

2020

THE WEIRDEST YEAR YET?

Before we close the door on 2020, here are 12 reminders of some of the headlines that dominated our news – hilarious, worrying, uplifting ... and just plain weird

1

Toilet paper

became more precious than gold



As lockdowns came into force around the world, the global population knew exactly what they needed to do.

Yes, that's right, invest in toilet paper!

Sources worldwide

2

Video games

officially became good for you

12 months after adding **'gaming disorder'** to its list of addictive behaviours, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially recommended video games

They help stop the spread of COVID-19 and are good for your mental health!



Business Insider

3

"The Blessing" produced a cascade of blessings around the world



This pre lockdown song went viral, with 35 million views on YouTube. But, in the middle of lockdown, it inspired covers by hundreds of virtual choirs worldwide, "The UK Blessing" released for Easter Sunday received 4 million views.

Groups of local churches produced their own covers - so it continued.

Premier Christian News

4

Facemasks led to a global slump in lipstick sales

When people can't see your lips, what's the point of lipstick?

That's what millions of lipstick-wearers asked themselves, as sales dropped 11%. Meanwhile, sales of mascara are booming!



Business Insider

5

Have we waved goodbye to the unsanitary handshake?



The **2,500-year** old practice of greeting people by shaking hands has been virtually wiped out by the virus – will it ever return?

The new contenders are head nods, waves and the still-weird elbow bumps.

Wall Street Journal

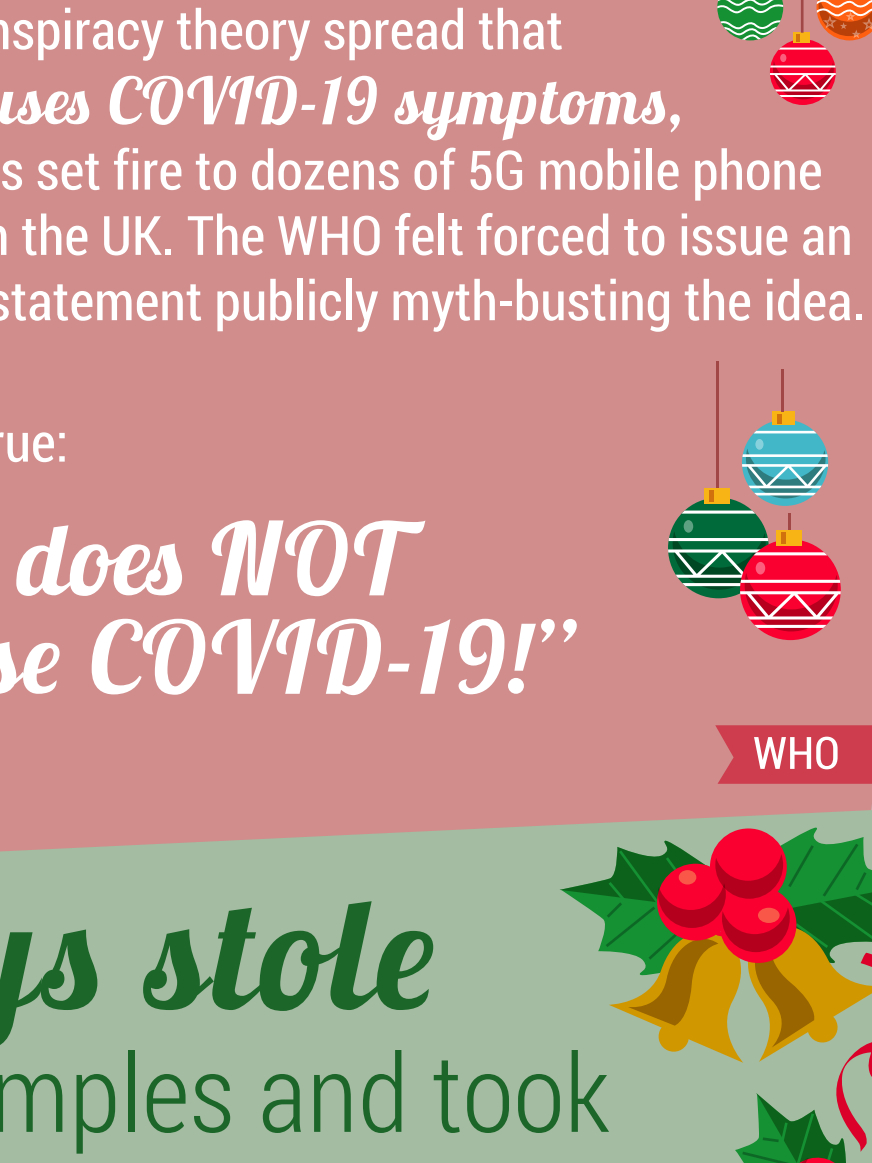
6

Record-Breaking Baptism

despite COVID-19

An evangelical church in **Thailand** held one of the largest baptism services in history – 20 ministers immersed a flood of **1,435** people in the local river on **September 6th**.

