

SORTING OUT THE MESS-AGE

**Humanity for the Next
300 Years**



B.C.Bamber

Sorting Out the Mess Age.
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By
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Published by Vagabond Unlimited 2022
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Contents.

1. Panic Measures.
2. The Most Likely Scenario.
3. Disaster Mitigation Spending.
4. Cleaning up the Mess – House Keeping.
5. Cleaning up to Save Lives and Livelihoods – Man and Beast.
6. The Leadership Crisis.
7. We Don't Need More Tree Huggers.
8. Complex Solutions Which Maybe Unworkable.
9. AI Will Reorder the World – Leading to the Consumer Class and the Death of Democracy.
10. Should We Maintain and Expand Western Levels of Standards of Living?
11. Egalitarian or Inequitable?
12. Social Harmonisation.
13. Fixing the Wobble.
14. Disaster Preparedness.

Sorting Out the Mess Age. Humanity for the Next 300 Years.

We have in essence started the long process of clearing up the mess of the last 100 years, plus of industrial activity. Some of us have started anyway, with floating plastics being collected from riverways and oceans. But if we look around the world, many developing nations don't yet have sophisticated rubbish collection processes and the West are busily moving out mountains of waste to those same nations on the assumption that they will recycle it. They don't. It just goes into landfill and onto vast areas of land, piling up to great heights with desperate children trawling through it to find things to use or sell. Also, thousands of tons of clothing are moved to developing nations for resale or to be dumped, as with our plastic waste. The life cycle of clothing, has become toxic, using slave and poverty wage labour to produce it, we wear it once and then send it back to those nations for disposal. Out sight, out of mind.

As carbon pollution continues to rise globally, there is no sign that the world is slowing down on its carbon emissions, adding to the great possibility that at some point we will trigger runaway climate change.

Also, we are largely unprepared for large catastrophes. If in fact any of the big seven disasters, should they occur will catch us out badly, and many lives will be lost. This includes an asteroid strike, a flood basalt volcanic eruption, a nuclear war, global floods and so on.

1. Panic Measures.

So, we are entering the age of the big panic response to the disasters we may trigger. Most of the world's wealth is locked up by the 1% and tax income runs dangerously behind spending in almost every country on Earth. Instead of dealing with debt and raising taxes, many economists both within and outside of government are beginning to think that having masses of debt on government books is probably okay. We can just print money, buy the debt and leave it on the National Bank's books indefinitely – maybe even writing off that debt at some point should it become necessary.

The task then is to know what to do, if there are signs that runaway climate change is happening. So far, the only sign is the rate at which the icecaps are melting, because they are melting much faster than climate scientists predicted a few years ago. Examples of panic measures, that may be used, would be to shut down the economy, in the same way the economy was halted during the Corona Virus pandemic. This is one of the key demands that Greta Thunberg and her followers believe we should do now. If we can shut down the economy during a pandemic, then why not do it, during a bigger crisis than the virus?

When I first became an environmentalist aged 21, way back in 1995 this was something that I believed should happen. Shut down the carbon economy; pour money into green tech and green infrastructure, then turn the economy back on, with the new tech available to anyone who could afford it, plus a whole raft of subsidised technology for poorer

people and nations. I was dismissed by everyone, including some of our best-known environmental campaigners. But never mind. Even if Greta believes it, our leaders definitely do not.

I don't have many ideas about how we might respond, should runaway climate change begin. One idea I had, comes from a possible scenario, which I became aware of back in 1996. At the bottom of the oceans, around the world, is a massive store of methane, locked underneath the seabed. The oceans have been storing the bulk of our carbon emissions for many years, in much bigger quantities than the rain forests. If ocean temperatures rise too much, and if carbon reaches saturation point, not only would marine life be unsustainable in the oceans, but there is a chance that all those trillions of tons of methane will leach out into the oceans and into the air. Methane is a much more dangerous and potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. This is the big event that could trigger runaway climate change. So, hear me out for a sec. What if we ban fishing world-wide, along with a compensation scheme for the fishing industry, currently worth \$400 billion a year and allow fish stocks to recover, soaking up lots of carbon on the way, out of the oceans? Yes, fish breathe and emit carbon, but the net result would be that fish and ocean mammals will fix carbon into their bodies, at a greater extent than what they breathe. Also, ocean plant life would also recover. That's the kind of thing I mean. Big measures for a big crisis. And of course, engineering solutions are being discussed, like machines which suck carbon out of the atmosphere. The trouble with building such machines, is that we would need hundreds of thousands of them, to make a real impact and seeing as there is little or no financial gain in the doing this (apart from at the macro-economic level), then who is going to fund it? Even billionaire philanthropists probably don't have enough money to fund this.

