

3. Longtermism

Terrie Lambert, 18.11.2022

Youtube Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bupDkUz-dw>

[00:00:05.300] - Terrie

Our loving God in heaven. Thank you for bringing us safely through another week. And as we spend these minutes together before the Sabbath opens, we ask that you would bless them. Bless them with your presence. As we look forward to the Sabbath. We look forward to more of Your rain, your messages, your truth that will continue to purify and sanctify us and change us into Your image. We ask that you would be with us, and that we in this preparation time, we can make the most of these moments together. Lord, we have much to be grateful for, and the world is in turmoil, which You've given light to Your people. May we show our gratitude by studying it and sharing it. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

[00:01:05.200] - Terrie

We've been studying Atheism. And we started with the great controversy where Ellen White talks about Babylon being made up of various organizations and religious groups. And as we went through the principles of the Ideologies and Philosophies of Daniel 8, I think we could safely say that Atheism is a religion. It has all the characteristics of false religion.

[00:01:40.360] - Terrie

Because we started with Babylon, we went back to the Alpha of Babylon, to the beginnings, the root of Babylon, and that is the Tower of Babel. When we looked at those passages in Patriarchs and Prophets after reading Genesis 11. Does anybody like to share some of the characteristics of Babel that stood out for them when we read Patriarchs and prophets? Just definitive characteristics connected with the Tower of Babel?

[00:02:23.980] - Katherine

They wanted to be remembered, famous and well renowned. Forever, I suppose.

[00:02:36.780] - Terrie

Yes. It's almost like they wanted immortality. They wanted to be remembered. They wanted to perpetuate their fame to the latest generations. Thank you, Katherine. Didn't want to be forgotten. Brenden?

[00:03:17.860] - Moli

No, it was me Terrie.

[00:03:20.260] - Terrie

Hi Moli. Sorry.

[00:03:22.360] - Moli

Yeah, they wanted to rule by suppressing others.

[00:03:27.640] - Terrie

Yes. It started out as a freedom movement because they didn't want to come under the constraints of God's law. They wanted freedom, but it ended up being a monarchy. To control the people. Thank you, Moli. And of course, if you're going to have monarchy, you got to have a king. Who was their king?

[00:03:54.420] - Moli

Nimrod.

[00:03:55.580] - Terrie

Yes. Let me tell you a little bit about Nimrod. I came across an interesting quote from Josephus. Josephus, an ancient historian. We have to be careful with Josephus as a source, because he wrote two books of history. One where he wrote a version for the Jews, which we don't have today, and one where he wrote a version for the Romans. The Romans were very interested in Jewish history, so he tended to embellish things for them and not say anything anti Roman for the Romans. It would be really interesting to have his Jewish version and to see the difference, but that it's being lost. Let me read to you something that Josephus said about Nimrod.

[00:04:45.520] - Terrie

He said, now, it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God as if it was through his means that they were happy. What he didn't want them to prescribe to God. The 'it' this paragraph is talking about is their prosperity.

[00:05:14.690] - Terrie

In the previous paragraph, he's talking about how prosperous they were out on the plane. Nimrod saying, this has got nothing to do with God. Why you're happy? But he wanted them to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power. He also said he would be revenged on God if he should have a mind to drown the world again. He would get back at God. If God wanted to send another flood. For that, he would build a tower too high for the waters to reach and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers. Now, the multitude were very ready to follow the determination of Nimrod and to esteem it a piece of cowardice to submit to God. And they built a tower, neither sparing any pains nor being in any degree negligent about the work. And by reason of the multitude of hands employed in it, it grew very high sooner than anyone

could expect. But the thickness of it was so great and it was so strongly built, that thereby its great height seemed upon the view to be less than it really was.

[00:06:45.000] - Terrie

It was built of burnt brick cemented together with mortar made of bitumen that it might not be liable to admit water. And then he goes on to tell the story of God's reaction to this tower. A couple of interesting things there. He couldn't get the populace to stop fearing God, and that's why he had to bring them under his control. And the people, once they got the idea of this tower, were really only too happy to be involved. They loved the building of this tower. And they got in very zealously and it went very quickly. It was built quick and because it grew high sooner than anyone could expect, and it was built so strongly that it didn't actually look as high as it was. Sorry, no, I'm reading out wrong. It's great height seemed upon the view to be less than it really was, so that's right. It was higher than it looked. I think that's what I said the first time. A couple of interesting things there. And this is taken from Jewish tradition. This account is also in the Talmud and the Midrash.

