
Cedars

Fall 2021

Cedars, Fall 2021

Cedarville University

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Recommended Citation

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CEDARS

Cedarville University Student Magazine

Fall 2021

MATT PAPA

Papa Uses His Talents
to Pour into Cedarville
Students

ALSO FEATURING

AARON COOK

TATTOOS & CHRISTIANITY

A TALE OF TWO REFUGEES



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Cover Design – Lydia Paris

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hey Cedarville!

Thank you so much for picking up our first magazine of the year. The other editors and I have worked so hard on this and hope it finds you well amidst a busy semester.

Cedars has been a source of great growth for me in my 3.5 years at Cedarville University. First semester freshman year I walked into a Cedars interest meeting in the old journalism lab right outside the chapel, where I decided to write for the sports section which would end up being the career I pursue. Most of you won't know what I'm talking about - where that lab once stood is now extra chapel seating.

Kind of sad, isn't it? The place where my love for sports journalism started doesn't even exist anymore. But just as that room is not where my career is found, my career is not where my identity is found. In fact, that room was replaced by the place that has helped me learn just that. I'm graduating 29 days after this magazine is published, and I have no idea what to do with my life from the world's perspective, but in an entirely different sense, I know exactly what I want to do.

I want the grace upon grace that flows so deeply through me to be evident to everyone around me. I want them to ask and know that Jesus saved me and He changed me. That He came down to earth, lived a perfect life, took the weight of our sins and died on the cross, rose again three days later and ascended into heaven. I want to be in a local church, trudging through life arm in arm with other believers as we fight to be children of light. I want to counsel and disciple as so many at Cedarville have done for me.

So thank you Cedarville, for Cedars, for Rinnova cubans, for godly mentors and bosses like Charlotte Burcham, for Printy and Willetts and janky houses off campus, for Lexi and Joe and Niko and so many others who have walked alongside me and made me more like Jesus, for chapel where I felt closer to heaven than ever, for Dr. Kimble's theology class, for tennis and spikeball and rock climbing and volleyball. Thank you for making me love Jesus more.

I know these are the days I'll remember forever, but I also know the Lord is faithful to continue to draw me near to Him in the days ahead.

I pray this magazine encourages your heart and makes you smile. I pray it gets you excited about Cedarville and all the Lord is doing here. Enjoy this place and these people, but know they aren't your hope or your identity. When your journalism lab gets torn down, replace it with a chapel.

Abigail Hintz



Abigail Hintz
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GRILL RECIPES

Students have Unique Recipes for the Grill in the Chuck's Dining Hall

by Kristina Birt

Rice Crispy Treats

by Kyrstin Stadel

Supplies:

- Aluminum Foil from Sub Line (optional)
- A Spoonful of Butter from Power Bar or Breakfast Bar
- A bowl of Marshmallows from Breakfast Bar
- A bowl of Cereal of your choice

Steps:

1. Take the foil and fold up the edges to make a 'boat' shape.
2. Melt some of the butter in the foil on the grill. Spread the butter all over the inside of the foil to help prevent sticking.
3. Add marshmallows into the foil.
4. Mix until the marshmallows are completely melted.
5. Pour the marshmallows over the cereal.
6. Put some butter on a spoon and mix the marshmallows and the cereal together.

The Mish-Mash

by Seth Eroshevich

Supplies:

- Chicken from Habanero or Bourbon Chicken from Home Cooking
- Brown Rice from Habanero or the Grill
- Mushrooms, carrot slices, and green pepper. Can also include spinach, cheese, broccoli.
- Egg from the Grill
- Sausage from the Grill
- Cooking Oil
- Soy sauce
- Salt
- Pepper
- Teriyaki sauce

Steps:

1. Put cooking oil on the grill.
2. Add rice and chicken.
3. Pour egg over the rice and chicken.
4. Add vegetables and mix.
5. Add desired seasoning, including soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, and pepper. Salt can be added for taste.
6. Continue mixing until the eggs and vegetables are thoroughly cooked.

Fried Rice

by Deborah Raczynski

Supplies:

- Oil from the Grill
- Vegetables (can include: onions, peppers, edamame, broccoli, spinach) from Salad Bar or from the Grill
- Rice from Habanero or the Grill
- Chicken from Power Bar
- Water from the Grill
- Eggs from the Grill
- Garlic from the Grill
- Salt
- Pepper
- Teriyaki Sauce from the Grill

Steps:

1. Pour cooking oil on the grill.
2. Add vegetables and season with salt and garlic.
3. Shred chicken from Power Bar while cooking the vegetables, making sure to stir them every few minutes.
4. Add water on top to steam the broccoli.
5. Add ginger and other seasonings.
6. Add spinach and rice, mixing it with the vegetables.
7. Add oil to the side and pour eggs over, making sure to season with salt and pepper. Scramble eggs.
8. Add teriyaki sauce to the main mix of rice, chicken, and vegetables.
9. Mix the cooked eggs with the rice mixture.
10. Add cheese and cook until it melts.

Check out our Instagram page to see the editors try these recipes!

JUST SAYIN'

On New, Nomadic Roots

It started because of COVID, for me. The polite kick-out we received in March 2020 sent everyone into a frenzy as we tried to figure out plane tickets and carpooling partners. Where would we go? For how long? What was happening?

I answered these questions from my then-boyfriend's basement in Cincinnati, a suitcase of clothes and textbooks (and a cardboard box of my plants) the only company I could bring from my dorm.

Four days later, I continued answering those questions from my friend Dean's house near Columbus, grocery shopping with his mother while reassuring my own that Dean's house was a safe place for me to weather out the pandemic-crazy. I still remember the clincher about his parents: Gary has guns and Jamie will force-feed me pasta before I go hungry. I'm in as good a spot as I can be. I stayed there for three weeks.

I'd slept in odd places before COVID: a peach-colored couch in Upland, Indiana; a rogue queen mattress (without sheets) in Peotone, Illinois; a camping cot, set up as a guest bed, in an Oskaloosa, Iowa, nursery; a pull-out couch at The Wisconsin Dells; a damp sleeping bag off the coast of Lake Michigan. These pit-stops always seemed to be conscious choices, though. Visits to friends and vacations to waterparks and nights under the stars were calculated hiatuses. I could leave whenever I wanted. Home was a known place, a definitive foundation.

Dean's house was different. I had to learn how to use a new washer and dryer because I'd run out of underwear. I made the bed every morning because though claiming it for weeks, it still wasn't mine. Very little was mine. I'd been evicted from my dorm room. My parents didn't want me home if I was sick. Our plan was

to find me a hotel room if I got the Rona (still not mine). I had few places to go, entirely dependent on the hospitality of others.

The world isn't as fretful as it was in March. People are allowed back in the dorms. I'm not suspicious when my friends sniffle. My parents would welcome me home whether I was yakking or coughing or feverish. I have a consistent, predictable place to sleep. And yet as I return to my apartment each night, I'm struck by how temporary it still feels—year-long leases, holiday breaks when the village vacates, weekends where my peers sleep in cars and brush their teeth in gas stations. We are untethered, ever-moving, the generation yet to be bound.

I talk about it with my friends often. We'll congregate around the couch that came with our fully furnished apartment (thanks Rob) and talk about how odd it feels to go home. Our bedrooms are being turned into offices and grandkid play-rooms. When we come back, there may be a mattress for us, but not the same space—physical or social—that was there when we left.

But this also isn't a manifesto against empty-nesters moving on. Mine is also the generation that forgoes family Thanksgiving for a road trip to Daytona Beach. Everyone is adapting.

We feel it when we stop moving. When the road trips and camping weekends are over, when RA's remind dorm-goers that they must be moved out by 3 pm, when our closets at home are filled with boxes that are not ours—we are facing the transition.

Home is more than the place we are welcome; my friends share more meals with me than my parents; my professors have been the ones offering advice and wisdom; I forgot to

tell my dad that I was dating someone new; I buy shampoo and pay for it myself.

Let no parent read this and, in a rage, lament my critique of parents boxing children out of their homes. It is time for us to be boxed out, to endure the scraped knees and credit card bills of adulthood. We need calluses.

I was walking with my mom over fall break, pushing my niece in her stroller, wiping select tears from my cheeks as I teased this concept out. I love her. I love my stepdad. I love that I know my hometown without Google maps. But I'd also stood in my childhood shower the night before, the same height and weight as I've been since eighth grade, convinced I'd outgrown it.

It's terrifying and exciting, sobering and exhilarating. We have the opportunity to build something new.

Might I encourage the college nomad, shifting between couches and bunkbeds and hotels and tents: taste the discomfort. Go home, sleep in the room that feels once-yours, and use the time it takes to fall asleep to dream of what you might build, where you might go.

Invite boyfriends and classmates over for Thanksgiving. Go somewhere new for spring break. We can build something new and still cherish our roots. They have earned our homage. Let's tend to them as we also strive to put down our own.

