

5. Effective Altruism

Terrie Lambert, 09.12.2022

Youtube Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_LyJ3QeypZ0

[00:00:04.610] - Marilyn

Dear God in heaven, we thank you for Your great love for us. We thank you for the especially the leadership that You've given to us to help us to learn the way that you would understand these very life and death issues that we have to go through, to see as you would have us to see. To see what heaven is made up of. Help us to see it this side of the kingdom and know that we can have a little heaven on this earth. Please be with all of those that are listening this evening. We pray that they will hear what the Spirit says. Please be with Terry as she presents and that you will give her the words that we need to bring us to your kingdom. We leave ourselves now in Your care and keeping. To your glory and honor we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

[00:01:13.070] - Terrie

We're going to start with a verse. We're going to start with 1 Corinthians 14: 32-33. This is a verse we used to use a lot going back. Once upon a time. 1 Corinthians 14: 32 and 33. Who would like to read that? Marilyn, I see your audio is on. Have you got it?

[00:01:59.060] - Marilyn

Yes.

[00:02:00.580] - Terrie

Thank you. If you could read that.

[00:02:06.620] - Marilyn

For ye may all prophesy one by one.

[00:02:11.260] - Terrie

Sorry, Marilyn. 1 Corinthians 14: 32 and 33.

[00:02:16.630] - Marilyn

32 and 33. Okay.

[00:02:27.860] - Marilyn

And the spirits of the prophet are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

[00:02:40.440] - Terrie

Thank you. Could I have a volunteer to explain, or put in their own words what verse 32 is saying? Just 32. Put in your own words what verse 32 is saying. What is Paul talking about? What does it mean? The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

[00:03:14.220] - Marie

Is it that they are witnesses? They're witnesses, so they're subject to them.

[00:03:27.130] - Terrie

What does it mean then to be subject to them?

[00:03:33.450] - Marie

They'll be a witness and confirm that what has been said is correct.

[00:03:43.920] - Terrie

How are they going to witness that what has been said is correct?

[00:03:55.710] - Marie

I guess if they would be doing line upon line.

[00:04:01.590] - Terrie

And what's the principle behind line upon line? Because all the prophets in the Bible aren't drawing lines on blackboards. What are they doing? You're right. I'm just trying to tease out a different answer. Keep going, Marie. They're witnessing of each other by doing what?

[00:04:30.190] - Marie

They're repeating what has already been prophesied?

[00:04:36.430] - Terrie

Yes. And what is our rule? What is the principle behind line upon line?

[00:04:46.130] - Marie

The testimony of two or three.

[00:04:49.010] - Terrie

The testimony of two or three something is established. That's the signature of God.

[00:04:54.790] - Terrie

When it says that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, it means that they all agree. Moses is subject to Paul. Paul is subject to Hosea. Hosea is subject to Christ. Christ is subject to Ellen White. They all agree. Not putting Christ on the same level as Ellen White, but as a prophet, they all have to agree with each other. They're subject to one another by the testimony of two a thing is established. As you said, Marie, they are witnesses of one another by repeating it. And when they repeat it, they repeat it differently. But the principle is the same. They're saying the same thing in different words. The spirits of the prophets, their message agrees with another's message. For God is not the author of confusion. God is not the author of confusion. Who is the author of confusion? I hear you all saying. Satan is the author of confusion. What is God the author. If he doesn't author confusion? What does he author? Peace. God is the author of peace. In fact, allow me to put it on top. What's the word in the Bible that we associate with confusion?

[00:07:00.220] - Katherine

Babylon, the Tower of Babel

[00:07:08.460] - Terrie

Yes, we get that confusion from the Tower of Bable. Babylon. Babylon means confusion. Babeling. I haven't given myself way enough room. I'm going to have to start this again. What is the word that I'm going to place up here on this line?

[00:07:59.810] - Katherine

Jerusalem.

[00:08:03.830] - Terrie

Why, Katherine?

[00:08:06.150] - Katherine

Because it's got the word peace in it. Like Shalom.

[00:08:11.510] - Terrie

City of peace, pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They that prosper shall serve thee. Peace be within thy walls and thy palaces. City of peace. We want to know more about Babylon. We looked at the Tower of Babel. I'm going to be mean and I'm going to pick on Lynne. Because Lynne and I had a conversation recently. I'm hoping it comes to your memory, Lynne. Lynne, walk us through the definition of Babylon. I want three verses.

[00:08:45.890] - Lynne

First of all, we wanted to identify what Babylon was, and from memory, that was that great city. And we can go to Revelation 14:8 for that. Do you want me to read that?

[00:09:07.190] - Terrie

No, you can. tell us it's Revelation 14:8. Go on.

[00:09:11.180] - Lynne

Revelation 14:8 is basically saying there has fallen another angel, and then it's saying that Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city. Therefore, that's how we can determine Babylon is that great city. And then we go back to Revelation 16. And we go further down in that chapter first just to get a little bit more information about what that city was. And that was in Revelation 16:19. In there, it talks about the great city being divided into three parts, and that was important. Then there was the third one. You go further back into verse 16 still, it was 16:13. And there it describes what the three parts are, and it talks about the unclean frogs. But basically what we've got is this is the identification of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. We know that three parts of Babylon were really divided into those three parts.