[00:08:15.840] - Terrie

There's a few sources there do agree. That gives us a bit of an insight into Nimrod. Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. When it says before the Lord, the literal Hebrew translation of that is, 'in God's face'. Which basically means against the Lord. He was the mighty hunter against God. And some say that he is the original Baal. This is where Baal worship come from. And of course, Baal is the god of fertility, but also the god of rainstorms, of weather, in particular rain. Fertility and rain going together. That is kind of interesting when we think of the flood and the building of the tower, he became the god of the weather. He was going to control the circumstances that were troubling the people and putting the fear of God into them. We talked about Nimrod, that he was the monarch. They wanted to build a tower that was to perpetuate their fame. Any other characteristics that you can think of?

[00:09:41.960] - Marie

Local and then worldwide?

[00:09:45.880] - Terrie

Yes. Thank you, Marie. While they built the city on the plain, their longterm objective was for it to be a universal kingdom.

[00:09:58.660] - Terrie

Thank you. Anything else?

[00:10:07.580] - Moli

God wanted them to be scattered, but instead they united. They stayed together.

[00:10:16.980] - Terrie

Yes. The people on the mountain that stayed up the mountain, but they eventually scattered. But as Marie said, their longterm objective was to be universal, but for the time being, to set up their kingdom, they gathered, they consolidated their talents and abilities. Thank you, Moli.

[00:10:44.780] - Moli

Self promotion.

[00:10:47.260] - Terrie

Self promotion, yes. We see that in the building of the tower. It was to perpetuate their memory, it was to be a monument to their wisdom and their engineering talents, and it was all about self promotion, lifting themselves up. So, self promotion. There's another main one I'm looking for. Think about why they're building the tower. One of the reasons for the tower is self promotion. The other reason is? Katherine?

[00:11:22.310] - Katherine

I was going to say about researching where the rain came from. They wanted to sort that out

[00:11:32.940] - Terrie

It's connected to that! Why?

[00:11:39.340] - Katherine

Because they want to find natural causes. Then you can discount the belief in God, I guess. It wasn't God that made it. There is no God, then, if we can explain it with science. That's how I understand it.

[00:11:57.060] - Terrie

That's true. That's true. Yes. It's very much connected with self exaltation. Yes. Lift themselves up through their wisdom and knowledge. But it's connected to what they want to find out, Katherine. The fear of another flood. It's sort of like a win win. They escape the flood, but then they also become super intelligent so that they can determine how to escape it or understand how it works in the first place. What you think about it. They're building this tower. Everybody's involved. Sorry, Moli.

[00:12:51.380] - Moli

They wanted to secure their own safety.

[00:12:55.300] - Terrie

Self preservation. Two things. Self exaltation. Self preservation. But who gets preserved? In reality, is everybody going to get up that tower?

[00:13:13.960] - Katherine

Just the rich and famous people back then. And the same today.

[00:13:20.140] - Terrie

It's the elite. But if the elites can get up there, what can they promise everybody else? We'll work it all out. We'll get up so high, we'll save you. Nimrod has what we would call today a Messiah complex, which fits in with our counterfeit of Daniel 8. Daniel 8 had a prince, Christ, as the true. And in the counterfeit, you have a Messiah, because he's Messiah the prince. You've got a messiah, the prince in the counterfeit. Which means you have a deliverer. You have someone with a Messiah complex. These elites are going to climb the tower, they're going to work it all out for everybody else. And everybody is just too keen to get this building done. So, self preservation, self exaltation, they go together. And of course, they're atheists, which is why we're looking at them. That was Alpha. The roots of Babylon is in Babel. So now we went down to modern Babylon, Omega, and we started looking at global catastrophic risks and existential risks. What's frightening people today? And because we have to put on our atheist hat, because we're Christians and we're 7th Day Adventist Christians. Which means we've read the end of the book, we know what's going to happen.