Graphics—Caroline King

CHRISTIAN'S AND HORROR

How Should Christians Handle Horror?

By Sam Acosta

As believers, discernment in entertainment can be a daunting task, with the seemingly endless amounts of music, shows and movies to filter through and pick from. It's an important task, however, as Phillipians 4:8 instructs us to be careful about what we dwell on and let into our minds.

Right off the bat, there are some fairly obvious rejects, such as the "Fifty Shades of Grey" series. Other properties are more controversial: some Christians refuse to watch "Harry Potter" due to its presentation of witchcraft. Nonetheless, these blacklists are typically very specific, aimed at particular franchises.

There is, however, an entire genre most Christians seem to reject regardless of the franchise: horror. This genre has found itself in a rather odd predicament within the Christian community, as it has gone largely unexplored. For many years, avoidance was a viable approach, as most of these movies were smaller, niche productions.

That isn't the case today, as horror has become incredibly popular over the last few decades. In 2021, so far, horror has comprised nearly 18 percent of the movie market share, compared to 3 percent of the market

share in 1995. Horror can no longer be ignored or pushed aside. Christians can no longer ignore the growing genre of horror; rather, they need to determine how to engage with it, whether to support or combat it.

To understand this issue better, I turned to an expert in the subject: Dr. Mark Eckel. Dr. Eckel is a man well versed in both literature and theology. He holds a Doctorate in Social Science from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Master of Theology in Old Testament from Grace Theological Seminary, and a Master of Arts in English from IUPUI.

Before taking on his current position at IUPUI, he taught at Moody Bible Institute and Crossroad Bible College. He also is currently the president of The Comenius Institute, a Christian education program in Indianapolis. For years, he has studied the connection between the Christian faith and horror, writing frequently on the subject.

From the start, what Dr. Eckel had to say was rather surprising, as it contradicted nearly everything most young Christians grow up believing. "The horror genre is the closest movie genre to the Christian worldview" he explained. "Every horror movie... has a supernatural world to which we must give an account. Second, every horror movie identifies an evil that must be overcome."

He went on to explain that horror movies can be amazing evangelistic tools. Atheists typically don't believe in a supernatural world, yet they compose a majority of the horror fan base. Discussions about horror movies must almost always address issues like the origins of evil and the existence of the supernatural, issues a biblical worldview speaks to directly.



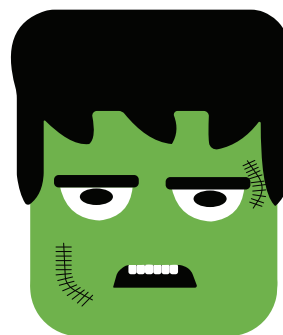
ly.

Dr. Eckel explains, "A Christian's responsibility in evangelism is only to cast the seed, sometimes to water or fertilize the seed, but we are not in charge of bringing the seed to fruition. In our culture, with so much adversarial verbiage thrown about, it is best simply to ask questions."

Dr. Eckel also noted how horror, especially gothic horror such as "Frankenstein," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" or "The Picture of Dorian Grey," teach us about the depravity of man, that, in reality, we ourselves are monsters due to our sin nature. That is the very point of most of the classic horror stories.

The whole point of "Frankenstein" is that Dr. Frankenstein, not his created "monster," is the truly evil one. "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" demonstrates man's capability for evil while "The Picture of Dorian Grey" shows us how we can become monsters even if we are only seeking our own happiness.

Christians who are wary of horror often point to verses like Ephesians 4:27: "give no opportunity to the devil." The worry is that horror opens us



up to evil and leads us astray. Yet Dr. Eckel argued that the reality of evil is something every believer must grapple with.

"My concern for the Christian is that you understand that this reality exists, and you can't simply bypass it as if to say it doesn't exist and it's not important," said Dr. Eckel.

I asked him if we needed to be careful to keep a balance between the light and darkness in what we choose to watch. He corrected me almost immediately, telling me not to use the word "balance." Rather, he argued, there is tension between light and darkness; as soon as you turn on a light, the dark immediately vanishes. Light always wins.

In the same way, God always conquers evil, and evil can never truly win. We know that because God tells us so in His Word. That idea makes horror even more of a potential evangelistic tool because the light of our worldview will only shine brighter in dark places, as Paul tells us in Phillipians 2:15.

Case in point, the Hayes brothers, the writers of the first two "Conjuring" movies and both followers of Jesus, said in an interview, "What we've tried to do is create films with redemption. They have happy endings. There's no sex. There's no violence. There's no swearing. It's rated R because it's a very scary story that happened to real people. This movie is not about glorifying evil, but it's about the triumph of good over evil".

This philosophy of framing horror stories as desperate struggles between good and evil has become more prevalent in recent years. Personally, I avoided horror movies for years, but then I took Dr. Eckel's course on Gothic Horror Literature in high school. His class pushed me to explore the genre more, and I have found some incredible films that tell not only amazing stories but also demonstrate valuable moral lessons and give nuanced commentary.

Films such as "Get Out," "The First Purge" and "Upgrade" are films in this genre that surprised me with what they had to say about human nature, morality and society. As Christians, watching such films can help us not only understand the culture we are witnessing to but also better understand ourselves and our need for Christ.

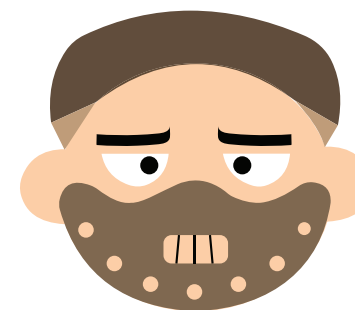
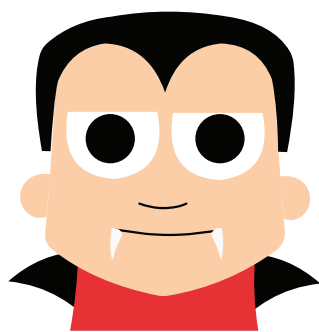
Dr. Eckel recognizes that some horror filmmakers take it too far, condemning certain types of horror movies for being gratuitous. He pointed to the "Saw" films as examples of violence for violence's sake. While he believes that violence can be an important part of telling a story or conveying a message, it becomes gratuitous without that distinct purpose.

In the end, Dr. Eckel recognizes that horror isn't for everyone. His argument isn't that everyone should become horror fans overnight but that Christians should recognize opportunities for evangelism, artistic expression and the furtherance of the

Kingdom that horror films present.

And if there are Christians who are drawn to this genre, they should have the support of the Christian community rather than feeling pushed to the fringes. As Dr. Eckel put it, "Everybody's got their opportunities that they have to invest in the lives of other people, and this is just one arena."

Sam Acosta is a Junior Theatre Comprehensive Major and an A&E writer for Cedars. He likes spending his time watching movies, drinking Dr. Pepper and writing plays.



Graphics—Caroline King

THE SPIKE OF COVID-19

By Anna Harman

Since March 2020 with COVID-19, Cedarville students were ready to get back to normal on campus this semester.

For the first week on campus, all students attended chapel and classes without COVID-19 protocols set in place. Then on August 24th, 2021, Cedarville announced that masks were once again strongly encouraged in all indoor public spaces. Chapel would not meet, students who tested positive for COVID-19 would have to isolate themselves at home and outdoor activities were encouraged whenever possible.

These changes were disappointing to many students because they got used to normal chapel meetings and classes without masks. Now, after barely a week of normalcy, they were going back to the COVID-19 protocol temporarily.

The amount of COVID-19 cases spiked in a short period. According to University Medical Services, UMS, around 575 students tested positive for COVID-19 overall. The spike hit its climax on August 30th, with the number of cases on campus reaching 426 at one time.

The director of UMS, Rhonda Evans, played a crucial role in how UMS decided to administer COVID-19 tests quickly and efficiently to students.

"God woke me up at 2 a.m. with a plan," said Evans. "I got up and hurriedly wrote down details that were streaming into my head and even drew out a plan of the rooms and where everyone would be stationed. The next morning I presented the plan to the UMS team that we were going to reschedule all appointments that could be postponed, and we were going to operate as a mass testing clinic."

Between 20 to 30 tests were administered per hour once this plan was in motion.

"If the university had not been so well set up from the prior year with automated tracking sheets and messaging, there's no way we would have been able to manage the outbreak as smoothly and as quickly," added Evans.

Due to the overwhelming amount of positive cases, quarantine housing became an issue. Faith Hall was filling quickly, and the university had to open up an additional isolation space for students who tested positive. If at all possible, students were encouraged to go home if they

had been exposed to the virus so beds were available on campus for people who could not go home.

"I was excited to have a 'normal' college experience and loved that many restrictions were lifted. I was looking forward to meeting new people, and it was very nice to not have to sit every other seat from people in class," said sophomore Jy Klein. "When the cases started to rise, I was extremely nervous and fearful that we would get sent home quickly. But by the grace of God, they were able to come up with more housing, and the cases eventually started to dwindle."