Getting the world back on its feet, is much more than just skimming a little waste plastic from the oceans or reducing carbon emissions by enough to slow or prevent climate change. If we were serious about re-ordering our lives to preserve our planet, its natural habitats, its oceans, we have a lot of work to do and very little money to do it. The tax system is hopelessly inadequate to function like that. So where do we find the cash to do it?

Carbon needs to be fixed and stored. Plastics need to be biodegradable. Plastics pollution needs to be collected up and recycled. Sewage needs to be processed adequately. Natural habitats need to be protected and preserved. The air needs to be cleansed. Our economic activity needs to be curbed and the lifecycle of stuff, better managed. Resources need to be managed and more equitably distributed. For this I would say that every government needs a specialised resource management department, with its own minister, who will monitor and control natural resources, around the world. All this will take a long time. Time is something we haven't got much of, when thinking about carbon emissions and climate change, but we do have time to give our planet a good ol' sort out. If we were to make great efforts to do this, I have given us three centuries for the purpose of this book. But it may be done sooner or might take much longer, or it may not be done at all, and we will continue to violently trash our beautiful planet. To do this, many new complex processes will have to be designed and infrastructure built. Massive intergovernmental co-operation will have to happen. Billions of pounds would have to be invested and given the parlour state of global co-operation, with battle lines drawn between East and West as intractable as ever, it would take a mammoth diplomatic effort to achieve anything. Whether as a collection of strong autocratic (and often psychopathic) leaders can achieve this, is, I'm afraid in great doubt as it stands in the modern era, with no real, tangible signs of change on the horizon (see The Leadership Crisis).

2. The Most Likely Scenario.

Back in 1996, I advocated developing green technology to replace carbon-based technology and opening that up for consumers to buy, without consumers having to make much change to their lifestyles. That would be the simplest method to decarbonise the economy. Over the last few years this is happening. People are choosing to buy electric cars and they are choosing green energy suppliers and other consumer habits like, choosing green products in the shops. However, it's not enough to make an impact on climate change now. I also advocated the idea, that people and governments and institutions, including corporations, wouldn't change until they personally experience a negative event, linked to climate change or witness a large event on the news. This hasn't really happened. People don't generally vote for political parties, for their green policies. However, polls taken recently do show that a good chunk of the electorate around the world's democracies, do want politicians to take action on climate change. This is all well and good. But the fact is that behaviour hasn't changed. We are still high users of carbon and resources. We are hooked on consumerism. It is us, collectively, who are driving climate change and other problems, like waste plastics, being emptied into the world's oceans. Greta rails at the leadership, which is right. However, it is not politicians alone that drive climate change. It is us. It is all of us. We all need to change, or have change forced upon us, good or bad.

The fact is that the most likely scenario for us, is that runaway climate change will happen. Large tracks of land around the equator and either side, will be so hot and dry that it will become uninhabitable, and tens of millions of people will be moving North and South for better conditions. 70% of the world's megacities are built on the coast. They will get flooded, as the ice caps melt, and millions of people will be on the move and trillions of dollars of real estate will be destroyed and abandoned. However, runaway climate change, once it happens could, (according to some scientists), wipe out every living thing on earth, in a global conflagration. I would call it the sixth mass extinction, but technically, it would be the seventh, because the sixth mass extinction is happening now, with the destruction of natural habitats and its beasts, birds and plant life, caused by our expansion into forests for farming land. Species are dying out right now at a phenomenal rate. The seventh mass extinction then, will be the rest of the natural world, plus humanity.