[00:10:26.900] - Terrie

Dragon, beast, and False prophet. The three parts of that great city. Thank you. Excellent work. Babylon means confusion and when we look further, it's divided into three parts. 1 Corinthians 14:32 said in the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. God's prophets agree. If God's got prophets in Jerusalem, Satan's got prophets in Babylon. And what will characterize Satan's prophets?

[00:11:17.270] - Marie

They will agree.

[00:11:22.930] - Terrie

They will agree or they won't agree?

[00:11:29.890] - Marie

Well, I said will. They will agree, because he's always copying off God's kingdom, but they probably won't. When I think about it.

[00:11:40.600] - Terrie

What does Babylon mean?

[00:11:42.630] - Terrie

Confusion.

[00:11:44.890] - Terrie

Do you think they're going to agree or not agree.

[00:11:48.890] - Marie

Not agree?

[00:11:51.530] - Terrie

That's why there's confusion. Why was there confusion in the Tower of Babel? Because they're all saying different things. If you think of the Great Controversy, when Ellen White talks about the dragon will reach its arm, I'm paraphrasing, across a chasm and the other reaches their arms across an abyss. That means that they have profound differences between them. They are going to unify for a brief period of time, but it'll only be brief, but there are profound differences.

[00:12:41.270] - Terrie

Between the three, there are disagreements. They do not agree, they don't give witness to each other, and within themselves they have disagreements. But when we looked at Daniel 8, we divided these up into three religions. The religion of the dragon is spiritualism, the beast is Catholicism, the false prophet is apostate Protestantism. And there are profound chasms abysses between them. Even though we've got mum and daughter, they don't agree. They are going to unify on something, though. The spirits of Satan's prophets are not subject one to another. What we want to make clear is that when we looked at the counterfeit in Daniel 8, we saw that the counterfeit runs close to the truth. We see things like self promotion, self exaltation, and self preservation are all characteristics of Satan's kingdom. And it is a counterfeit of God's kingdom. But in God's kingdom, it's not self that gets promoted, it's not self that gets exalted, and it's not self that preserves. God does all of those for his people. We looked at the counterfeit. When we come to here, when we're looking at these, we understand that each of these is a counterfeit.

[00:14:56.510] - Terrie

When we did Daniel 8, we recognize that spiritualism is the daily, it's the continual. The hatamid, the continual, the Gadal, self exaltation that was from the beginning and continues all the way through. And then we saw that Catholicism is just another version of the daily as well, and so is apostate Protestantism. The daily is going to continue through but it will get called different names. When it becomes Catholicism, it's going to be called the abomination that make it desolate, but it's just another version of the daily, the continual. All of these entities are beasts. The dragon is a beast, the false prophet is a beast. It's the lamblike beast. And this one is The Beast. A dragon is a beast, false prophet is a beast. And we have The Beast. The only difference is in their names, in the sense that these are common nouns and that's a proper noun. They're all beasts. They're all the daily, they just have different versions of their names and manifest themselves differently. But they essentially have the same characteristics of a counterfeit. They are all counterfeits. They are all explained in Daniel 8.

[00:16:49.960] - Terrie

The dragon is a counterfeit, the false prophet is a counterfeit, and this one is the counterfeit. I just want to try and make clear that they're all counterfeits. It's just that we focus a lot on the counterfeit, but they are all counterfeits. Just like the dragon is the daily and yet they're all daily. Any thoughts, Ray?

[00:17:46.170] - Raymond

Elder Terry? Should we think of the dragon and the false prophet as a copy of the copy? If you have the first copy, it would be like fairly close to the original, but then each subsequent copy is going to get less and less accurate. Does that make sense? Is that not really a right way of thinking.

[00:18:18.000] - Terrie

I think of it more like children. If you look at a family, you can look at the children and tell who their parents are. The children look like mum and dad, but they look different to each other. They're similarities.

[00:18:36.390] - Raymond

Yeah, right.

[00:18:37.130] - Terrie

You wouldn't call one child more of a child of its parents than the other child. You can look at those children and you know where they've come from, even though there's differences.

[00:18:53.340] - Raymond

That makes sense. Thank you.

[00:18:58.300] - Terrie

If we consider Jerusalem and we think of the three persons of the Godhead. Think of, and I'll use the biblical terms, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Bible said God is Spirit, so the Father is Spirit, the Son is Spirit, who dwells in a temple of flesh, the Incarnation. And there is the Holy Spirit. Proper noun. When we talk about the Father being Spirit, we use a common noun. When we talk about the Holy Spirit, it becomes a proper noun. Little bit of grammar on the end of a long week. Bit of a pain, isn't it? But we do that in different ways with other things as well. We have to be able to recognize when something is a proper noun and when something is a common noun. We're looking at atheism, we're looking at something that comes under the heading of the dragon, under the umbrella of the dragon. The dragon will have numerous examples of itself, of the daily. It is a beast power. It is a counterfeit. As we're looking at out atheism, we're looking at a counterfeit. It is going to be counterfeiting God's kingdom.

[00:20:25.680] - Terrie

But it's not the counterfeit in the sense when we study the midnight cry message or how the movement uses this term. We understand that the false prophet is also a counterfeit. When we're looking at atheism, we should be able to see aspects, characteristics of what we're studying that are mimicking God's kingdom just in a different way, like it's a different child than the counterfeit does. Any thoughts?

[00:21:14.760] - Raymond

No, but you also answered another question I was going to ask, which is what would be the three parts of Jerusalem? Thank you.