As of October 1, cases have dropped down to three people isolating off campus, a significant drop since that last week of August when cases were at their peak on campus.

It was important that the university acted quickly and made the most sensible decision for the health and safety of both students and faculty, no matter how disappointing it was to be restricted by COVID-19 protocols once again.

UMS highly recommends students get vaccinated. Even with breakthrough cases, vaccinated people are not being hospitalized nearly as often as non-vaccinated people. UMS also encourages keeping close contact groups as small as possible.

Students, remember to thank UMS, the food services, the residence life staff, faculty and everyone who made it possible for the overwhelming amount of students to be tested quickly during the outbreak, who found a way to provide more space to house students in isolation, who gave so much of their time, brainpower, wisdom and compassion for the sake of the people at Cedarville University.

Anna Harman is a sophomore Biblical Studies major and also a reporter for Cedars. She appreciates writing, getting coffee and going to concerts.

MEMORABLE TRADITIONS

Thanksgiving may be a Day, but its Traditions Live on for Generations

By Michael Cleverly

Thanksgiving is an American holiday that holds an important spot in the year. However, it seems to hold a less important spot with Christmas occupying people's minds. Despite this many Thanksgiving traditions remain memorable.

"Before the Thanksgiving meal we'll go out and play football," said Josh Burns, a Cedarville University student and RA of Marshal 1. "After the meal we'll settle into the living room. The people who want to take a nap lay down behind the couch, and the people who want to talk come into the main part of the living room."

Nicole Gordon, a Cedarville University student Psychology major, talked about how her family begins preparing for Christmas in the days

and her family used to get together with their friends from overseas when they were living in China. They spent time remembering the history of the first Thanksgiving. Her parents would create a trivia game about the history and her mom would read through some of the history.

They also had gatherings for their Chinese friends who be-

fulness. Gordon and her family have everyone share what they're thankful for from the whole year. Read's family would pass around dry kernels of corn and think of things they're thankful for. This is because of a story about the first Thanksgiving that the Pilgrims only had five kernels per person. Her father created a thankfulness tree, a tree drawn on a piece of paper, on the wall. They would

"As we're eating Thanksgiving dinner we'll go around the table and thank God for the blessings He's put in our lives"

-Josh Burns



following Thanksgiving. The day after Thanksgiving her dad starts putting up Christmas lights and decorations. Then the next day they go to the electronics stores, like Best Buy to get good deals without having to deal with Black Friday crowds.

Gordon's family also goes Christmas tree shopping the day after Thanksgiving. Every year they get a different tree.

"We go out to this little Christmas tree farm," Gordon said, "Either my dad or my brother will chop it down and my sisters and I will carry it."

Cedarville University student and Chinese Club president, Megan Read,

came Christians to introduce them to Thanksgiving. There would be Thanksgiving food there and they would sing Thanksgiving songs and hymns. At the international school Read went to, she said she would watch "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" and the building would have Thanksgiving decorations.

Different food traditions can also make the experience more memorable. Burns' grandma makes a cranberry relish and they serve a sweet cinnamon roll and sweet potato. Gordon's mom makes a sweet tea from the part of Africa her family used to live in.

One thing that ties all three of these different people's experiences together is an emphasis on thank-



write what they were thankful for on a leaf and put it on the tree.

"As we're eating Thanksgiving dinner we'll go around the table and thank God for the blessings He's put in our lives," said Burns, "I think that's the real spirit of Thanksgiving."

Michael Cleverly is a junior Journalism major with an Asian Studies minor and writer for Cedars. When not studying or working on a story for Cedars he likes to write, knit and hang out with friends.



MATT PAPA

Papa Uses His Talents to Pour into Cedarville Students

by Kathryn McDonald

On July 13, 2021, Cedarville University was excited to announce that Matt Papa will serve as the Artist-In-Residence for the coming school year. Cedarville students had the opportunity to hear him speak and sing in chapel, teach in certain classes and even interact with him personally.

Papa is a two-time Dove-award nominated Christian music artist and songwriter. He is best known for his recent songs "His Mercy is More," "Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery" and "Christ the Sure and Steady Anchor," which he co-wrote with Matt Boswell. These modern hymns reflect what Papa described as his mission: "To write songs that are singable, beautiful and timeless."

Assistant Chair of Worship and Associate Professor of Worship, Rog-

er O'Neel said that this is something that the Music Department has been looking forward to for "quite some time."

"Having Matt on campus when he can be to teach classes or to hang out with our students or perform—it's just very meaningful, because it's one thing to sing someone's song, but it's another thing to get to know the person behind the song," O'Neel said.

Cedarville University is dedicated to providing its students with relevant instruction that prepares them for their chosen career. Having an artist-in-residence is just one opportunity to allow the Worship majors to develop their personal and professional skills.

In addition to his role on campus, Papa provides information about Cedarville at his concerts and on his

website, mattpapa.com. O'Neel says that this also is a great opportunity for people to hear about the wonderful programs that Cedarville offers its students to learn and grow both inside and outside of the classroom.

This year, Papa will be a guest lecturer in at least three classes for Worship majors. He will feature as both a performer and worship leader during the Worship 4:24 conference on January 28-29, 2022, and he will lead a one-day songwriting seminar on March 19, 2022, which will be open to the public.

The chance that students have to learn from his experience reaches beyond the classroom and extends to chapels, concerts and rehearsals. O'Neel said, "To have our students see him in multiple contexts, I think is a real benefit to having an art-

ist-in-residence."

On October 4, Papa led the student body in a worship chapel where he had the opportunity to share his heart for what he does. Papa says that the reason he does what he does is because he still believes that author and pastor A.W. Tozer got it right when he said, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

Whatever that is for each of the students shapes where they are heading in life, and who they will become. "That's why I write the songs. That's why I do what I do," said Papa.

Papa hopes that his songs plant the seeds of God's character in our minds. So as we sing, we understand Him better and more fully.

As artist-in-residence, Papa seeks to extend beyond drawing others into

worship. The students who Papa interacts with can learn from his ministry and passion to do just that.

For Papa, the moments where he heard from experienced songwriters and musicians was formative at the beginning of his own career. Now, he has the chance to pour into students what was poured into his own life and share the lessons he learned with a new generation of songwriters and musicians.

Papa noted that for many professional musicians, they choose either to continue their careers as musicians or to teach what they know. His position as an artist-in-residence allows him to do both. Investing both inside and outside of the classroom is rewarding for Papa as he enjoys what he describes as "seeing the light bulbs go on."

"College kids are in such a unique

season of life, and I love the ability to influence people and what they're doing in life," said Papa. "Here on campus is just a closer touch point to pour into these kids who are just awesome and are just going to be culture-shapers."

Papa said, "If I can help pour into those guys and shape what they're doing, then hopefully it will have a ripple effect through future artistry and song writing."

This forward-thinking mindset drives Papa to share his experience with young people seeking to enter the music industry and make a big impact for God.

Kathryn McDonald is a junior Psychology major and a Campus News writer for Cedars. When she's not at her desk studying, you can probably catch her in the library writing a letter to a friend,



Photos - Esnest Toh



THE MAKING OF A FRANCHISE

Why Some Succeed Where Others Fail

by Janie Walenda

It feels like everything is a franchise nowadays. Every movie sets up a sequel, and more often than not, it gets one. Few franchises, however, are truly successful. Most fizzle out thanks to underwhelming sequels that drag on far beyond where they should.

What about those few franchises that are both long-lasting and successful overall? What makes them succeed where so many fail?

First and foremost, the movies are usually connected. Though seemingly obvious, creating a unified story across multiple films is easier said than done. There has to be a vision and a concentrated effort to keep storylines cohesive.

This could be accomplished by having a particular producer, director, and writer be involved across multiple movies or simply by using an accepted formula. The Bond films, for

example, don't have a single person at the helm but instead use a tried-and-true formula to achieve cohesion and success.

Yet a successful franchise is also constantly evolving. Even in more formula-following franchises, each addition progresses the stories and characters further and gives audiences something they've never seen before. Franchises that get stuck in a rut will either die out or drag on

needlessly.

The opposite can also be true, with a franchise having so many new ideas that it speeds through them and ends up being an unsatisfying mess. The sequel trilogy of "Star Wars" fell into this trap, squandering potential storylines with the addition of weaker new ones.

A franchise's greatest strength, however, is its characters. Beloved characters can carry even weaker entries and keep audiences invested. One of the advantages of a franchise is getting to watch characters grow and learn over multiple installments, and audiences will sometimes follow these journeys for years.

What are some examples of fran-

chises that work?

The most obvious answer is the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The MCU started with smaller, character-focused films and built towards team-up stories. This Marvel formula led to "Infinity War" and "Endgame," two movies with massive ensemble casts that still packed hefty emotional punches. Having made the most of this formula, Marvel has decided to lean into more creative, ambitious, and risky projects in its Phase Four lineup.