So far, Thailand has coped remarkably well with COVID compared to most countries.



Premier Christian News

7

5G towers burned for "causing COVID symptoms"



As a conspiracy theory spread that **5G causes COVID-19 symptoms**, arsonists set fire to the dozens of 5G mobile phone masts in the UK. The WHO felt forced to issue an official statement publicly myth-busting the idea.

So, its true:

"5G does NOT cause COVID-19!"

WHO

8

Monkeys stole

COVID blood samples and took them up a tree

In the category of **"you just couldn't make this up"**, monkeys broke into a research lab in Uttar Pradesh, India and made off with positive COVID blood samples.

Video footage emerged of a monkey with COVID samples up a nearby tree - bizarre!



Reuters

9

New ways of communicating the Bible

emerged in 2020, and flourished



- The first Bible in **American Sign Language** was completed
- There was a tenfold increase in users of the new **Bible Study Fellowship app**
- **The Bible App for Kids** (YouVersion) received a record - **14 million downloads**

Premier Christian News

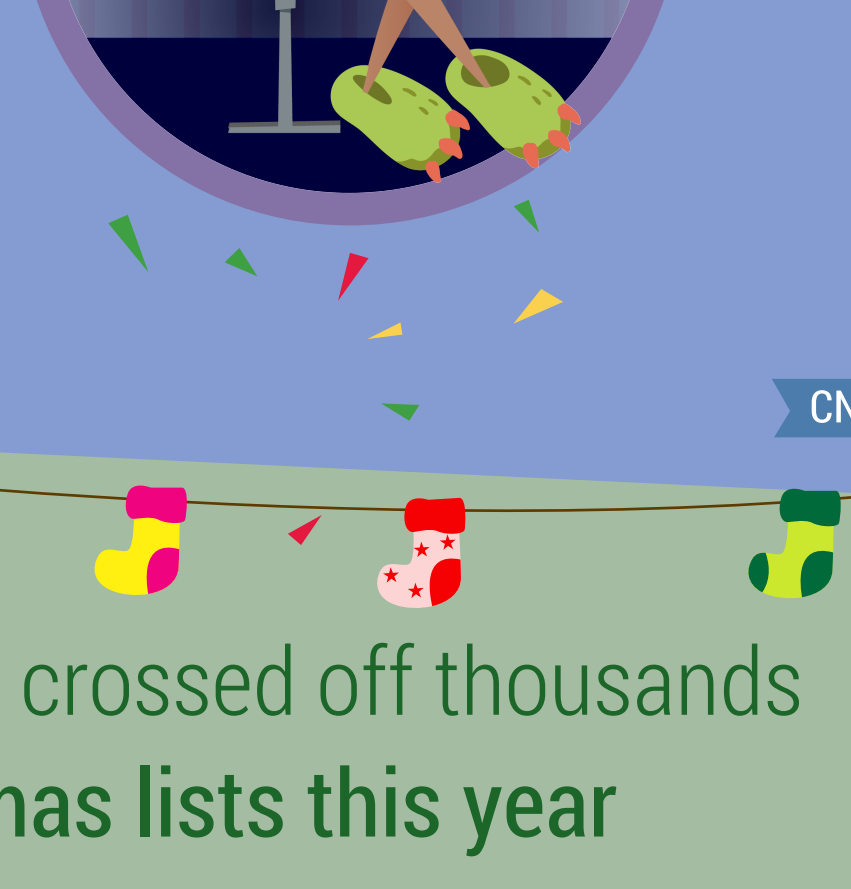
THAT'S A LOT OF BIBLES!

10

Zoom stopped people caring about trousers

You can now safely **"get caught with your pants down"**.

With the shift to remote working, businesspeople relying on **Zoom care** a lot less about the half you don't see on camera, resulting in plummeting sales of trousers in 2020



CNN

11

Bicycles crossed off thousands of Christmas lists this year



With gyms closed, people were forced to exercise at home. Consumers turned to pedal power as worldwide demand for bicycles surged as much as **650%**, leading to a **worldwide shortage of bicycles for Christmas**.

BBC

12

Lastly, we are in the **midst of a spiritual shake up** ... and we don't know the outcome

- Demand from churches for **IT equipment sky-rocketed** as churches finally discovered the internet!
- **1 in 4** of people engaged in some form of **online worship**
- Overall church attendance (online and in-person) grew according to the **Evangelical Alliance**



Premier Christian News

In 2020, the church which first began in people's homes – moved back to people's homes. Hybrid Church (in-person plus online) is a new chapter in a 2000 year old mission – and it's ours to look after.

When God closes a door - he opens a browser window!

And so, as we enter a new year we trust that God is at work in greater ways than we have yet seen or imagined.

Wishing you a brighter, blessed (and hopefully less interesting) 2021!