[00:21:26.380] - Terrie

When we consider Ted Wilson's sermon and really the main focus of the mainstream Seventh-day Adventist Church, it focuses on the counterfeit and doesn't really see what's happening with the other counterfeits as well. We know that they were all going to join hands across the chasms and across the abysses, but they don't agree. And like the Tower of Babel, it will all come crashing down because they can't keep it up. That's all I wanted to say there.

[00:22:14.190] - Terrie

Atheism. Since we're talking about atheism. This is an article from the National Geographic. It's from 2016 and it says 'The World's Newest Major Religion: No Religion'. As secularism grows, atheists and agnostics are trying to expand and diversify their ranks. We'll just read a little bit. You don't usually think of churches as going out of business, but it happens. In March, driven by parishioner deaths and lack of interest, the UK mennonites held their last collective service. It might seem easy to predict that plain dressing antibaptists who follow a faith related to the Amish would become irrelevant in the age of smartphones, but this is part of a larger trend.

[00:23:30.210] - Terrie

Around the world when asked about their feelings on religion, more and more people are responding with a 'hmm'. The religiously unaffiliated called "nones" are growing significantly. They're the second largest religious group in North America and most of Europe. In the United States, "nones" make up almost a quarter of the population. In the past decade, US "nones" have overtaken Catholics, mainline Protestants and all followers of nonchristian faiths. This is a group that's worth taking notice of. They're a large group. Shows some maps here how it's growing and where it's not. It's not growing in Africa and it will go on to explain why in parts of the world it's not growing. Atheism's diversity problem. As atheism grows as its own movement, it is not cohesive, as we read in a study last time, and it is very much white. The center for Inquiry in Washington, DC hosts a regular happy hour called Drinking Sceptically on a Wednesday in late March. About a dozen people showed up to faithlessly imbibe, and all but one were white. And this will go on to explain how it's largely a white movement. The secularizing west, they will talk about. And here it will say, the privilege of not believing.

[00:25:16.790] - Terrie

Why? Well, let me read. There are a few theories about why people become atheists in large numbers. Some demographers attribute it to financial security, which would explain why European countries with a stronger social safety net are more secular than the United States, where poverty is more common and a medical emergency can bankrupt even the insured. Atheism is also tied to education, measured by academic achievement. Atheists in many places tend to have college degrees or general knowledge of

the panoply of beliefs around the world. Hence theories that Internet access spurs atheism. The more people get educated and the more they have financial security, the less they need God. We see that more in Western nations. The other thing is, and it talks about here is women. Around the world the Pew Research Center finds that women tend to be more likely to affiliate with a religion and more likely to pray and find religion important in their lives. And why is that? Lack of education and lack of financial security. Fewer have economic opportunities and less exposure to a worldview that does not require the presence of God. Religion has a place for women, people of color and the poor.

[00:26:51.590] - Terrie

By its nature, secularism is open to all, but it's not always as welcoming. And then it will go on to talk about the humanist movement's most visible figures, which elder Tess talked about in Vespers, Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens. They're not welcoming to women. It's an interesting article that shows the growth of atheism / "nones" across the world. The dragon power is large and influential. It is white and male, largely. What we've been looking at when we consider this counterfeit is one aspect, one particular outgrowth of the dragon. And it involves three parts, philosophy, technology, and elites. Or as that article said, the privileged, those with money. And they come together and they are going to influence politics. When we consider these together, one of the things that we can establish through Daniel 8 is, that this is a religion. They might not call themselves religion, they might be antireligion, but it is a religious movement. And we've proven that, and we'll continue to do that. But this religious movement, it got its own trinity. And we were talking about longtermism.

[00:29:10.200] - Terrie

We'll go back to there. If anybody wants to take a picture of that, I'm just about to rub it out. One, two, three. What we started looking at last time was the philosophy. We can continue looking at the philosophy today and then hopefully get onto the technology next time. The philosophy. We went back into the 1970s. We remind ourselves of a study from 2021 about atheism. It said "a new study suggests that while atheists and theists share moral values related to protecting vulnerable individuals, atheists are less likely to endorse values that promote group cohesion..." They don't really stick together. "...and more inclined to judge the morality of actions based on their consequences." This is a philosophy called consequentialism and a particular thread of that we're looking at is utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that determines right from wrong by focusing on outcomes. It's a form of consequentialism. Utilitarianism holds that the most ethical choice is the one that will produce the greatest good for the greatest number. Basically, as human beings, we all have utility. We have something that we can give or contribute.

[00:31:17.460] - Terrie

What utilitarians want to do is whatever will create the greatest utility for the world, the universe, the cosmos. That is what you work towards. Utilitarianism has its roots in the 18th century, but we went back to the father of modern utilitarianism, to Peter Singer. Peter Singer was an Oxford philosopher, so he's considered a living legend among philosophers. When you take on philosophy, I guess it's like any career, when you take on a career, you want to do something in your career that will stand out. If you're a philosopher, you want to come up with at least one exceptional thought that people will grab hold of. Peter Singer came up with three. He's known for three consequential thoughts or beliefs that have had a

profound influence on academics, atheists or otherwise, from when he wrote them. In 1971 he wrote *Famine, Affluence and Morality* and we talked about that. *Famine, Affluence and Equality*. And the key thought was that people in rich countries are morally obliged to give away a big portion of their income to people from poor countries. Distance means nothing. His pond parable is if somebody was drowning in front of you, you wouldn't think twice about getting a good suit and your shoes dirty.