The success of the MCU stems from the creators' understanding of the characters and the source material. Kevin Feige, president of Marvel Studios and chief creative officer of

Marvel Entertainment, got his first job as associate producer on "X-Men" because of his knowledge of Marvel Comics. The shared universe of the MCU was his idea, and he has been a producer on every MCU film to date.

The MCU is almost the largest interconnected movie franchise at 25 films, matched only by Bond films. There is no other franchise like it, though many have tried to replicate it.

Speaking of Bond -- James Bond -- the first film premiered in 1962, while the most recent installment debuted on October 8 of this year. This franchise has introduced too many tropes to mention, but that's part of the charm. Even as Bond has

Graphics - Claire Xu

been modernized, there is still always going to be the monologuing villain and the witty one-liners.

In a similar market, "Mission: Impossible" is another long-running franchise that relies on its formula. As of late, the main appeal of the "Mission: Impossible" movies have been its innovative action pieces and Tom Cruise's unyielding commitment to doing his own stunts.

If there's a single thing that these long-lasting franchises have in common, it's having a good formula and sticking with it. Knowing what fans liked about previous films and what they want to see in future films keeps audiences happy and ticket sales high.

Each of the franchises mentioned so far has a great understanding of what audiences expect. Formulas can be experimented with and altered but are nevertheless essential to a successful franchise. "Shang Chi" and "What If...?" are perfect examples of this.

"Shang Chi" uses the classic MCU origin film formula as a backdrop to a compelling family drama unlike any that has come before in this universe. Meanwhile, most of "What If..." acted as a mini Phase One, with each episode setting up a new character for the epic team-up in the grand finale.

So, what about the franchises that haven't worked? Firstly, this category is not absolute. Many lackluster franchises today were successful up to a point but had major missteps that they have yet to recover from. Others have struggled to get off the ground in the first place.

Universal's "Dark Universe," a planned series of monster films using classic properties such as "The Mummy," "Frankenstein" and even "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," has been a victim of these struggles. After the absolute failure of "The Mummy" reboot starring Tom Cruise, most of these films have been shelved or remain with an official release date.

The DCEU is a more complicated story. After the success of the "Dark Knight" trilogy, Warner Brothers decided to create a shared universe to compete with the MCU. The original plan was to build a universe around director Zack Snyder's creative vision.

However, Snyder's first two DCEU projects, "Man of Steel" and "Batman v Superman," proved incredibly divisive among fans. On top of that, "Suicide Squad" was panned, leaving "Wonder Woman" as the only positively accepted film of their initial lineup.

After Snyder stepped down from "Justice League" due to a family tragedy, "Avengers" director Joss Whedon stepped in to oversee reshoots and post-production. "Justice League" was not well received and led to cries to release the Snyder Cut, which tells an entirely different story. Ever since then, the DCEU has favored directors' autonomy over a shared universe.

While this has resulted in many unique projects, it has kept the DCEU from building upon previous stories and having one consistent storyline. Abandoning a shared storyline makes it harder for audiences to follow along, meaning the mainstream appeal is slim.

However, the experimentation of the DCEU has resulted in darker, more stylistic films, something that the MCU is now trying to recreate. By no means is the DCEU a failed franchise, but as long as it lacks interconnected characters and stories, its ultimate fate will be uncertain.

What about "Star Wars?" What about all the "Harry Potter" and "X-Men" movies? Well, these franchises can all be classified as "good until they weren't."

"Star Wars" has struggled for decades to expand beyond the original trilogy, only recently finding consistent success in properties like "Star Wars: The Clone Wars" and "The Mandalorian." While the original "Harry Potter" films were a massive success, the recent attempt to revitalize the franchise through the "Fantastic Beasts" movies has fallen flat.

Meanwhile, the "X-Men" movies never quite understood the iconic characters and plots, with few notable exceptions, such as "Logan" and "Deadpool." While the early films were essential to the development of the comic book movie, the franchise eventually fizzled out with disappointments like "Dark Phoenix."

There are numerous other film series worth discussing, and there are

many factors that can make or break a franchise. Making one good movie is hard enough, and making a sequel or a trilogy is even harder. In this age of interconnected universes, many films are rushed into becoming franchises, with each mildly successful property getting sequels and spinoffs. The best franchises are the result of patience, planning, and knowing how to tell an entertaining story.

Janie Walenda is a freshman Global Business major and an A&E writer for Cedars. She enjoys musicals, movies and rereading the same books ten times.

TATTOOS AND CHRISTIANITY

Tattoos Are Leaving Their Mark on Christianity

By Maggie Walker



Photo - Trey M Lahmers

"I wanted it to be a reminder to me about God's providence in my life. It has my life verse on it, Philippians 1:20-21," she said. "All of my tattoos I can point back to Christ somehow. I've made that a point with all the tattoos I have because I know that tattoos are here-there with the church so I wanted to be able to say, 'well, all my tattoos glorify God.'"

Waywood has several other tattoos, including one of 2 Corinthians 12:19 and one of her favorite names for God drawn from Jeremiah 23:23.

Joseph Mattackal, a senior IT Management major, has a tattoo of a name on his forearm.

"The tattoo I have is my mom's name in Hindi," Mattackal said. "I wanted to get a tattoo for a while just because it was something I was interested in, but I was not interested in permanently marking my body for absolutely no reason. I felt there had to be a reason to have the tattoo, and my mom was a very important person to me. She passed away when I was 12; I wanted to get something to commemorate her by, so I got her name phonetically spelled in Hindi on my right arm."



Photo - Trey M Lahmers

Tattoos---hate them or love them, the art form is now prevalent in America. In 2020, over a third of Americans aged 18-29 had at least one tattoo. What used to be controversial has entered the mainstream. What thoughts do people have about tattoos today?

Emma Waywood, a senior Social Work major, has gotten several tattoos, starting with a colorful wrist tattoo when she was 16 years old.



Photo - Trey M Lahmers



Photo – Elena Mendez

Aaron Gosser, Associate Professor of Studio Art, has multiple tattoos, all in type. Two standing out specifically are the words, “choice,” and “TRUTH”.

Explaining the “choice” tattoo, Gosser said he was greatly impacted by John Steinbeck’s “East of Eden” and the Genesis 4 story of Cain and Abel.

“The idea of this choice to be overcome or overcome sin that free will has necessitated all this pain, evil, ugliness -- free will is responsible for this world in which we live, and everything kind of flows out moment by moment from our choices,” he said.

Gosser has another tattoo on his arm of the word “TRUTH” in all capital letters framed by a crown.

He said, “There is that which supersedes, undermines my own concepts. There is an absolute to life, to existence, that makes relative my own choice. I like that those [two tattoos] are on opposite sides. Truth is king, there is an ultimate reality. It’s sort of fun, I’ve gotten into all sorts of interesting conversations because

of both of those, but definitely the truth.”

A theme arising in all three conversations was the idea of tattoos as a tool for witnessing and sparking conversations with nonbelievers. Gosser pointed out that most conversations he’s had surrounding his tattoos have been with unbelievers. For Waywood, a social worker, her tattoos help her connect with her clients.

Waywood said, “My tattoos help me a lot with my clients because most of my clients have tattoos. [Having tattoos] helps me connect with them more because they see me more on their level than as a pious, high-and-mighty Christian.”

Because of the artistic nature of his tattoos, Mattackal has been able to have many conversations with non-Christians. He shared that many people of the world believe that Christians are uptight. So, some people are surprised when they see a Christian with tattoos as it makes them perceive the Christian as being more laid back than they expected.

“I can tell them my testimony,” Mattackal said. “I think there are a lot



Photo – Elena Mendez

of cases where tattoos can help other people who are not Christian empathize with you because they don’t expect to see Christians with tattoos.”

Is the idea that Christians are against tattoos an accurate one? It depends. For Gosser, who got his tattoos after college and attends a church where most attendees have tattoos, there were no negative reactions from his church or community to his tattoo.

Waywood and Mattackal’s experiences were a bit different. Waywood met with resistance and unapproval from her extended family, who are Catholic, and the Evangelical church she used to go to.

Waywood experienced negative stigma around the fact that she was a woman with tattoos. “Tattoos are typically seen as masculine,” she explained. “If I was a man in the military it would be more acceptable than as a 16-year-old girl in high school.”

While there was some support in her community, it was split between the approving and disapproving.

She further remarked that different denominations and countries have “their own stigmas, their own thoughts on tattoos. I think it’s just a lot of the traditionalist views you find in the evangelical church.”

According to Gosser, views that people have of tattoos is dependent largely on context.

“Where we live, here, in the middle of the cornfield, we tend to be a

pretty conservative sect,” he said. “It makes sense that people might be a little resistant.”

Mattackal had a similar perspective, remarking that in contemporary Christian circles tattoos are very common. But in other places tattoos are seen as unprofessional. In these places, he believes that tattoos are viewed as a symbol of a secular culture.

Mattackal experienced some apprehension coming from his “conservative, Christian, Indian [family and community]” about his tattoos, but only initially.