Once methane is unlocked from the oceans, the world will be destroyed and it would take thousands, if not millions of years to recover. We may survive or we may not. I'd like to think that we would survive. But whatever happens, even in the most optimistic predictions we could lose a third of the global population or indeed all of it. This is not alarmist. The universe is a very dangerous place. Massive global disasters happen regularly all over the universe, whether on uninhabited and baron planets and planetary systems, or planets teeming with life, like ours. You can believe it or not, but we are not the centre of the universe. We're not the apple of Gods eye. We will not be protected, just because we are rare in our advanced intelligence and sophisticated technology and architecture. We are just a ring in a tree. We are just a new layer in the fossil record, with a layer of carbon and a layer of nuclear material, from when we tested our missiles, ranged against each other across the East/West rivalry. In fact, we are primed for a big disaster; a big test, because we are so good at breeding and spreading across the world in greater and greater numbers, that some scientists say this is because we sense the great disasters coming. A collective amnesia (see Velikovsky) of great disasters past. The more numbers we have, the greater chance that we will continue on afterwards.

3. Disaster Mitigation Spending.

What we spend now in decarbonising the economy and preparing for disasters of all kinds will save lives and money later. Because of the deep inadequacies of the global tax system, and greed of the 1%, freeing up the funds needed to mitigate future disasters, instead of reacting to it, will be difficult. For example, in reacting to Corona Virus, we have spent trillions of dollars world-wide, most if not all of it, borrowed from the banks. And as the Omicron variant spreads throughout the world, it has become apparent, that we have not done enough to vaccinate people in South Africa, where Omicron came from, but to vaccinate African and other developing nations populations, we effectively would have to build a new health infrastructure to deliver it. This was done by donors and the WHO, during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. They had to build and fund pop-up treatment centres and testing capabilities where there were none. To deliver a vaccine to many African populations, not only do these vaccines need to be refrigerated, they also have a use by date and must reach people many miles away from urban centres, where there may not even be electricity. This is an example of a reactionary response to disaster, but only because Western governments feared Ebola coming into their own populations.

We must begin to move from reaction to pre-emptive action, when it comes to climate change. As I have said before, the tax system is largely useless in its current form, and adding debts to government books and printing money, will be the fall-back position, unless and until the tax system is reformed.

How to reform the tax system for disaster mitigation and preparedness, is a real headscratcher. The left would just say, ‘tax the rich!’. The right would say, wait until something happens first, borrow, then slash government spending to manage the debt. Printing money during a period of high inflation would be a massive mistake. The printing of money can only really be done, during periods of growth in the economy and low inflation. We are not in that stage. So where do we get the funds to mitigate the effects of climate change? Probably a bit of all of the above. Tax more, print money, borrow money, invest in infrastructure, both from private sources and government, which will be good for the economy and good for jobs. But mostly do *something*. Build the infrastructure. Do the spending needed to slow down carbon emissions. Build the dams to hold back sea level rises and inland flooding mitigation, such as opening up wetlands and flood plains. Have a plan, any plan to handle warming climates in the global middle and have a plan to handle floods in the north. Have a plan to deal with forest fires, including extra infrastructure to deliver water to problem or vulnerable forested regions. Do something.

4. Cleaning up the Mess – House Keeping.

To clean up the mess we’re making, largely revolves around how we manage waste. Globalisation has brought with it this bad habit, linked to the need for people to earn a living, the designing and manufacturing of nonsense stuff. Just stuff, that nobody needs, that we buy to bulk out a stocking at Christmas or we need cheering up, so we buy something to make us feel good, that more often than not ends up in landfill. Also, the enormous piles of waste in developing nations, is a festering sore, that needs to be tackled. In this we need a global strategy. Something that might involve the United Nations, much like the global movement to educate girls or to deliver fresh water to poor communities. A global waste strategy might involve Western nations stopping the practice of shipping waste abroad and maybe even taking back the waste that has already gone there. For example, the Chinese under Xi Jinping, have now banned foreign nations from exporting their recyclable waste to China for processing – a wise move – but it merely moves the problem somewhere else.

