

An overview of world dangers

<p>Global warming There is wide agreement on taking measures against global warming</p> <p>But there is climate change denial. Also some say we are not doing and won't do enough to prevent climate change. It will cause extreme weather, crop failures, undernutrition, heat-related illness and death, vast increase in refugees, violence, war</p>	<p>Artificial Intelligence AI Positive benefits e.g. increasing efficiency, medical diagnosis, etc.</p> <p>But there is potential for autonomous weapons: e.g. Russia is developing AI missiles, drones, vehicles, robots; China is developing AI submarines (for reconnaissance, mine placement, and "suicide attacks")</p>	<p>Genetic engineering Positive benefits e.g. combatting disease, handicap etc.</p> <p>But there is potential for selective breeding of humans which could easily lead to political and social oppression.</p>	<p>Surveillance Positive benefits e.g. promoting safety, preventing crime etc</p> <p>But there is potential for and actual use of computer surveillance, cameras, facial recognition, etc., to be used for political control/ oppression.</p>	<p>Economic challenge Since 1993 a billion people have lifted themselves out of extreme poverty.</p> <p>But "The global centre of economic gravity has been shifting eastwards towards Asia for decades...Power always follows money, so the rise of Asia will have a profound impact on the global balance...by 2030 ... the world's biggest economy [China] won't be a democracy—or even want to become one."(UK Foreign Sec)</p>	<p>Disease threats Great strides have been taken against disease</p> <p>But since we now live in a global village there is a danger of disease spreading far and wide. Also although biological weapons are banned various countries still have them. They could, of course, spread disease on a vast scale.</p>
<p>Antisemitism Any country should be open to fair criticism</p> <p>But antisemitism is now often taking the form of anti-Israelism of the UN Bias against Israel and current sanctions against Israel It is not impossible this could lead to military pressure on Israel - especially in view of the decline of US influence and Israel's regional enemies</p>	<p>Sexuality issues There is growing understanding for people facing gender issues.</p> <p>But there is widespread acceptance of same-sex relationships, change of gender etc which together with easy divorce, 'sleeping around' etc, will undermine marriage, the family (and therefore society), child security, emotional and mental health.</p>	<p>Islamic threats It is good that there is widespread respect for Muslims as people and their freedom to worship.</p> <p>But, quite apart from violent Islamic extremism, there is widespread persecution of Christians in Muslim countries. Also, as Muslim influence grows, it must be remembered that Islam proclaims a Jesus ("Isa") who is not divine, did not die and so did not rise from the dead.</p>	<p>Terrorism It is good that firm action has been taken to stop terrorism.</p> <p>But terrorism continues (and may be assisted by the US withdrawal from various countries). It is not impossible that terrorists could obtain chemical and biological weapons, with devastating results.</p>	<p>Persecution The UK Foreign Secretary has ordered a review into persecution of Christians.</p> <p>Some 215 million Christians face persecution in over 50 countries. About 250 are martyred each month. Christians face 80% of the religious discrimination in the world - in 144 countries (and growing). Persecution of Christians is worse than at any time in history.</p>	<p>Secularism It is right that the freedom of people to follow any religion, secularism and atheism should be upheld.</p> <p>But growing secularism means the population is increasingly ignorant of the countries rich Christian heritage and so is in no position to make an intelligent decision as to whether or not to follow Christianity. Sometimes secularism is domineering.</p>
<p>Societal decline Improvements in western society include human rights, health, welfare.</p> <p>But increased well-being can cause materialism and secularism. Stressing 'my rights' causes selfish individualism militating against community and morality e.g. sexual licence, unjustified abortion or unjustified divorce.</p>	<p>War dangers There have been justified wars in which many have given their lives.</p> <p>But now we have extensive cyber warfare which easily disrupts a country's political, democratic and welfare systems. The evils of chemical and nuclear war remain a danger because of unwise politics and extremism</p>	<p>World government Global cooperation brings peace, stability, trade and reduces poverty.</p> <p>But "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." World government is likely to bring dictatorship and oppression. Current populism/nationalism is likely eventually to produce a reaction leading to inevitable globalism, cf the 1930s.</p>	<p>Political Oppression Democracy can bring many benefits and preserve freedom.</p> <p>But extremism, removal of rights and oppression of minorities remain threats and, in some countries, realities e.g. there are 68.5m forcibly displaced people incl: 40m internally displaced; 25.2m refugees; 3.1m asylum seekers.</p>	<p>Religious Oppression The West has a long history of protecting and supporting Christianity.</p> <p>But secularism, moral change and false definitions of "extremism" are reducing the rights of Christians to freedom of speech and action especially in areas of sexuality and gender but also over other challenging aspects of the faith.</p>	<p>Church decline Some churches, groups and individuals promote Christian beliefs and action.</p> <p>But many churches are "lukewarm" (which is serious - Rev 3:15-16) or dying. Also some Christians promote sexual activity contrary to Scripture or fail to take a definite stand for the truth, so failing in their duty to society and unbelievers.</p>

PRINCIPLES

1. **Often inventions which can have beneficial effects, also have the potential for misuse for evil purposes.**
2. **Laws/Agreements to prevent misuse of inventions can be (and often are) easily broken, including by governments/political leaders**
 - e.g. chemical weapon used for the first time in UK (Salisbury) in 2018. They have also been used in Syria.
 - e.g. governments/political leaders have opted out of agreements on global warming, the Iran anti-nuclear deal, whale hunting. Anti-personnel mines are banned in many countries by the 1997 Ottawa Treaty, not including the United States, Russia, and much of Asia and the Middle East.
3. **“The price of freedom is eternal vigilance” but “We learn from history that we do not learn from history” and “Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.”**

We are seeing a different sort of politics: nationalistic, populist and angry, which also happened in the 1930s. Now, as in the 1930s, people are turning to the cult of the charismatic strongman leader because voters feel that mainstream politics is impotent and deaf to ordinary people. Scholars point out that populism is linked to authoritarianism. Benjamin Moffitt (Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Political Science at Stockholm University) says that populists’ strong claims to be speaking on behalf of the people “can lead to people thinking they’re infallible. It restructures the political space in a new and scary way.” We need to remember what happened at the end of the 1930s! The very surprising election of Trump shows how easy it is for a populist leader to be elected to the most powerful position in the world. Given the twists and turns of world politics, and some of the dangers outlined above, the idea of a very charismatic, authoritarian leader coming to power in a world government does not seem impossible. (Also the head of the Russian Orthodox Church said recently that internet-connected devices created the possibility for “universal control over humanity.” They know “exactly where you are, what you are interested in, what you are afraid of.” He said: “Such control from one place forebodes the coming of the Antichrist.”)

(Today’s populists include: Trump; Modi (India); Erdoğan (Turkey); Bolsonaro (Brazil), Marine Le Pen (France), Viktor Orbán (Hungary), Rodrigo Duterte (Philippines); Evo Morales (Bolivia); Andrés Manuel López Obrador (Mexico); the increasingly powerful Podemos party in Spain; Matteo Salvini Deputy Prime Minister, Italy, etc.).