[00:15:09.870] - Terrie

It's very hard to get involved. Or get mentally connected with what's worrying the majority of the world, even some Christians. Most Christians believe in the second Advent. It might not be in their time, but they believe in something apocalyptic, something very scary. But if you're an atheist or a noneist somebody that doesn't believe in anything, then what is it that they are troubled by? We made some lists. First of all, a definition: a global catastrophic risk is a hypothetical future event that could damage human wellbeing, on a global scale. That's different to an existential risk. An existential risk could permanently and drastically curtail humanity's potential. Something catastrophic might not wipe everything out, but it would certainly put things back and kill a lot of people. Something existential has the propensity to wipe out mankind, to bring them to extinction. We're looking at both catastrophic and existential. First of all, we went to non anthropogenic catastrophic risks, which means they naturally caused, not man made. And we looked at the possibility of an asteroid. I just want to share screen. This is something that came up this month, the huge planet killer asteroid discovered and it's heading our way.

[00:17:12.230] - Terrie

It turns out it's going to miss us. It's just heading our way. But these are the things that you can see regularly in our news surface. NASA is watching. There are organizations watching for this. With a diameter of 1 to 2 km, this space rock crosses our orbit, but it has no chance of hitting Earth. They say they've discovered the largest planet killersize asteroid in eight years. It will cross our orbit. It's got a name, et cetera. It just gives you an idea that this is things that are being watched. I led you down the wrong path. It's actually got another name, hasn't it? Bear with me. Double asteroid redirection test. I can write that somewhere. I rub this out. Just a minute. If you Google 'Double asteroid redirection test'. They hit one of two asteroids, and this is what's called DART. Just recently and deflected the asteroid. These are the things they're trying to do in case there's a bad asteroid heading our way. And then we looked at global warming and we put global warming under human and natural. What would cause a natural global warming?

[00:19:29.590] - Terrie

Does anybody remember? It happened early this year. This is the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai Volcano. That was in January this year. And it temporarily warmed the climate and depleted stratospheric ozone. And all these statistics came out in August and September. The impact that that volcanic eruption had on global warming, it will dissipate. But it's these super volcanic eruptions that can cause a runaway global warming. The last one that occurred was about 26,000 years ago, New Zealand. And I think the earliest one is like 400,000 years ago. Remember, we got our atheist hats on. Supervolcanic eruptions or any volcanic eruption can cause global warming. Did I hear somebody speak?

[00:21:00.300] - Marie

I just said volcano, but you put it up.

[00:21:04.720] - Terrie

Thank you, Marie. Sorry. I jumped in t quick.

[00:21:09.280] - Lynn

Graeme's got his hand up in the chat.

[00:21:15.860] - Graeme

I was just answering the volcano question, that was all.

[00:21:19.170] - Terrie

Okay. We'll skip resources for the moment because we asked for suggestions. Pandemics. And we've got that under natural. Should we have that under natural? That's another question. We know that the pandemic, the COVID pandemic, or SARS, was not made in laboratory, but does that mean it was necessarily natural? And so here's an article from The Guardian. This is a couple of years old. Pandemics result from destruction of nature. Says the United Nations and the World Health Organization. It says, pandemics such as coronavirus are the result of humanity's destruction of nature. According to leaders at the UN, the World Wildlife Foundation International. And the world has been ignoring this stark reality for decades. What are they saying? That pandemics really are man made? Even though we're not artificially creating the pandemic, they are a result of man's destruction of wildlife habitat and interference. I'm going to take pandemic out of it here and we'll put it over here. The other thing that people worried about are hostile extraterrestrials. We have movies about that. We talked about supervolcanic eruptions. Then there's the sun turning into a giant red star, which it will do in about 5 billion years.

[00:23:23.840] - Terrie

But in 1 billion years, we won't be able to live on this planet. Or it will have gotten too hot as the sun starts to break down. It increases in luminosity, which means it gets hotter here and all our water will evaporate. We've got a thousand years, even though the sun's got 5000 years before it goes into a giant red star.

They're our natural causes. Then we went over to the anthropogenic causes, and we looked at AI or artificial intelligence. And that's one of the main things that scare scientists. I'll write up AI. But I'm going to write AGI, and rub out AI. Why? Artificial intelligence and the science connected with it and the engineering connected with it is developing. Knowledge of it is growing all the time. Artificial intelligence, we're surrounded with a lot of that already. If you're using a navigation app, it's artificial intelligence. If you've got Siri or one of those voice activated helpers that Apple has got Siri and what's the other one? Alexa. Siri and Alexa, they're artificial intelligence. Google assistance, face recognition is artificial intelligence. Our online banking, that's a lot of artificial intelligence.