[00:33:39.540] - Terrie

Then if people are starving in Bengal, then you should be able to give the equivalent of that at least to help people. Distance means nothing and all that sounds really good. This thinking actually spurred on the international aid agencies. There was international aid with the United Nations, but this spurred on more secular groups, non religious groups, to take part in international aid as well. This is not without its critics. There are a lot of people that see international aid as doing more harm than good. This is not something that was accepted by everyone for certain. The other book in 1975 was called *Animal Liberation*. And does anybody remember the thought that Peter Singer came up that he expanded on in his book *Animal Liberation*?

[00:35:03.460] - Katherine

I'll say what I remember of it. He said that there are people, but not everybody is actually equal. Some people have maybe more skills or some are disabled or whatever, so there's different levels of people. And then we all are able to suffer. And so therefore, because animals are able to suffer, you need to treat them equally. It's their ability to suffer is the reason why you have to treat them well. It's not because of their inherent value, is what I picked up from what he was saying.

[00:35:53.280] - Terrie

Yes, very good. He called it speciesism. Sure, I've spelled that right. Thank you, Katherine. Yeah, very good. So, he is confusing real differences with false differences. I don't want to get too much go back into that at all, but this is what spurred on the animal liberation movement. And also spurred on to him to think more about what actually makes people people and animals, animals. The differentiates. He's going to continue to write on that in 1979. He's going to write a book called *Practical Ethics*. And in that he's going to discuss personhood, what makes a person. And he will say that not all humans are persons. In order to be a person and to deserve moral considerations, beings must be self aware and capable of perceiving themselves as individuals through time. Let's consider abortion. A fetus is not self aware, so it is not a person. Parents, mothers should have the choice to abort the fetus if that's their choice, because it's not a person. But then he would go on to say that an infant is also not a person.

[00:37:58.030] - Terrie

They do not have self awareness. They don't understand themselves as an individual in time. And so if a parent could make the decision to abort a fetus before his birth, then they could make the decision, if the child was born with terrible disabilities, that that child could also be killed after birth, until they reached the age of personhood. He got himself into a whole lot of trouble with that one. There were massive demonstrations in 1989, actually, and I remember those in Germany. He would also argue that somebody with advanced dementia is not a person too. He defined what was person, what what made a person. He

wasn't saying that it's okay to kill a child, because as a utilitarian, you would say, don't kill that child because it would upset the parents, that would do harm to the parents. It's the parent's choice of whether they want to keep the born child. Not for any moral reason, for the child itself. Three major thoughts that are going to have a large impact going forward. You cannot underestimate the work of Peter Singer amongst intellectual elites, especially at Oxford, but across the world.

[00:39:46.110] - Terrie

We're going to come down in time. Actually, I'll just quote Peter Singer. Killing a defective infant is not morally equivalent to killing a person. Sometimes it is not wrong at all. That's a quote from Practical Ethics. You can imagine the people with disabilities were very upset and still are with Peter Singer's conclusions. All of this tied together, especially this book, *Famine Affluence and Morality*, is going to have a profound effect on students of philosophy going forward. And we're going to look at a few of those. His work is going to create a lot of think tanks, groups within academia, and eventually this is going to develop into the effective altruism movement or EA. I'll just write it up here. Actually, I'll write it up here. Effective Altruism. And we want to look at a few individuals, philosophers that were the most influenced by Peter Singer and have created their own influence. The first one we're going to look at, and I talked about them before. We're going to come down to 2009 and there are two individuals, we mentioned them a few weeks back, William MacAskill, and Toby Ord.

[00:41:58.500] - Terrie

Toby Ord and William MacAskill, young Philosophers at Oxford. And they are going to take Peter Singer's work and create a charity called Giving What We Can. And effectively what they realized was that altruism is nothing new. Altruism is selflessness. It's giving, it's disinterested and selfless concern for the wellbeing of others. That's nothing new. What is new is being effective about it. Taking utilitarian beliefs, taking that to altruism to make bring the most good out of charitable giving. If we're going to take Peter Singer's parable about the pond, then and we, we want to help people overseas because all their help would be largely in third world countries, then we have to look at the most effective way to do that. They coined the term effective altruism and they started an organisation. I don't know if you can call it a charity. We'll call it a charity. It's called Giving What We Can. Now, how are they going to encourage people to take on Peter Singer's philosophy? How are they going to encourage people to give what they can? Any ideas? Oh, sorry, I've missed some hands. Moli you had your hand up?

[00:44:26.880] - Moli

I was just going to ask a question because it sounds like he basically built this on Darwinism.

[00:44:42.880] - Terrie

Yeah, it's just a natural extension of Darwinism. We're all animals, so we're all animals. We should care for each other and hence speciesism. And we have to actually determine then between the animals. And that's where he came up with personhood. There's threads that run through his thinking. Doesn't dwell on it too much, of just being aware of it. But there are others that have dwelled on it a lot and it's going to develop especially with online groups. Once you get chat groups or blogs. This is growing. Giving What We Can, they're trying to encourage students, people from these universities, to be more effective. To first

of all, think about altruism and to be more effective about it. Any guesses about what their first thing is going to be to get people to give? Bad way to put the question. Does anybody do any research on them, on Toby Ord or William MacAskill? What's their idea? Their first idea? We're going to encourage people to give. Lynne.