He said, “in the end, it’s just skin-deep...After a couple of weeks, they all got over it.”

Historically, Leviticus 19:28, which forbade the Israelites from getting tattoos, has been brought up in debates over whether or not Christians should have tattoos. Waywood admitted that there are historically negative connotations surrounding tattoos but pointed out that the argument that says tattoos are sinful is taking scripture out of context.

Verses such as Leviticus 19:28, however, were referencing historical tattoos aligning with witchcraft. In contrast, today, tattoos aren’t generally associated with witchcraft and pagan practices.

Waywood said that she would obviously never want a tattoo of something like swastikas or witchcraft, but tattoos pertaining to the

grace of God in her life are something entirely different.

Waywood said, “I think there’s something really beautiful about having permanent reminders about God’s grace etched on my body. We all kind of have our own scars that we carry in a lot of ways, and we don’t consider scars sinful. And I don’t think God considers tattoos sinful, either.”

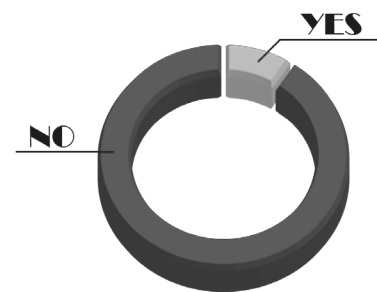
The general consensus was that tattoos are a form of art. Since they’re permanent, it’s advisable to think through whether or not you want to get one, but a tattoo can glorify God and be a useful tool for witnessing to people.

Gosser views tattoos as art and art always has meaning. Good design glorifies God, who is the ultimate designer.

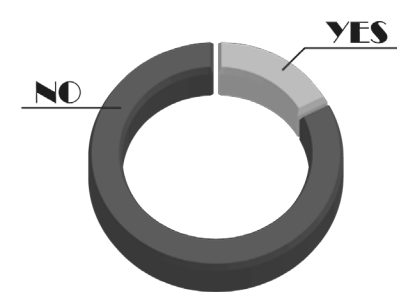
Gosser said, “We create because we are placed here as tenders of this garden, that’s our whole purpose. That was the original purpose in us, cultivating. And how do we cultivate but through design? We do this everywhere; any kind of aesthetic undertaking is a part of the initial purpose we’ve been given. Of course tattoos can fall into that.”

Maggie Walker is a junior Political Science major. She loves both spontaneous and planned adventures with friends, art, dinosaurs, green tea, and indulging in the occasional rant, political or otherwise.

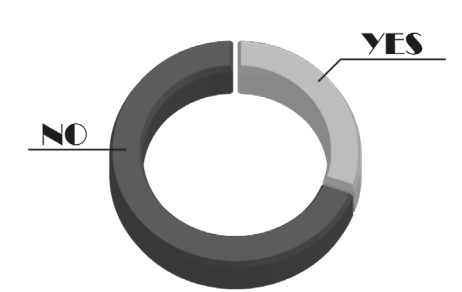
Do you think it's wrong for Christians to have tattoos?



Do you have a tattoo?



Do you think tattoos are edgy?



Graphics – Corissa Smith

SOCCKER MISSIONS

How Three Missionaries Spread the Gospel Message Using a Small Leather Ball

by Chris Karenbauer



It was the summer of 2018. Cedarville University's women's soccer team went on a mission trip to Costa Rica. Through Global Outreach, they connected with a mission organization called Thrive Vision, which organized games between Cedarville and professional soccer teams.

Lauren Lichy was a junior at the time. At the beginning of their mission trip, they played the University of Costa Rica, a professional women's soccer team.

But as memorable as it was to play a professional team, what set them apart was the moments after the game. Both teams piled into the Costa Rican coach's house. Lichy stood among the crowd to share her testimony to her new Costa Rican friends.

"Essentially, I just kind of shared with them, in my life, how God used soccer to show me that my identity is in him and not in soccer," said Lichy.

Lichy's testimony began a chain reaction. The Costa Rican head coach came forward. He shared his testimony to his girls. Then, the assistant coach stepped forward to share his testimony.

All three of their testimonies watered the seeds in eight girls, who gave their lives to Jesus. Lichy's heart swelled with pride with these

girls knowing that God used her team to share the Gospel message.

"You see a lot of people whose complete and utter identity is wrapped up in soccer," said Lichy. "For them to see how much this sport still means to me, but how much it doesn't have control over my life is one of the coolest bridges to the Gospel I have ever had the opportunity to see."

How can a small, leather ball change so many people's lives? For so many developing countries, soccer is the key out of poverty because it is one of the only means for making money. The people also form their identities in the sport.

"For us Christians, we love the game of soccer," said Jonathan Meade, the head coach of Cedarville's women's soccer team. "We see it, though, as a gift."

This gift God bestowed upon Christians is used in many ways. For Duerr, he used it to reach government officials who close themselves off to Christians.

"It's funny," said Duerr, "because mission organizations can go up to a government and say, 'we want to do this, this and this.' And they say, 'well of course you cannot do that. You're Christians.' But you bring to them

a small, leather ball filled with air. It opens all kinds of interesting doors. Doors that wouldn't be open to me now as an academic."

Soccer is also a gift that becomes a gateway to build a relationship between culturally diverse people. It has become a universally common language because almost every country is familiar with the game.

Even for people who know the Gospel, soccer is an open door for spiritual growth. Trent built friendships with the orphanage boys through their common love of soccer. He helped these boys understand the Gospel message.

On his last trip to Haiti in 2019, after a game of soccer, Trent explained to the kids he continues to return to Haiti, despite the political unrest.

"I was just sharing the Gospel with them and talking about what the Kingdom was," said Trent, "and how the kingdom was this promise that everything that's wrong with the world is going to be undone. And we wait for that. Jesus is coming back, and he's going to make that a reality. At the same time, one of the reasons we're here in Haiti is we believe that the Kingdom also exists now."

Three years after her mission trip, Lichy signed to play professionally in Costa Rica. Many people ask why she decided to play in a country like Costa Rica because even though soccer is popular, players, especially wom-



Graphic - Corissa Smith

en, do not get paid much, if at all.

Their identity is in soccer, but Lichy does not see it that way.

Lichy said, "It's provided a really cool opportunity for me to be like, 'yeah, soccer is awesome, but if this was my everything, I couldn't be here. If this is what I'm living for, I couldn't be here.'"

Besides playing professional soccer, Lichy does volunteer teaching at a local school. And she is also working to open a home for kids rescued from sex trafficking.

Soccer is a great sport. It brings people from all over the world together. It may bring temporary happiness to someone's life, but it is not the key to joy.

For athletes or anyone who wants to go on a mission trip for sports, Trent said, "If you have these opportunities, don't over-spiritualize it. Don't sit here and be like, 'Well, I just don't know if I'm supposed to go here, or I'm supposed to go here.' 'Just go.'"

Chris Karenbauer is a junior Journalism major and the Campus News Editor for Cedars. She enjoys reading and writing, hanging out with friends and jamming out to music.



AARON COOK

Aaron Cook Lives as Evidence of God's Grace

By Kathryn McDonald



Photo - Trey M Lahmers

Cedarville University is unique because of the people who are most involved in the community. Many people work behind-the-scenes to create a vibrant, Christ-centered community. Invariably the behind-the-scenes moments go unnoticed yet are the lifeblood of this ministry.

Aaron Cook is one of the biggest players in these behind-the-scenes moments. In his role as Director of Discipleship, Cook is responsible for managing Discipleship Groups, Fit to be Tied—a premarital counseling course, Tied and True—a mentorship program for married couples, and the student chaplains.

Cook's time at Cedarville began in 1995 when he enrolled as a student. He said that this is simply evidence of God's grace in his life. Before visiting Cedarville with his youth group as a senior in high school, Cook said, "I wasn't planning on going to Cedarville. I didn't know anything about it."

After graduating from Cedarville in 1999 with a degree in Bible Comprehensive/Christian Education, Cook began his ministry at Scioto Hills Christian Camp, where he loved the ministry he partnered with.

Before God called Cook and his

family back to Cedarville, Cook did not anticipate leaving Scioto Hills. "I loved it. Thought we would stay forever," he said.

Eventually, God compelled Cook to go back to Cedarville where it seemed that "Cedarville would be the greatest place to leverage his talents for the Gospel," said Cook. It has now been seven years since Cook began serving as Cedarville's Director of Discipleship, and it is evident that God has been using Cook in a mighty way for His Kingdom.

Jon Wood is the Vice President of Student Life & Christian Ministries, Assistant Professor of

Theological Studies and a close friend of Cook's. Wood explains that he loves how Cook refers to the Discipleship Council as "dear ones" because they are truly dear to him.

"I think he means they are dear to God as well," said Wood. "And 'dear ones,' recognizing that whether there are 12 or 14 or however many on any given discipleship council, that he's acknowledging he values and loves each one of them individually. His very way of expression, 'dear ones,' is conveying his heart for ministry and discipleship."