[00:25:30.300] - Terrie

That's not the artificial intelligence that has people worried. It's AGI. Artificial General Intelligence. Artificial General Intelligence is where the machinery can write its own software. It's when a machine becomes as smart as a human. It becomes self aware and it can write its own software. You might have heard of the word sentient. Earlier this year there was June, there was a Google engineer that was fired because he said that the machinery he was working on had become sentient. So Google fired him. Sentient means that it has become self aware and it was able to have these conversations with this Google employee. There's a lot of controversy out there whether this machinery is sentient or not. We will look into that a bit more another time. But just bear in mind that there is a difference between AI and AGI. But let me bring something up. In 2014, Elon Musk said artificial intelligence is our biggest existential threat. The AI investor says that humanity risks summoning a demon and calls for more regulatory oversight. Elon Musk has spoken out against artificial intelligence, declaring it the most serious threat to the survival of the human race.

[00:27:33.370] - Terrie

And then same year, Stephen Hawking in December came out and said: artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race, the famous astrophysicist. He says the development of artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race. The famous astrophysicist said he believed technology would eventually become self aware and supersede humanity as it developed faster than biological evolution. And that concept has only grown more since 2014. Okay, then we looked at global warming. It's not global warming as such that has people worried about existential threat. It's runaway global warming. Or maybe I should put runaway greenhouse effect. You want to know what runaway greenhouse looks like? Then look at Venus. Venus is hundreds of thousands of years ago it had an atmosphere like us. And then there was a runaway greenhouse effect and it was carbon dioxide. And now the surface of Venus can melt lead. It's that hot. That will eventually would eventually happen to the Earth when the sun implodes. But there is a fear that man could hastening that. We will talk a bit more about the difference between, global warming or this greenhouse effect.

[00:29:31.040] - Terrie

Again, when we looked at nuclear war, the threat is the nuclear winter and the particles that would be scattered across the Earth's atmosphere, that would stop the light getting in. Crops wouldn't grow, famines would come, people die and starve. A nuclear winter would bring about an extinction. Bioweapons, biotechnology, people are worried about that. And then we put overpopulation. Anybody

watched the news this week? What special event happened on the 15 November? 8 billion people. 8 billion people. We've reached a milestone. 8 billion people. Are we overpopulated? The ABC has done an interesting special on this. It's called 8 Billion and Counting. And all the data that the various world organizations put together on these things. And so in about 2100, we should reach our pinnacle, which is about 10 billion. We've had kind of exponential growth in population over a short period of time, but they're expecting that to plateau out. And then we will sit about 10 billion and then decline. They're not worried so much about overpopulation. Why is this 8 billion worrying people? Anybody read the articles or see anything?

[00:31:18.220] - Terrie

Why isn't it overpopulation that's the concern? What is it about this 8 billion people? What kind of a population are we? We are an aging population. We're getting old. People are living longer and they're not having enough babies. The population is aging. That's the concern. If you watch this ABC special, once upon a time, not that many decades ago, the average amount of children was five. And then it was like two and a half, in Australia at least. The only countries where population is increasing is the African continent. And a lot of that has to do with women not being able to get education and jobs. But in countries where they can get education and jobs, then the birth rate is slowing down. And that worries people. And we'll find out why that is of concern. I'm going to put it overpopulation here. When we talk about resources over here, that should be over here as well because we've got enough resources. It's the inequality of the distribution of resources that's the problem. And that's man made. We talked about environmental degradation and then we put Pandemic over here as well.

[00:33:03.120] - Terrie

Any thoughts or comments about these catastrophic global risks and existential risks?

[00:33:16.000] - Katherine

I just saw an article, I didn't read it, but I saw the headline. They're talking about how the sperm count is dropping as well. And I wonder if that ties in with what you're going to say. That this is why they're concerned about that, given what you've said tonight.