[00:46:28.260] - Lynne

I haven't done any research on that, so I really don't know. I'm just taking a bit of a step in the dark. But it seems to me that they're going to look at a marketing campaign and they'd try to get celebrities involved or something that's going to be popular. That would be what I would imagine. But I'm grasping at straws a little.

[00:46:54.560] - Terrie

No, thank you. Eventually, yes, celebrities, people with money, et cetera, are going to get involved. But it's starting. It's sort of a ground movement amongst the universities at first, amongst the intellectual elites. And the clue is it's a counterfeit. Katherine how are they going to counterfeit?

[00:47:19.860] - Katherine

I haven't researched it, but I was going to guess that you can leave a legacy and in that way you can live forever.

[00:47:31.640] - Terrie

Okay, good. Swinging about. Yeah. How much legacy, Katherine, each week? What would you give? What are they telling people to give?

[00:47:43.470] - Katherine

Oh, 1/10, of course.

[00:47:45.520] - Terrie

Yeah. They want you to give 10% of your income. These atheists. Who would ever have thought. This is where it starts. Pledge 10% of your income. They thought that was a pretty good way to start. Actually I might be able to bring that up. Here's the Giving What We Can page from Wikipedia. The shared ground of all members is that they have committed to providing at least 10% of their income by signing "The Pledge". Therefore, members often refer to themselves as "Pledges". We don't sign pledges, do we? What do we have? What is the pledge counterfeiting? The Vows. Yes. The pledge is a voluntary and non legal commitment to donate 10% of one's income. Then you can further pledge, though. Founder Toby Ord further pledge to donate anything he earned over £20,000 a year based on his conviction that he could live comfortably and happily on this income. That's another thing they call the further pledge. You work out what you can live on and then whatever is above that, you give. Some give more than the 10th, but the minimum is the ten.

[00:49:30.830] - Terrie

Giving what you can. When we come down to 2015, I'll just write it down here. They're going to start up 80,000 hours. 80,000 hours. That is the amount of time that you're probably going to spend in your career. This was a counseling. I don't know if counseling is the right word. This arm of the EA movement was to help students in their career choice. If you want to be an effective altruist, then you won't be as effective going to work for a charity as you would going to work at Wall Street or Petrochemical company or earning big money. If you can get into a job that can earn big money, you will be able to be more effective in your altruism. They would guide people in their career choices where they could be more effective. There's two things. They're telling people, minimum of asking people to sign the pledge. It's voluntary. And people are getting on board because you want to do good. Sounds good. It's not asking that much. 10% is not asking a lot of people, and that's what they recognize. But when you get people to give, there's two things you want them to not do. To not consider when you give.

[00:51:18.610] - Terrie

What would be the two reasons that we would give? Why do we give? Graeme?

[00:51:30.950] - Graeme

I was answering something previous. I wasn't trying to answer this one.

[00:51:36.810] - Terrie

Okay. What were you going to say, Graeme.

[00:51:43.940] - Graeme

Before when Katherine was answering? I was going to say, "time". I thought that the movement first started on giving time and then money, but I was incorrect.

[00:52:00.950] - Terrie

The time is going to come here, but it's where you're going to put your time? Your time might be more effective in a career that's going to make more money. Thank you, Graeme. If you're going to give, there are two reasons why we give, and they want you to not give because of those two reasons. Because those two reasons are not effective. Why do we give? Any thoughts? What makes you give.

[00:52:44.170] - Moli

When there's a need? Somebody need help?

[00:52:50.830] - Terrie

Yes. There's a need. How has that need prompted you to give?

[00:53:04.450] - Moli

Especially if I'm able.

[00:53:08.050] - Marie

Out of love. Out of love? Out of your emotions.

[00:53:16.230] - Moli

Emotion.

[00:53:17.390] - Terrie

People give as an emotional response. Atheists say, no, that's bad, that's not effective. You see a need, Moli, and you go, oh, that makes me feel like I should do something. That's not effective to an effective altruist. We give because it tugs on our emotions. Love, sympathy, empathy. The other reason we give. Think about this, why do we give? What's this tied to for us? Sorry, Moli.

[00:54:04.110] - Moli

It's a moral obligation.

[00:54:08.410] - Terrie

That morality has come from where?

[00:54:10.800] - Moli

The Bible.

[00:54:16.010] - Terrie

And the Bible is? What do atheists not believe in? The word of God?

[00:54:23.180] - Marilyn

God said for us to give it to him.

[00:54:36.350] - Terrie

Yes. You're all right? I'm thinking of the word religion. You're all right. We give because of our religion, or we give because of emotion. People across the world, either they give because it's emotionally pulled on them or because of religion. And atheists say that is bad giving, that is ineffective giving. We want you to give, but not because of religion and not because of your emotions. What are they going to use in its place? What are they going to replace religion and emotions with? And they're going to replace it with mathematics. To be effective, they're going to use a lot of mathematical tools to work out what is the most effective giving. And we've already done a little bit of grammar tonight, so we're not going to do any math, because it'll make your head hurt. But there are all these probability calculuses, and what's the other one?

They're going to use reason and evidence. And I'm just trying to expected value calculus. There are probability calculuses, expected value calculus. Expected value calculus actually is something that is used all the time. It's used by insurance companies. It's used by the medical industry.