Cook's unique ministry to students is reflected in the unusual opportunities for relationships to be built between the students and the faculty and staff.

"I need partnerships with faculty and staff to do my job, and a major component of Fit to Be Tied is the mentorship couples. Even with my chaplains, I have different faculty and staff come in and interact with them on a regular basis," Cook said.

It is this intergenerational component that is designed to prepare students for future ministry opportunities in their own local churches, both now and after they leave Cedarville.

The heart of all discipleship ministries on campus is the desire to foster the growth of individuals within a Christ-centered community. Cook and his partners in ministry use Psalm 1 as one of the key passages to illustrate this growth. Cook said, "We want to cultivate individuals who look like that tree that's planted by streams of water." Down to the very logo of discipleship ministries on campus, the goal is to display flourishing.

Cook also points to John 15 where Jesus uses another tree-type metaphor for the Christian life. Jesus Himself is the vine, and His followers are the branches. And out of that relationship comes fruitful flourishing. For Cook the mission does not stop at multiplying these fruitful followers, but rather "multiplying multipliers."

He said, "That goal of spiritual transformation means helping individuals understand how that works and then understand how to help others grow. And that is directly transferable into the local church." All discipleship ministries are engaged in preparing to see more people multiplying and discipling others beyond Cedarville.

What does that look like? Cook said that this kind of success has no recipe.

"We just keep walking alongside them pointing to truth, trying to counsel with truth," Cook said. "And there is no formula for that. It's just taking them to the Word, pointing them to the Gospel and then asking and praying in that time. 'Spirit of God, please reveal this truth to them

and lead us.' But you can't manufacture it. You just can't,"

The key is faithfulness. No matter how much activity you have, it cannot replace long-haul commitment to pour into people's lives. Over the years of serving at Cedarville, Cook said that he has learned that change doesn't happen overnight. Our God is in the business of transforming people one small interaction at a time, and the sum of those interactions that produces lives are radically renewed.

Jeremy Kimble is an Associate Professor of Theology at Cedarville University and a good friend

of Cook's. He recalled one of his first interactions with Cook and what he learned about the way

Cook lives out his ministry in his own family.

Just after Cook and his family moved to Cedarville, Kimble invited them over to dinner. Kimble remembered that they had originally planned to eat at 5:30, but they ended up being almost an hour late.

At the time, Kimble thought, "We could never be friends." and that, "He'll be a nice guy. I'll talk to him, but whatever."

The following day, Kimble was surprised by a knock at his door sometime that afternoon. When he opened it, Cook and one of his young children stood at the door. Kimble remembered looking at them both and seeing that they looked forlorn.

Kimble said, "I was like, 'Yes?' And then he said, 'So-and-so has something to say to you.' I looked down at this child, and they had a toy in their hand. And they couldn't talk. They were all choked up. And so I said, 'Is that my son's toy?' They nodded, 'Yes.'"

It was obvious that the child was there to apologize and return the toy. After resolving the situation, Cook explained that he just wanted to make sure that everything had been taken care of, thanked Kimble and left.

Kimble remembered exactly what he thought after that experience, "There's a man committed to the very fine details of discipleship. He's just committed to that process, and he knows what it is to be a disciple and to pursue discipleship. I just

knew that he's not just in a position. He lives this."

For Cook, this faithful discipleship was modeled by different men pouring into his life over the years. Cook told the story of one mentor who he described as living his life, "really depending on the Word of God and expecting God's Word to make a change in people's lives. And I watched it happen."

This was a man who not only spoke the truth into Cook's life, but truly treasured it. "My mentor lived that out, and he actually depended in such a way that if God's Word didn't come true, his ministry would fall on its face. What I learned from him is basically the foundation of everything I do here," said Cook.

The Student Chaplain's Council integrates both these one-on-one relationships and student chapels. Each year, the student body elects a group of five young men to lead different student chapels.

Student chaplains and a cohort of their peers have one of the greatest opportunities to benefit from Cook's mentorship. They then share the overflow of that growth with the student body.

This year's student body chaplain is Justin Schlabach, who has served as his class's chaplain since freshman year. He said that through all of the time that he spent watching Cook's ministry, there are a few things that stand out to him.

"I've seen Aaron be a godly father, a godly husband and a faithful friend," said Schlabach. He also said that if there were two passages that characterize Cook, Psalm 1 and John 15:5 can be seen as, not only the guiding principles of his ministry, but also of his personal life.

Aaron's delight is in the Law of the Lord, God's Word, and his ministry is fueled by his commitment to remain in Christ who is the vine.

Schlabach said, "Those are two of his favorite passages. And there is a reason why: because he lives them out. Aaron's demeanor is just, 'I depend on Christ because, apart from him, I can do nothing.' And he lives that out in his ministry, in his family, in his friendships and in his church."

Last year, Cam Sardano served as

Cedarville's student body chaplain. Cook's impact on Sardano's life is still impacting his own ministry as he begins to step beyond Cedarville.

He remembered first hearing Cook speak during a chapel service on Psalm 23. But even outside of Cedarville, as Sardano got involved in his local church, he realized that the men who poured into his life were those who had been poured into by Cook's ministries.

"I remember meeting with them every week. It was just so evident that Aaron Cook and his ministry and his discipleship had just borne immense fruit in their life and was continuing to," said Sardano.

After a series of events, Sardano decided to campaign for the chaplaincy. After being elected, he joined the chaplains council where Cook played a huge role in preparing him for the job.

"He wasn't leading from above, but from beside," said Sardano. Not above as one who is superior, but beside as a comrade and friend with whom to fight the good fight.

Sardano said, "I think that what makes Aaron Cook, Aaron Cook, is simply time plus grace. It's the Lord working in his life over the course of his life. I think that Aaron would want that to be an emphasis."

It is the same grace that was at work in the lives of the Apostles of our New Testament that is at work in the lives of faithful servants of the church today.

Cook's ministry extends far beyond the ministries that he is directly involved in. His philosophy of generating "multiplying multipliers" is transforming the lives of young people across campus and beyond.

Kathryn McDonald is a junior Psychology major and a Campus News writer for Cedars. When she's not at her desk studying, you can probably catch her in the library writing a letter to a friend, reading her favorite American poetry or drinking coffee from her favorite mug.

STREAMING SERVICES

The Binging Revolution and Its Consequences

By Josh McClain

Fifteen years ago, bingeing referred to the overconsumption of alcohol, money or other abusable substances—not something most Christians take pride in. Now, teens and young adults use the same word to describe watching through hours of the latest movies and series on streaming platforms like Netflix or Disney Plus. Just as word connotations morph over time in response to cultural change, the “binge” revolution represents a response to the emergence of accessible streaming technology.

Streaming services began as an offshoot of the bustling movie rental industry. Entrepreneur Marc Randolph and computer scientist Reed Hastings founded Netflix in 1997 as the world’s first online mail-delivery DVD-rental company. The company’s “video on demand” service didn’t launch until 2007 and originally allowed access to just 1,000 titles, compared to the 100,000 available for physical rental.

Hulu surfaced shortly afterwards in 2008 with a similar setup. As the market grew, these mediums started releasing original content. Hulu debuted its own web series “The Morning After” in 2011, and Netflix followed in 2013 with its show “House of Cards.” From there, these streaming services continued to expand, with Hulu adding live TV and sports in 2017.

Several other streaming services had joined the market before 2019, but COVID-19 brought the industry to a whole new level. Disney Plus, Apple TV Plus, HBO Max and many other streaming services launched soon after the world entered lockdown. With countless stuck at home due to virtual schooling and unemployment, streaming became a common quarantine pastime.

BBC News reported that 12 million people subscribed to new services during the lockdown and that streamers spent an average of one

hour and 11 minutes viewing content each day. Thus, binge-watching solidified itself as a common practice.

However, streaming services didn’t disappear when COVID-19 waned and the world began to re-open. In fact, they seem poised to stay for a long time. COVID-19 demonstrated that Americans can get their fill of movies even when theaters close, and many fans now prefer the accessibility of streaming movies to the hassle of travelling to a theater.

Luke Wiley, a marketing student at Cedarville University, thinks that streaming services will soon overtake the box office, relegating the theater experience to a once-in-a-while nostalgia trip. “I’ve been tracking box

office numbers for a statistics class... We’ve been trending toward less tickets sold,” he said. “With time, movie theaters will go the way of the CD and VHS—slowly dying away as more people accept the new mediums.”

On the other hand, Sean O’Connor, Assistant Professor of Broadcasting, Digital Media, and Journalism at Cedarville, has a more optimistic outlook, noting, “There’s enough people at least now that are passionate about that experience and mad at certain streaming services for doing day-and-date releases or just dumping movies onto streaming in order to maintain profits.” Either way, streaming services have begun to steal views away from the theater industry.

Moreover, streaming services endanger the future of cable TV.