[00:33:36.680] - Terrie

There it is Katherine. Yes. New study reveals global sperm count is significant and accelerated decline. Thank you. That's part of it. It's not a concern about overpopulation. We're not breathing like we were. There was another one that we could put up and that is repressive totalitarian regime. That is a fancy word for a one world government. It won't mean existential risk, but it would be where the propensity for civilization to improve would be stopped and all go backwards. That would be a catastrophic global catastrophe if there was a repressive totalitarian global regime. These are things that they talk about. And of course, if that totalitarian regime controls or put the values into the Artificial General Intelligence, then we'd really be in a lot of trouble. The problem with artificial general intelligence is that... Let me read you a quote. This is an AI pioneer and he said, if we use to achieve our purposes a mechanical agency with whose operation we cannot interfere effectively, we had better be quite sure that the purpose put into the machine is the purpose which we really desire.

[00:35:44.660] - Terrie

What's he saying? If we created something that ultimately we won't be able to control, we better make sure that the values and the goals that we put into that machine are the ones we really want to have. And that would be the concern if you had a totalitarian regime putting their values and goals into AGI and then the AGI took over the world. Some of the scenarios that people suggest is for example you had superhuman intelligence and you said to that superhuman intelligence. And I'm not talking about robots. Robots are the body. I'm talking about the computer. And you said to the computer, we want to solve global warming. And the computer went tick, tick, ticket, tick, tick, and said, humans cause global warming, and so they kill all the humans. They've solved the problem. These are the things they talk about and worry about. Okay, so we're worried about extinction. We're going to look at the big picture. This is a graph. It's called Our World in Data. This is a thinktake that runs out of Oxford University and we'll be hearing a lot about Oxford University. This is an illustration of the population today and the population in the past.

[00:37:43.830] - Terrie

Let me bring it up. These all represent grains of sand, and each grain of sand is 10 million people. How many people have already lived? 109,000,000,000 people have lived and died. Each of these grains sand is 10 million people. And there are 10,900 of them in the bottom of this hourglass. That's 109,000,000,000 people. Remember, we're atheists. We've been around 300,000 years. So down here we've got the cavemen, then the first agriculturalists, and then we come all the way up to here. 60 million people die every year. We've got six grains of sand falling through that hourglass. That hour represents a year. And here are our 8 billion. This little green bit here, it's got 7.95 billion. But they haven't read the latest news. So we'll say it's 8 billion. They represent those that are alive today. There are 140,000,000 children at the moment born each year. This is what's being added to the hourglass. That gives us an idea of comparison of the people that have been and the people that now are in the present time. As I said earlier, the population was really kind of stagnant for a couple of hundred thousand years.

[00:39:32.430] - Terrie

More. More than that. And it's only in the last it's only since that really the industrial age that population has increased and it increased quite exponentially. That's why we got to 8 billion in a relatively short period of time. What's the future look like? Here we've got another illustration. Our potential future is vast. Let's bring this up. Let me make it a little bigger. Okay. Every triangle in this chart corresponds to 7.95 billion people. We know we got eight, but we'll ignore it. Every triangle is 8 billion people. Here in the past, the bottom part of that hourglass, we've got 14 triangles. That represents 109,000,000,000 people that have lived in the past. Those that are living at the present is one triangle, 8 billion people. What's the future going to look like? It's vast. I'll make it a little smaller. Remember, every triangle is 8 billion people. We'll go back to our line here. The average life span of a typical mammal species is about 1 million years before they go extinct. That's typical. There's been a lot of species extinction over the millennia. We're a mammal and we've got a million years.

[00:42:09.760] - Terrie

We've been around for 300,000 years. We have the propensity to live for another 700,000 years. But with our technology and if we can navigate all these problems that are facing at the moment, we have the potential to live for a very long time. And in that long time, there are going to be a lot of people. Let's go back. It gives you an idea. Each row represents the lives of half a trillion people. We go all the way down here, it takes us down here that there would be 100 trillion children would be born in the next 800,000 years. We haven't even got to a billion years yet. Remember, we've only got a billion before the sun does damage to the Earth. The sun exists for another 5 billion years, if we stay alive for all this time. How would somebody who believes this, how would they look to solving these existential risks? How would they relate to these problems? Philosophers and think tanks have spent the last couple of decades thinking on these issues. And I want to share with you one solution that has been slowly taking the world by storm.