[00:56:30.160] - Terrie

You work out the probability, the possibility of something happening, like a fire or a flood, and how often it's happened in the past. You put all those numbers into your formula, and you come up with an expected value calculus. And there's all these probability formulas. And they use mathematics to work out how to be the most effective in the giving. They look at data, they use reason. Mathematics has the authority. EA really came into its own in 2012, and I'll read a little from William MacAskill's book. This is a story he tells. In 2009, while germinating the concept of effective altruism, he visited a hospital in Ethiopia that treats obstetric fistillas, a condition resulting from childbirth in young and malnourished women that causes permanent incontinence of urine and or feces. According to the Fistilla Foundation, which funds the hospital, a majority of women who develop fistulas are abandoned by their husbands and ostracized by their communities because of their foul smell. At the hospital, MacAskill met some of the women who suffered from the condition. But several years later, he concluded that although the organization was repairing fistillas at low cost and saving these young women from terrible fates, others working on different issues were making a bigger impact and that they should get his donations instead.

[00:58:48.700] - Terrie

And the mathematical calculations that he used to determine that impact, were described in his book. He laid out all the formulas and the reasons for not donating to this, but donating to something else. You can imagine the Fistula Foundation were very upset. Actually, a lot of his calculation, the information he was using, was erroneous. And because of his decision in his book, it took a lot of donations away from their charity. According to the Fistilla Foundation, which funds the hospital, a majority of women who develop fistulas are abandoned by their husbands. Oh, I read that already. MacAskill explains that by donating to the Fistula Foundation instead of a different organization, he thought he would be privileging the needs of some people over others merely because I happen to know them. He didn't want to use his emotions just because I've known him and I've met them and I've seen it, I must not let that affect my giving or go home and do my mathematical equations. And that it was arbitrary that I'd seen this problem close up rather than any of the other problems in the world.

[01:00:22.120] - Terrie

Effective altruists admire the cool rationality that considers personal attachments as arbitrary. No personal attachments actually admire that resolve of people not to get personally attached or drawn into caregiving. The importance of EA is to maximize how much good you can do. And as I said earlier, when we're talking about especially about international aid, it's just not clear cut. You can be thinking about how much you can get for your dollar, but it's not really considering the individual needs. And we'll look at that more, there'll be another example of that. I've just introduced Toby Ord William MacAskill they are the founders of this EA movement. In 2021, Toby Ord wrote ""The Precipice"". A precipice is, you're standing on a cliff, you're about to go over and die. It's about existential threats. The world is on "The Precipice" of extinction, and we talked about that in an earlier studies. All the things that are troubling the world at the

moment that could actually bring us to extinction. He is now going to combine this idea of existential threats with effective altruism.

[01:02:18.840] - Terrie

And where did they get those ideas from? Let me introduce you to another philosopher. Another philosopher that was heavily influenced by Peter Singer's work. And his name is Nick Bostrom. I'll put him back here. He's written over 200 books. I'll mark this one as 2005. Nick Bostrom. I might just pull up the Wikipedia on him, might be the easiest thing. We'll just have a little look at Nick. Oxford philosopher. He's actually from Sweden, but he is the author of over 200 publications, has written two books and co edited two others. The book that we will be considering is "Super Intelligence Paths, Dangers, Strategies". And he wrote that in 2014. It was a New York Times bestseller. Bostrom superintelligence. He is an EA, but his work is mostly on existential risks. Aspects of Bostrom's research concern the future of humanity and long term outcomes. He discusses existential risk, which he defines as one in which an adverse outcome would either annihilate earth, originating intelligent life, or permanently and drastically curtail its potential. He's the founder of Future of Humanity Institute, which we've looked at before too. 2005 Future of Humanity Institute.

[01:04:41.210] - Terrie

We look at this book that he wrote in 2014. In 2014, the book Superintelligence Paths, Dangers, Strategies. Bostrom reasoned that the creation of a superintelligence represents a possible means to the extinction of mankind. Bostrom argues that a computer with near human level general intellectual ability could initiate an intelligence explosion on a digital timescale with the resultant rapid creation of something so powerful that it might deliberately or accidentally destroy humanity. Bostrom contends the power of a superintelligence would be so great that a task given to it by humans might be taken to open ended extremes. And then he'll give some examples. For example, a goal of calculating pi might collaterally cause nanotechnology manufactured facilities to sprout over the entire Earth's surface and cover it within days. He comes up with all these stories that could happen. He believes an existential risk to humanity from superintelligence would be immediate once brought into being, thus creating an exceedingly difficult problem of finding out how to control such an entity before it actually exists. There's a couple of interesting things about Bostrom. He is also a transhumanist. Transhumanists believe that we're transitioning because of evolution.

[01:06:41.120] - Terrie

We're human, but we're in a transitioning phase where we would become posthuman. Where we would eventually, because of technology, we could become immortal, we would conquer death, we would conquer all the health problems, all the sicknesses. We would have superintelligent brains, et cetera. We're in a trans stage at the moment between being human and being posthuman. And there's a lot of things that are connected with that. The idea of uploading your brain to computers and living in computer generated worlds, computer simulated worlds, perhaps on other planets. It sounds very science fiction and it is. But there are a lot of people, and a lot of the EA's that have bought into this philosophy as well. Nick Bostrom is going to bring his calculations to the EA movement and now they are going to consider that the main altruistic need for humanity is to stop any existential threats. The worst thing that could

happen to humans is that we die out. Because it will affect, as we spoke about earlier, trillions of people that are going to live in the future. They love their parables. In this book, Nick Bostrom tells the parable of the sparrows.