Many streaming providers now offer live television on demand, including sports, game shows and reality TV for a price competitive with broadcast companies. This advent comes without many of cable’s shortcomings – extra hardware, fees and hundreds of channels that consumers will never use. On the other hand, these services do not feature local news, a mainstay of television, nor do cellular connections provide the consistency of broadcast TV, potentially ruining the viewing experience. Nonetheless, it’s only a matter of time before technology allows streamers to access these advantages equally, if not better, than cable TV. In sucking content away from theaters and conventional TV, media companies are forcing consumers to accept the consequences of streaming services as a medium. Some of these can serve constructive uses in daily life. For example, the introduction of Netflix’s on-demand streaming permitted viewers to watch a wider diversity of films than those at theaters, granting access to more niche perspectives and less overall bias. Their flexibility and accessibility across screens also make watching content with friends and family simpler. Of course, these services also present the temptation to binge. Theaters and cable networks once forced viewers to pace their viewing habits: TV shows came out once a week for a few months, and movies only released in theaters for a limited

time before transitioning to purchasable DVDs.

Today, consumers can watch an entire season of a TV series in a single day or view almost any movie with a few taps on their iPad. This radical accessibility promotes frenetic viewership—seemingly the same kind of “binging” that once characterized harmful compulsions like alcoholism.

Obviously, alcohol overconsumption carries more drastic consequences than excessive streaming, but health officials still express serious concern about the practice of binge watching. Media companies have added innocent features, such as automatic episode queues and tailored viewing suggestions, to encourage continued watching, which increases profits but hides from viewers the sacrifices they make by remaining idle. Scientists have warned that binge watching can result in physical maladies like sleep deprivation and eye strain as well as the habitual danger of overeating. Snacking has always paired wonderfully with movie and TV watching, but those who make a

habit of grazing during their favorite show may struggle to keep it under control if their viewing time extends to several hours each day.

Bingeing also contains dangers beyond one’s physical body. Apart from correlations with decreased social activity and increased incidences of depression, unhealthy streaming inhibits viewer retention and critical analysis of media.

Professor O’Connor believes that bingeing promotes content going “in one ear and out the other” and notes that the vast library of on-demand media complicates viewers’ efforts to find, watch and remember worthwhile content. Though streaming services originally propagated a valuable diversity in film, such an overload of movies at users’ fingertips can render thoughtful contemplation a lost art.

A recent survey of the Cedarville student body shows that these side-effects are not restricted to the public in general. Over a quarter of participating students reported using streaming services three-to-five times per week, and over 30% estimated that they spend an average of

one-to-two hours streaming every day. When asked about the impact of their viewing habits, 36% admitted that their time spent streaming “somewhat” affects their academic and social lives while over 60% denied any impact whatsoever.

Evidently, what began as a side project of a DVD rental company has grown so much in the past two decades that it permeates even our cornfield-bound campus. As a Christ-centered community, we ought to take care how we address the bingeing epidemic.

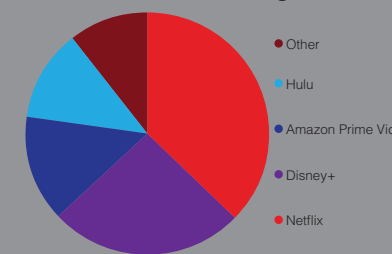
As the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:12, “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.” Let’s embrace the benefits of streaming services without letting them dominate us at the expense of our physical, mental and spiritual lives.

Josh McClain is a freshman Professional Writing and Information Design student and an A&E writer for Cedars. He enjoys writing stories, reading YA novels and playing spikeball and soccer with friends.

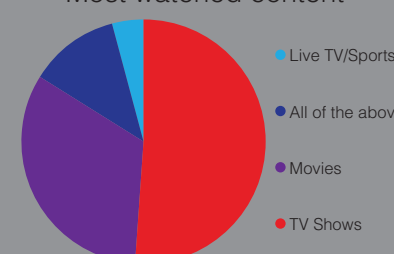
“I’ve been tracking box office numbers for a statistics class... We’ve been trending toward less tickets sold”

-Luke Wiley

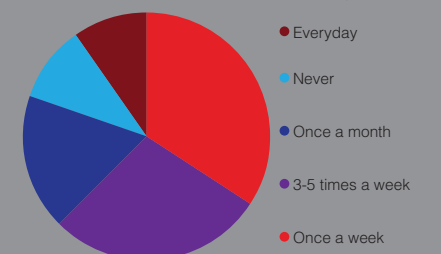
Most used streaming service



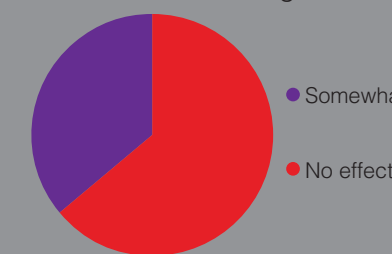
Most watched content



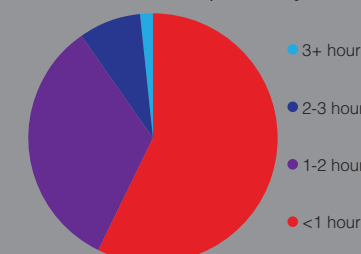
Frequency of streaming



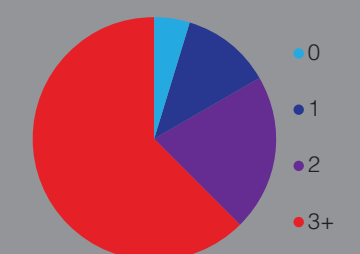
Effects of streaming on life



Hours per day



Number of streaming services owned



Graphics - Natalie Cherry

A Tale of Two Refugees

Finding New Life in America

By Esther Fultz

American economist, Thomas Sowell, once said that the freedom of America is the freedom to live your own life and take your own chances. Historically, America has been a place people from all across the world look to as a bastion of freedom. Immigrants and refugees from all across the world still seek the freedom and security that a life in America can provide.

Fifi Gaju is a junior studying at Mt. Vernon Nazarene University. She was born in Congo but spent most of her childhood in Rwanda due to tribal conflicts in Congo.

"In Congo, there are different tribes and we're not allowed to marry into a different tribe," Gaju explained. "We believe that if you marry someone from your tribe you're going to have a good understanding of that person and be able to communicate better with them. [Other tribes] hated [my tribe] because of that, and they started to kill us."

As the conflict escalated, certain tribes began to drive others out of the country.

"They wanted us to move out of the country, and we wanted to stay in our country," Gaju recalled. "This is still happening in the Congo now."

While moving to Rwanda allowed Gaju and her family to escape the conflict, conditions in the Rwandan refugee camps were hardly better.

"We would eat the same thing all year, from January to December," Gaju remembered. "For us to have something to wear – clothes or a pair of shoes – my parents had to go and sell the food that the government would give us... It was a choice between eating that month and buying clothes that month. We would go three or four days without eating... Nobody would wish to live their life like that."

Anne Sada, an 18-year-old refugee who was born in Rwanda and raised in Congo until coming to



America at the age of 12, also spoke of the meager living conditions in her former country.

"It was totally different [than America]," Sada remembers. "My grandmother used to sell food so we didn't go hungry... We used to have a farm, and my family would have to look after the animals and make sure nothing happened to them. It was just a lot."

The actual process of coming to America was long and grueling as well. Gaju said she and her family spent 13 years in the camps before actually being able to come to America. Gaju explained how refugees are repeatedly interrogated to ensure they are telling the truth about who they are and why they decided to leave their home country. A single mistake in an interview can have dev-

astating effects.

"If you mess up, if you say something different from what you said yesterday, that means you aren't going anymore," Gaju said. "There's people that are still in the camps because of that."

Gaju said many times that being in America is not something she takes for granted. She is especially grateful for the opportunity she has to go to school and eventually work in America. Education in Rwanda and other African countries is very limited.

Where Gaju grew up, school only goes from primary school to a student's freshman year of high school. If one has enough money, there are limited options for secondary and post secondary education, but Gaju explained that finding this money is impossible due to levels of depen-

dence on the government.

"The clothes you wear, the food you eat, you depend on the government," said Gaju. "Here, I don't depend on anyone, I can do anything I want."

Sada had a similar experience with education in Rwanda, and also appreciates the opportunity to be educated in America. In Congo, it is not common for women to work or girls to go to school.

"[In Congo] only my older brother went to school," Sada said. "I only went to school when I got to America."

Sada wishes teachers in America would be more understanding towards refugee children and recognize the help they need.

"Refugee children who just then have to start going to school are just going to need more help," Sada explained.

Living in America and getting an education allows Gaju to have hope and view her future positively. She has big plans and dreams. While currently an Earth Science major, she said her ultimate goal is to have her own show.

"I want to be able to have my own show and talk to people about life in general and how they should take care of themselves and their health," Gaju explained. "So, I feel like I'm not in the right path in my education. But it's good for me to know about science and stuff like that, so it kind of relates to what I'm doing right now."

