cesarean delivery. After 1,913,978 person-years of follow-up, 12,156 (36.6%) women were obese and 2014 (6.1%) had received a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes. Women born by cesarean delivery were more likely to be classified as obese and to have received a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes during follow-up. These associations persisted when analyses were restricted to women at low risk of cesarean delivery based on maternal characteristics. This study suggests that women born by cesarean delivery may have a higher risk than women born by vaginal delivery of being obese and developing Type 2 diabetes during adult life.

[Read more at JAMA Network](#)

#### FYI #4

## There Are Real Advantages To Being Tall, And It Can't Just Be Explained By Personality





Height is associated with many advantages in life. Taller people tend to earn more and are more popular on online dating sites. Economists have long speculated what makes tall people more successful. One common explanation was tall people had better social skills that came from being a popular, attractive teenager. A positive adolescence was presumed to increase self-confidence and with it the keys to a successful life. True, economists are not known for their social skills themselves and most are relatively successful, but the tall-people-are-more-affable theory seemed like a plausible explanation for their higher earnings. But a new working paper from economists at the University of Toronto and Notre Dame takes a harder look at height, earnings, and social unease and it argues it's cognitive skills that can explain the pay gap—not a good personality.

The relationship between height and earnings is non-linear for American men. Being an inch shorter than average correlates with annual earnings of about 5% lower. But being an inch taller than average does not have much impact (though men who are about 4 or more inches taller than average earn slightly more. There are not many gains to being tall, but there is a clear penalty to shortness. The shorter men are, relative to average, the less they earn. Men more than 20% shorter than average (66 inches or less) earn at least 10% less. Short women also earn less, but they face smaller wage penalties, about half the magnitude of short men men. But tall women do out-earn their peers. Each extra inch of female height adds about 1% more in earnings.

[Read more at QZ](#)

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## **SPRING READING**

# **A Billion Black Anthropocenes Or None**



**Credit: 'America the Beautiful,' 1968. David Hammons**

Kathryn Yusoff, a professor at the University of London, uses the construct of the Anthropocene to frame her critique of colonialism and slavery in service to capital accumulation. In *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (2019), published on-demand by the University of Minnesota Press, its small pages packed with academic prose, she writes, "The solutions and the proposals are all about the continuance of the current stain of inequality, powered by other means in a future that continues to privilege the privileged. The Anthropocene is the white man's over-burden."

She makes the argument that until the global North stops oppressing the global South, in the historic and present binary of a white bourgeoisie subjugating black and brown people in order to extract an economic surplus, there can be no profound healing of the ills that plague the planet. She suggests a response to the climate crisis, more subtly phrased than 'civilizational reboot', but with a similar impulse, when she

chides her readers “to think about encountering the coming storm in ways that do not facilitate its permanent renewal”. Artfully couched, her words barely conceal the radicalism required by their premise.

A response to a problematic framed by millennia can usefully be built around the armature of the Anthropocene, which demarks the onset of a planetary epoch characterized by human production, rather than the cyclical, deep time, geological impacts that have hitherto served to delineate them. The new construct demands an investigation into its ideological underpinnings. Yusoff establishes a baseline of enquiry by suggesting that, “The Earth is massively geo-engineered, which may be what the word Anthropocene actually means.” She points out that the European program of geologic appropriation, initially and most egregiously exercised in the Americas, was achieved by the enslavement of Africans and indigenous peoples. Slavery, she writes, “...weaponized the redistribution of energy around the globe through the flesh of black bodies”. It is those bodies that “began the work of the accumulations and which have now coalesced as the Anthropocene as an expression of geotrauma.”

She further argues that the coal mined in Britain during the nineteenth century and used to fuel that country’s industrial revolution, often cited as the proximate cause of anthropogenic global warming, was mined by men inured to their task by the pre-eminent colonial drug crop of sugar, first harvested by slave labor starting in Madeira in the middle of the fifteenth century, and later in the Americas. Tea and tobacco, produced by black and brown field workers in conditions that varied from slavery to serfdom, are similarly implicated in the bio-chemical support of the drudgery endured by Britain’s industrial working class, and thus in the creation of deleterious climate impacts. But she notes that, “While Blackness is the energy and flesh of the Anthropocene, it is excluded from the wealth of its accumulation. Rather Blackness must absorb the excess of that surplus as toxicity, pollution, and the intensification of the storm. Again, and again.”

[See More Of This Essay And Review At Wild Culture](#)

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## FYI#6: SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION

# COVID-19 And School Closures: What



# Can Countries Learn From Past Emergencies?



Credit: solarseven/Depositphotos

In recent decades, crisis has disrupted education in individual countries or regions mainly due to natural disasters, armed conflict, or occasionally epidemics. For example, the 2010 floods in Pakistan that washed away homes and crops in one-fifth of the country affected 20 million people, many of them children and youth. Schools across the affected region were closed and converted into temporary shelters for communities. In the Middle East, at least 2.8 million Syrian children have been out of school for some period during the last decade, and 5 million children were out of school in the Ebola epidemic that spread across West Africa starting in 2013.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads around the world school systems are shutting their doors. To date, the education community has largely focused on the different strategies to continue schooling, including lively discussions on the role of education technology versus distribution of printed paper packets. But there has been relatively little discussion about how to take advantage of the know-how and good practice developed from years of work in the humanitarian and global development sectors.

Over the course of my career, I have had the privilege of helping to translate the disparate actions and approaches of teachers and program leaders on the ground into an established field of theory and practice on education in emergencies. Today,

although the world has never seen a crisis quite like this, the field of education in emergencies has much insight to offer school systems around the globe.

**See Also:**

**At The Brookings (Institute):** [COVID-19 has thrust universities into online learning—how should they adapt?](#)

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**At The Telangana Today:** [Half Of World's Locked-Down Pupils Lack Computer: United Nations](#)

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## END SHOTS

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**IN REMEMBRANCE AND WITH GREAT RESPECT  
TO ALL THOSE FALLEN IN THE SERVICE OF THOSE WITH COVID-19  
AND PROVIDING ESSENTIAL SERVICES**

**SWANSEA, TORONTO WALKABOUT - MAY 2, 2020**

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Credits: David Zakus



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