[01:08:28.990] - Terrie

The sparrows are building nests. They're having trouble and they think, wouldn't it be good if we could get an owl to help us? Owls are so wise, they could protect us. And there's this one eyed sparrow saying, I don't think it's a good idea. I think we should train the owl before we get the owl to work for us. And the sparrows don't listen. They go, no, we get the owl and then we can worry about that later. You know how the story ends for the sparrows. He takes that parable and applies it to artificial intelligence. The idea that computers will get so smart that they can actually create other computers and they will have no need for humans other than to use their brains if there's any potential use for a person's brains. Otherwise there won't be any use for humans. These are the things, as we said earlier, that keep them up late at night. In 2009, Nick Bostrom wrote a paper that argued that a non existential disaster causing the breakdown of global civilisation is, from the perspective of humanity as a whole, a potentially recoverable setback. A giant NASTICA for man, but a small misstep for mankind.

[01:09:48.830] - Terrie

Little things that happen now, like World War II, or Ukraine, they're just blips on the radar. He said, we find that the expected value of reducing existential risk by a mere 1,000,000,000th of 1,000,000,000th of one percentage point. There's a lot of maths in this. We could reduce existential risk by 1,000,000,000th of 1,000,000,000th of one percentage point. It's worth 100 billion times as much as saving a billion lives today. I hope that didn't do your head in. But if we could reduce existential risk by 0.0000001 today, that's a billion more times effective than saving a billion lives today. Human beings get quantified, that's basic utilitarianism. Human beings are just boxes of utility. And it might be that we can suffer a billion deaths today as long as there are that we're working towards saving a trillion lives in a few billion years. And math doesn't lie. The EA movement is essential to understand how longtermism developed. William MacAskill first is going to write a paper called Strong Longtermism. And then he will write a book that came out this year, 2022, and it's called What We Owe the Future.

[01:11:48.250] - Terrie

This was heavily marketed. It was every major news outlet either did a review of it or interviewed him, whether it's the Washington Post, New York Times, all of them, What We Owe the Future, which was essentially selling a mild version of longtermism that would be suitable for the public. You have to read their papers to understand how far they take Strong Longtermism. Strong Longtermism is that the majority of our work, our priority, should be to stop existential risks. Don't worry about world hunger, we can do that. But it's not really the major concern. I'll just read a little bit of MacAskill. He said, the idea is then that for the purposes of evaluating actions, we can in the first instance, often simply ignore all the effects contained in the first 100 or even 1000 years, focusing primarily on the further future effects. He goes on to say, that anything that happens today really is a rounding error. If you've got a decimal number, like 7.1654327, what we do is we round off to six digits. What is happening today is totally inconsequential.

[01:14:09.800] - Terrie

We round that off. It's a rounding error. World War II rounding error. If we think of the history of mankind as a book, we're on the first page. All our efforts and priorities should go into protecting the long-term future. Essentially, this is the philosophy behind EA, effective altruism, and longtermism. What we next need to look at is how it has affected the tech industry. This is what happens when you take God out of the equation. People want to do what is morally good and they will work out ways to do it. That leaves God and emotions, because emotions are not considered intelligent, out of the equation. Then you have to replace that with something. And what they have replaced it is with mathematics, basically. Logic, reason, a lot of mathematical equations to come up with what is the most effective way.

[01:15:32.120] - Terrie

We'll stop here for time, but in 2012, William MacAskill met a young man called Sam Bateman Freed and counseled him to look for a job that he could make the most amount of money so that he could be an effective altruist. And he went into cryptocurrency.

[01:15:56.820] - Terrie

And if you've been living under a rock, you would have missed what's been happening this last three or four weeks with the crash of FTX that cryptocurrency exchange. A million people have lost their money. At least a million people have lost their savings. But there's others that have lost big money, that can afford to lose big money, but a lot of people that couldn't afford to lose it. SBF bought into effective altruism. And where he was funneling his prophets, I think he had something like 26 billion. He was a billionaire. He was funneling that into research, into artificial intelligence and other things as well, that we might take a look at him at some stage. But he was the poster boy of the EA movement. In closing, any questions so far? Oh, we've got some hands up, Graeme.

[01:17:33.300] - Graeme

With the example that was given before about the mathematical equation to give to women with that illness that they had.

[01:17:47.340] - Terrie

Suffering from the Fistula Foundation.

[01:17:51.480] - Graeme

Yes. Math, as you said, doesn't lie, and as they quoted, doesn't lie. But it's based on parameters, so the information that you're entering into this program that allows you to determine what is the best way to spend the money, if that was based on a patriarchal society, wouldn't that sway the numbers to also keep that money headed in a way that benefits further a patriarchal society? Does that make sense?

[01:18:29.380] - Terrie

Yes. And that is one of the criticisms of them. They're giving not because of emotion, but they are actually giving to feel good, to get the warm, fuzzy feeling. The more effective they are, the more the math's adds up, the bigger the warm, fuzzy feeling. Right. That they're kidding themselves. But in doing the maths, in trying to be effective from a rational reasoning... I lost my train of thought. I was heading somewhere. Sorry, Graeme, what did you say again?

[01:19:37.300] - Graeme

I was just asking whether the numbers that they had to enter into this algorithm that told them the best place to spend their money, this is obviously skewed by patriarchy. I'll stop there. You've got your thought?