Both Sada and Gaju have extended family still living in Africa, and Gaju said her family very much wants to come to America.

"The way Africans talk about America you would think it's heaven!" Gaju shared with a smile. "Imagine if you grew up going three days without eating... And then think about America – it's a country that you get to eat everything you want, you get to work, you can have any job you want, and you get to go to any school you want to. People think we don't stress out here."

"People would even tell us... if you need \$200, it's like you could just sit down and that money would appear by itself," Gaju recalled, laughing. "That's how they think."

Gaju also said the people in America are one of her favorite things about living here.

"I just love the way they welcome you," Gaju said. "Back in Africa, the people who live in the camps, most people are disrespectful to them. They think they don't have the capacity or the mindset to think like them. They think they don't have anything to contribute to society, like they're stupid or there's something wrong with them just because they're not educated."

Gaju said her main motivation for sharing her story is to help people in similar situations back in Africa.

"Most people from our country don't want to share [their stories] because they just feel like it's embarrassing but I don't," Gaju said.

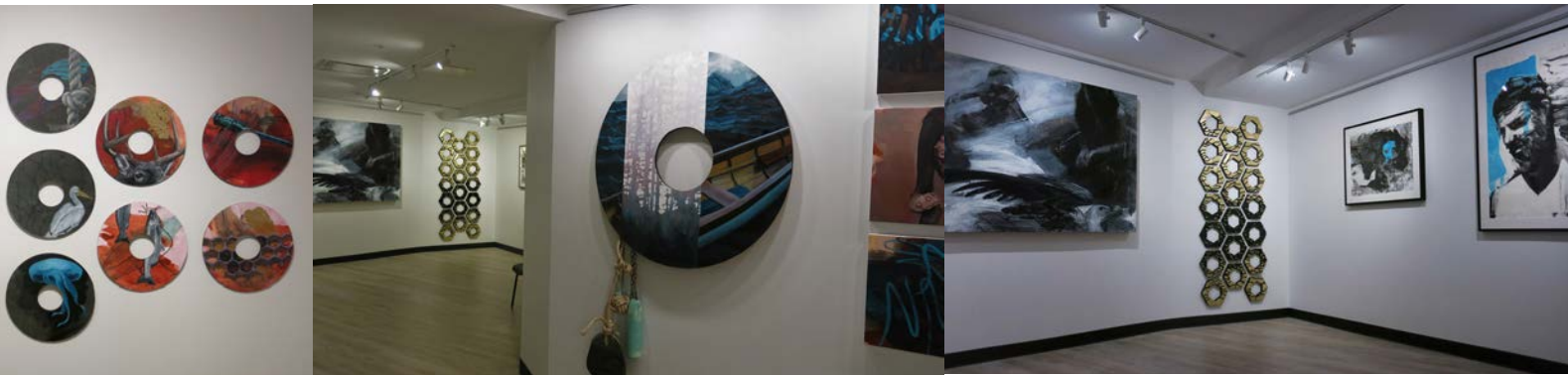
When asked what she thinks Americans could do to help with the situation in Rwanda, the first thing

Gaju encourages Americans to do is go to Africa themselves.

"I would tell them to go to Africa to have the experience, to see how people live life, so they can help them according to what they see and how they feel," said Gaju. "If you have the kind of heart to help, I would want you guys to help the people in our country. That's also my dream, to work hard and help and change something back there. And you will never want to do that if you don't know the story behind."

Esther Fultz is a sophomore Social Work major and an Off-Campus and On-Campus writer for Cedars. She enjoys writing songs, spending time outdoors, drinking coffee, and hanging with friends.





Photos – Elizabeth Kollmar

A SPACE SET APART:

Cedarville University Opens First Permanent Art Gallery

By Maggie Walker

It's been a long time coming for Cedarville's visual artists. After 16 years, approximately the age of Cedarville's Studio Art major itself, a permanent art gallery has been installed in the Stevens Student Center, the first in the university's 134-year span.

According to Aaron Gosser, Associate Professor of Studio Art, various proposals for a gallery were met with friction because it meant taking space from another department or building something new. This difficulty was overcome by remodeling what used to be a storage area in the DeVries Theatre, a space designated for use by the Department of Art, Design, and Theatre.

Before the gallery's installation, art majors had to display their work on unlit, carpeted artboards set up in the Dixon Ministry Center, the Student Center lobby, or the Centennial Library.

Gosser said, "It was nice when different departments would accommodate art" but noted that these spaces "competed with tables and walkthrough," making them "far less than ideal."

While lacking a gallery was less than ideal for all art majors and their work, Studio Art majors especially felt a sharp absence. Gosser said, "[A gallery] is important for art and design, but it's necessary for studio art. It's where the work takes on its significance. We've produced class after class of students who've left the university and didn't have that experience."

Why does having a gallery matter? The gallery space is significant in terms of both the types of work displayed and the experience. Practically, a three-dimensional work or large piece needs physical space. To paraphrase Gosser, the importance of a proper art gallery to studio art is akin to the importance of a playing field for a sports team.

As a matter of inspiration and expansion, Assistant Professor of Studio Art Caleb Booth points out, "It's a huge encouragement for the students to make more work and even make larger works. Otherwise, [a lack of space] is not pushing you to grow. Turtles only grow to the size of their cages."

Both Gosser and Booth noted that the way most people interact with images and art today is through a phone screen, which robs people of an enriching experience. Experiencing art requires a separate place.

"How difficult it is for art in this culture, in this time and place," said Gosser. "We move so quickly between images. We have hardly any appetite for contemplation. In order for art to live, it requires a viewer that intends on seeing art, that is willing to step out in faith, believing there is something here to be gleaned. You can't do that quickly. It takes a separate space."

Booth agreed, adding that viewing art on our phones stunts a person's growth. "The main way we interact with creativity and images is usually on our phone, swiping through [feeds] curated for you based on what you've already liked. You don't actually grow your palate of what you're interested in or grow in appreciating the arts."

In contrast, art galleries "expose us to different ideas, different ways of thinking, different points of view, which is really important, especially for the gospel and...interacting with very different types of people."

As a physical experience, Booth said, "Nothing really replaces this type of moment where you can walk around and feel the size of the art compared to you as a person, and not just your finger."

Currently, Booth's works are on display in the gallery.



Photo – David Kollmar

One fascinating theme of Booth's work is the vulture, featuring in several pieces displayed. "Typically, we think of vultures as arbiters of death or some sort of bad omen," Booth explained. "But I see them as really good things because they're eating death, getting rid of death, which I think is a really nice idea of salvation and what Christ does for us."

In the back of the gallery is a large painting in the back of a man looking off into the distance, called "Rest." Booth said, "I was thinking about how we long for rest in this life. This figure looking off the panel feels cold and longing. It's kind of like how Christians are stuck between two worlds wanting to be with Christ but then also being present in flesh."

Booth said his paintings are "not necessarily always the happiest of things," but he wanted to "wrestle with pain or suffering which is also prevalent in this world. For a lot of people, this is their world. I think we want to empathize with that so that we don't just come off as bubbly people who can't care as opposed to people who see the pain but then also have hope."

Gosser hopes that people will come to engage with the art, saying that art "[isn't] just decoration, [or] just necessarily pretty." Art is more than that, having "potentially real significance someone has poured into them, and [people] have an opportunity to interact with them if they choose to do it."

The significance of the art gallery for artists at Cedarville may be even more intense than the significance of the gallery to the student body as a whole.

As Gosser put it, "Art making is so personal. It's like you're putting yourself into this object of paint, or wood, or plaster, or terra cotta. You're putting [your art] out there to interact with. Most people are too busy to have those interactions; they're just moving from one thing to the next. That's not ideal for eliciting the kind of response for which one makes art."

But, with the art gallery's installation, "there is this set apart, viewing, sensing space, where [you have] blank walls and a clean environment, [and] you can focus --

now there's a chance for [the art] to live a little bit."

Viewing art takes time and effort. Art's inherent subjectivity can be intimidating, but, as Gosser said, "the fact that [art] opens itself up to your own experiences, your emotions, your exposure, individually is amazing. If you don't bring all that to the table when viewing a work of art, it's going to remain opaque. You're not going to get anything from it. You have to bring all your knowledge and imagination into that conversation."

He remarked that when the Psalmist said that "the heavens declare the glory of God," (Psalms 19:1), seeing that expression still required something of the viewer. Art can be a form of worship. Booth said, "[Art] done with a right heart can be something that we [use to] say, I love you, Lord. In being able to say, Lord, use me, and create something interesting or beautiful or provoking -- something that speaks to the spirit and not just physical needs."

Overall, both Booth and Gosser emphasized their and the department's excitement for this gallery and look forward to displaying more work in the months and years to come. As Gosser put it, "It's not easy to carve out time, but if [you're] willing to play along, make the effort, art can meet you halfway. It might surprise you."



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