[00:44:15.360] - Terrie

And when I say the world has only really been introduced this year to the general populace, but it has been around in the think tanks of universities for probably about 15 years generally. But longer than that, we could trace it back to the 1970s. It's called longtermism. And this is how it goes. This is the mantra. Future people count. There could be a lot of them and we can make their lives better. Three sentences. Now, when we talk about longtermism, this is different from thinking long-term. We should always be thinking long-term. Now, remember, when we're looking at these, we're looking at a counterfeit. Generally people like to think long-term. Or if we're smart enough, we should be thinking long-term. Every time I drive north out of Melbourne and you see all those developments and new suburbs and you think, where's the public transport? How come I've only got two lanes? It's a good example of governments not thinking long-term. So governments and policy can be a bit myopic. Myopic means short term and don't really plan for the future. And that's kind of how politics can work sometimes because it's all about getting to the next election.

[00:46:39.010] - Terrie

It's good when governments think long-term and make plans, but even when they might not be in government. There is efforts to be long-term in thinking and sometimes we're not. But when we're talking about longtermism, we're not talking about fixing global warming for the next 10,000 years. We're talking about thinking about the next hundreds of billions of years and trillions and trillions of people. Future people count. The premise goes like this. If I'm hiking along a trail and I drop my glass bottle and it breaks and a child comes along after me, maybe that afternoon, maybe the next day, and they cut their feet, I have created harm for that person. Does it make any difference if that child comes along the next day or she comes along 100,000 years after? And the answer for these long-term is no. What we do now is directly affecting the people in the future. And the people in the future are a lot more than the people now. So they quantify people and they want to do the greatest good. To do the greatest good would be to do it in thinking about the most people and not about the less people.

[00:48:29.150] - Terrie

Let me see. This will explain it better. The key argument of longtermists is that our planet will remain habitable for a few billion years, which means that most people who will ever be alive are yet to be born. Therefore, the first and foremost priority of longtermists is to minimize existential risks. This includes

events that could lead to human extinction. If we're really going to think about the future and all those trillions of people, they're going to live in the future, then we have to navigate the problem that we're facing at the moment. And the problem we're facing is extinction, global and existential risk. We talked about last week, we're here 300,000 years in, and scientists are saying maybe we got 30, maybe we got 100, but they doubt we've got 200 years left. Which as a as a highly developed mammal is pretty bad. We've got ourselves into a place here where we won't survive. How are we going to navigate this time period so that we can do the greatest good for all these trillions of people? Where should our priority be short-term? Long-term? Any thoughts? How does that sound to you?

[00:50:37.340] - Speaker X

I got a comment that I'm not sure if this says anything to it. It sounds similar to sacrificing the few for the many?

[00:50:58.500] - Terrie

Yes. There's been all these think tanks and research organizations that have developed over the last 15 to 20 years looking into these subjects, these risks. And what has come out of that is that our priorities need to be for the many, not for the few. If you think about it, if you think that if this is the lifespan of humanity and think of that as, say, a 90 year old man. Here he's born, here he dies,. And we're here, and something like World War Two happens, between 40 million and 50 million people die. On the scale of things, that 40 or 50 million people, is it really a big deal or what about even 6 million Jews? How much of a big deal is that when you're talking about trillions of people lasting billions of years?

[00:52:25.180] - Katherine

It's just like tiny amount in comparison.

[00:52:31.040] - Terrie

This 90 year old man has knocked his knee. He probably he probably hasn't bruised it, but he was 30 and he knocked his knee on the bed as he walked around. That's all it is. With longtermism, this movement that is growing and growing and getting more and more popular, things like floods and famines. They're not big deals because they're not existential risks. The war in Ukraine not an existential risk. It's a blip in history. Money, resources, policies need to go to these problems. A lot of money being funneled into it. And this is the irony of it, not only developing AGI, but working out just as much, working out how they're going to control it. It's called alignment. We need to align AGI with our goals and values. And there's a problem with that, that they're worried that it's not going to be aligned. It'll think what it wants to think. It'll go off the rails. A lot of money being funneled there. Let's talk about population. We're here, and within 100 years, we'll reach our full potential. In fact, we've reached the pinnacle in the 1960s of our growth rate.