[01:19:53.880] - Terrie

Yes, thank you. Sorry. If they're not dealing with the systemic problems, it is a feel good, and they're not dealing with things with corruption or patriarchy or racism, sexism, all those things. A lot of what they do is they buy mosquito nets so that children, adults won't get malaria, which that sounds good. It is good, but it's basing it on mathematical equations when they go to countries to give those bednets. Take Peter Singer, right? Do I save this child in the pond here or can I save with that same money? I could probably save five children, for the cost of my suit and shoes, in a third world country. But what if to save that child in a third world country, I had to kill a person, to save five kids by giving the government guns. International aid is complicated. You have to deal with corruption. That is another rabbit hole to go down is the problem with international aid. And you put aid into Syria. The biggest refugee camp in the world, I think, is in Syria, correct me if I'm wrong. It's big. Anyway, the government takes 50% off the top, so you can do the math where it looks like you're benefiting a whole heap of people.

[01:21:57.820] - Terrie

But what's going on behind the scenes, that's not really what's taken into account. Because what they believe is it's top down where the smart ones, we determine where the money goes. That's not human rights. Human rights is listening to the people saying, we have the needs, please listen to us. We'll tell you where it's best spent. The people in the country, the people, individuals in need know the experts to know what their needs are. And there's so many examples of bad international aid where the locals just haven't been considered. And just to continue on from your point, Graeme, with the math. The math that they're using is to do with probabilities? It's a counterfeit of what we do. In longtermism, they're predicting, but they're predicting based on probabilities. You can't predict based on a probability. Probability is not predictability. Prophecy is predictable. Maths and probability isn't. But they've turned these probability calculuses into a form of prophecy, of what could happen, will happen, might happen. It's not reasonable either. But people are buying into these. They get hypnotized by the math. It really looks impressive. The math draws the brain and they get wowed.

[01:23:51.700] - Terrie

And then they work out what's so effective. And that gives the warm and fuzzy feeling. And if you're a billionaire, or a millionaire, you've got a lot of money and you want to have that warm and fuzzy feeling, then let's put it into don't worry about hunger, don't worry about the floods in Pakistan, don't worry about

that because that's inconsequential. That is a rounding error. But I could put it into a think tank that is working on all the problems to do with AI and a lot of people having fun with computer simulations. And I can feel really good about myself. I'm not only doing something that is morally good, I am doing the best moral thing that can be done. Because that's what the numbers tell me. What we're seeing down here is a combination of Nick Bostrom's thoughts regarding artificial intelligence, posthumanism combined with effective altruism. And they're building this castle in the sky. They're pretty much starting to come down because of the cryptocurrency collapse. This book that Bostrom wrote in 2014, who wrote the foreword for it? Bill Gates. Who recommended and tweeted it, Elon Musk. And put a million dollars into his Future for Humanity foundation.

[01:25:35.840] - Terrie

This is where big money is going. Just talking about counterfeit, we can see the counterfeit in the 10%. That's an easy one. But we're also longtermists, aren't we? We're longtermists. We're thinking of eternity. We're planning for eternity. It we're planning for posthumanism. When this mortal puts on immortality and this corruption puts on incorruption. What they're doing is really counterfeiting what God's kingdom is going to provide for. Graeme, you've got your hand up a couple of times. Is there something you wanted to add to that?

[01:26:30.060] - Graeme

No, that was from something previous. Thank you.

[01:26:33.500] - Terrie

Thank you. And Moli?

[01:26:39.580] - Moli

No, I was just thinking how they are smart in the counterfeit using mathematics. Because to them, as long as the numbers add up, you give them good feelings. But not knowing the fraud and everything else that happened behind the scene. It sounds like a very complicated plan of salvation.

[01:27:04.840] - Terrie

Yes, because life is complicated and giving is complicated. And intelligence is complicated. It's not just rationality. We'll look at that in the future as well. So we've just followed through the development of the philosophy and how we've ended up with longtermism. You can't separate longtermism from effective altruism. It was only a few months ago that this was really not in mainstream media. Some people called it the most dangerous philosophy that nobody knows about, until the collapse of FTX. We might continue on that. Especially with this book, it was getting a lot of good publicity. New York Times, Vox. The Washington Post was the only one with articles saying that there's something not right here. But there were other papers that were buying in to this religion. If nobody else has any comments, any closing comments or questions? We're jumping into dragon and this movement that is under the umbrella of the dragon power, spiritualism, which is another counterfeit of God's kingdom. Looks a little different to the counterfeit. They dress in different clothes, go to different schools, but it's a counterfeit.

[01:29:20.570] - Terrie

It's just a different child, but it has the characteristics of the parent as well. On that note, we will close in prayer, and Moli, would you close in prayer for us this evening?

[01:29:41.430] - Moli

Loving God, we are so thankful that we have just finished our study. And we thank you that you have kept us all together in this opening Sabbath. To study more and to know, Lord, what the world is doing. And also, Lord, to understand what the movement is doing. And I thank you that you have guided Elder Terry in the thoughts in the study for tonight, and I pray that you may continue to bless her with wisdom. And also the elders, elder Tess and elder Parminder and all the leaders around the world. I pray also, Lord, for the members of the movement that we are being encouraged and may we continue to study hard and learn the message as you have given us to prepare us, Lord, for the great work ahead. And I pray that you may be with each and every one of us tonight as we rest for tomorrow to continue our study. And I thank you that you have heard us. In Jesus' wonderful name. Amen.