[00:54:23.830] - Terrie

It's slightly been going around down since the 1960s. And we'll reach our plateau by 2100. Yes. Why is that a problem? To to solve these problems, to continue these generations, what do we need? We need

women having children, but not just any children. What kind of children do we need people to have? Because what do they have to work with? The answer to all our problems lies with technology. We need smart children, educated children. Elon Musk said, it's just a shame CEOs aren't having more children. We need CEOs having more children. He's had nine so far and intends on having some more. Somebody suggested he needed about 500. He thought that was a bit over the top. But he recognizes that. He has said elsewhere that the other risk is under population. When it comes to population and resources, we need women to be having children, but we need them to be not poor children, not uneducated children. And they're not talking, though they're not talking about putting money into schools and solving global poverty. They're talking about the smart people today having more children, the engineers, the scientists having more children and putting them into their elite colleges so that they can be able to deal with these problems here.

[00:57:07.070] - Terrie

The people that are getting on this longtermism train are the super wealthy. The Elon Musks, your Peter Thiels, your Mark Andreessen's. If I said FTX, SBF, what am I talking about? What's this all about? Who's watched the news this week?

[00:57:42.890] - Speaker X

Cryptocurrency.

[00:57:43.840] - Terrie

Cryptocurrency. So SBF, Sam Bankman-Fried. Longtermist, who put his career into finding a job that he could earn the most amount of money to put into all the organizations that they are dealing with these. He wanted to earn as much money to solve these problems. He's a longtermist. It's 08:00. We'll stop here. But next week, what we want to talk about is what created longtermism, and it's something called Effective Altruism. What is altruism? It's the disinterested and selfless concern for the well being of others. The Effective Altruism movement began in the 2000s, started in Oxford University. A couple of philosophers. And what they wanted to do was work out the most effective way to benefit humanity in giving. They use math. It's all quantitative, all this about the future and the numbers of potential populations. It's all about math and working out probabilities. And it's actually a lot of guesswork, but anyway, they use mathematical equations that go over my head. But they effectively use mathematics to determine what is the most effective way to benefit humanity.

[01:00:03.520] - Terrie

Here's an example. You've got a charity like Make a Wish Foundation, and little Amy has got cancer. She makes a wish. She wants to be Bat girl for a day. They gather all this money and she gets a costume and somebody comes dressed as Bat Girl. Maybe they'll fly to Disneyland. You know, some of those things could cost, say, \$10,000, anything between 5000 and \$10,000. And you've benefited child, made her feel good while she's going through a traumatic experience. Whereas Effective Altruism would say no. They would do the math and say, we need to put that amount of money into mosquito bed nets in a third world country. And then that would buy a lot of bed nets that would stop malaria, et cetera. The intention started good, Effective Altruism. How to do the best good. As that snowballed, what they did was there were

many think tanks that developed from that first group. One of the ones is called 80,000 Hours. And 80,000 hours is about the length of time that you're going to spend in a career. You're a young person, you go in a university and they will mentor you, and say, you want to do the best good for humanity?

[01:01:39.000] - Terrie

Then you might not be joining a charity. Why don't you join Wall Street where you can earn a lot of money and funnel that? Or get a job in a petrochemical company. Find the best paying career move that you can make to benefit humanity. So 80,000 Hours, it's quite a big organization. The effective altruistic movement at the moment holds about 46 billion ready to help. This is no small thing. It has large donors that are keeping it running. And there are others, let me give you a few other names and you can just tell by their Future of Life Institute. Future of Humanity Institute. Global Catastrophic Risk Institute. Center for the Study of Existential Risks. There's just all these institutes. The majority of them, or a lot of them are connected with Oxford University. Cambridge has its own and America has their own. I think it's Future of Life Institute, that's funded by Jaan Tallin. The billionaire that started Skype, but it's also Elon Musk and Peter Thiel. They put big money into these institutes. Effective Altruism out of that came longtermism.

[01:03:34.670] - Terrie

And the danger of it is. Let's not put our priorities here, let's put our priorities here. If you're somebody that's always wanted to go to Mars, what can you do now? You've got good reason to do that. You are saving humanity. You are doing the best for the most people. It doesn't matter there's a war in Ukraine or there's a flood in Pakistan. They're just blips. It's sad. But the greater good is to deal with these problems, especially that. Money is going here. Global warming isn't a problem if it's just what we're experiencing today, floods and hurricanes and wildfires, that's not going to wipe us out. Global warming is only a problem if it's the runaway greenhouse effect. The research is going to that, and also just to get us off the planet before that as well. Things we want to look at is next week I'd like to go back and look at the philosophy and ideology that started even before Effective Altruism. What led up to that? What is it that is at the core of their beliefs that ends up as longtermism?

[01:05:19.710] - Terrie

It is a religion in the sense that it makes people feel morally good. It's the religion you have when you take God out of the equation. You've got something to give you purpose and that you are contributing to the good of mankind. I'm using mankind because Effective Altruism, it's an atheistic movement, largely white, largely male, largely elite. And when we looked at New Atheism and we saw all the problems with sexism, and New Atheism has the same problems. We want to look at the ideology and philosophy that brought this about. That'll be one topic. We also want to have a look closer look at AGI, Artificial General Intelligence and look at just what makes intelligence, what is intelligence? Because we're the people that should know. We might not be rocket surgeons and brain scientists, but we do know how human beings are made and so we should understand intelligence. We want to have a look at that. And the other thing we want to look into is these billionaires. We understand Trumpism, we need to understand Muskism and that all of this really longtermism is just capitalism on steroids.

[01:07:01.790] - Terrie

Because if you get off the planet here, what have you got out there in the universe? It's the libertarian dream. Away from the constrictions of these laws and these government regulations. There's a a lot of holes that we just want to poke down and to get this picture of what's happening out there in the secular world, what's taking the world by storm. It's been a slow train, but it's really starting to fasten up. And when you see it, you can't unsee it because it's in the news all the time. Even when we saw this week with the collapse of this crypto exchange. It's so connected with this effective altruistic movement and longtermism. Any questions? No thoughts?

[01:08:27.580] - Katherine

Would it be worth us looking anything up in between now and next time? Is there something you recommend we read or look into?

[01:08:37.360] - Terrie

You could Google longtermism. You can google Effective Altruism. There's plenty of it. In your spare time. You won't be short of information. You'll see who's connected when we talk about not going down rabbit holes. It's a warren. So just be aware. You don't want to fully immerse yourself in it. The thing is, we've got to sift sources. A lot of this, the majority of this is left wing. And so even good journalists see that longtermism will have beneficial results. There's a few that see the problem, but not all of them. Some of them are a little skeptical, but it's quite entrancing. This whole idea of doing the greatest good. It makes mathematical sense. So just be aware. I'll give you a couple of names. So William MacAskill. I think that might be it. And Toby Ord, let me double check, he's an Australian. Okay. Let me show you two books. Not that I'm telling you to buy them, it's just being aware of them. This one, it's called the Precipice.

[01:11:07.730] - Terrie

Toby Ord wrote this in 2015. And it's all about these existential risks and that we are on the Precipice now. The future of humanity is in our lifetime. You could read about that. Notice the website that I've pulled this up from. This is 80,000 hours website. This is who's promoting this book. And the other book is I don't know if I can swap that over. Did that work? What we owe the future a million year view. That's William MacAskill. What? We owe the future. I'm just going to make sure that that worked. What We Owe the Future is the book that came out this year. And it's the book that is meant to sell this philosophy. It's toned down a little bit for public consumption. MacAskill and Hillary Greece wrote a thought paper in 2019 on longtermism. When we're talking about longtermism, there are varying degrees and they believe in strong longtermism. That is our greatest priority. The priority of today is fighting existential risks and preparing for the future. We're to prioritize that over anything else that is happening in the world.

[01:12:51.890] - Terrie

In fact, some of these philosophers will say it's 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th priority on the list, and fifth priority is understanding AGI. And then you can worry about famines and floods and all the rest. These are two people that are worth looking at, and longtermism and Effective Altruism.

[01:13:24.810] - Terrie

Graeme, would you mind closing in prayer for us tonight?

[01:13:29.290] - Graeme

Dear Lord, thank you for the Sabbath hours that have dawned upon us. We thank you for the blessings that we have of understanding through true information, your plan and salvation for the people of this world. We look into the understanding of atheism, and we ask for big understanding as we search out these subjects. Bless elder Terry with her presentations as she unfolds to us the deep workings of these topics that we are learning. Help us to grasp the concepts that atheism deals with and how it relates to us and to the people in our time. We ask for greater clarity as you continue to pour out your Latter Rain upon us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.