5. Cleaning up to Save Lives and Livelihoods – Man and Beast.

The non-cosmetic clean-up, which is also needed, will save the lives of people and animals. Moderating the amount of land to agriculture; cutting the use of animals for food. Growing food more sustainably, like within agricultural buildings where plants are grown using hydroponics and vertical farms, will free up space for natural habitats to be reintroduced or recovered and will move more human activities to the urban centres, where perhaps we belong. Removing dangerous products and chemicals, is something that we've always sort to do. For example, removing CFCs from the atmosphere (although there has been a resurgence of CFC pollution in recent years coming from illegal activities in China). Also, the nicotinoids in fertiliser, which is thought to be killing off the bee population. But curtailing the threats to life, that human beings do every day and in vast quantities, will also take international action. But with the likes of Putin and Xi in power, this becomes increasingly impossible.

6. The Leadership Crisis.

What we have essentially got, world-wide, with maybe one or two exceptions, is a chronic leadership crisis. The UN solidifies this crisis, in the East/West split on the Security Council's permanent members, including the UK, in their inability to help the Syrians fight back against mass murder and civil war; their inability to act against Russia in Ukraine, their inability to act against the new military Junta in Myanmar and to act on climate change. At COP 26, world leaders couldn't even agree to phase out coal powered electricity generation. The term 'phase out' was replaced by 'phase down' and even the US under President Biden, didn't want to bear down too much on the coal industry, because of domestic politics at home.

But the leadership crisis, which in one way or another has always been around, comes into much sharper focus on the climate change issue. Governments and the politicians that run them, talk the talk (blah, blah, blah), but they don't walk the walk. Democracies are caught in a downward spiral of cryptocracies, where leaders are commonly out of their depth and the electorate seem to be in the habit of making poor choices for the wrong reasons. In America they voted in a disturbed, inadequate, vain autocrat in Donald Trump, then followed up with an aged 'dotard' (to quote North Korea's leader Kim Jong-Un, about Trump). Biden may even have to resign before the end of his tenure, because he is too old and doddery to cope with stresses of what I imagine is the toughest job a person could possibly have. The impossible job in fact. Being a Prime Minister or President, in a rapidly changing and increasingly dangerous world, is very tough.

Populists have also been getting into power a lot recently, as a reaction to the global financial crisis of 2008, followed by the mass movements of poor and desperate people, fleeing from poverty, war and oppression. The rich white people, don't want the poor Arabs, Asians and Africans turning up on our shores, hoping for a better, richer and safer life. They want their resources for themselves, and social media right wing propaganda is fuelling the populist's resurgence. The right is winning the arguments online. And on Brexit, the right-wing media, pre-social media, have been campaigning heavily for decades to get Britain out of the EU and close Britain to immigrants, both inside and outside of Europe. It was no surprise that the anti-Europe argument won the day, when we voted in the referendum. They voted for racist reasons, then pretended they were European constitutional experts, who didn't like EU bureaucracy and the apparent lack of democracy, after the event. And right

wingers are not traditionally ‘green’, in that many of them think climate change is a hoax to make money, despite mounds of evidence from climate scientists and other experts to the contrary. In fact, the study of manmade climate change, has been the biggest scientific study, in the entire history of science, bar none. In fact, no other area of scientific study can even come close, to even a fraction of those studies, involving tens of thousands of scientists from all over the world. And still, they cry foul.

But the leadership crisis is worse than this. We have over ambitious people vying for power, often corrupt, often inadequate, who get into power, with zero experience of running a large department, with multi-billion-pound budgets. No qualifications, no experience, flailing around, unable to cope with the pressure, often poorly viewed by the civil servants that help them. The current Home Secretary, of the UK Priti Patel, for example, was found to be bullying staff out of their jobs, and it was generally the case, that the civil servants in her department, felt that she was totally out of her depth. Many believe the same of Boris Johnson and many past and present, ministers of state. The media, as one of the key pillars of a fully functioning democracy, go after politicians as their quarry, constantly hoping for a scalp – hoping to uncover such damning examples of mismanagement, scandal and corruption, that a senior politician (the more senior the better) will be sacked, be forced to resign or be voted out in the next election. Big names losing their seats in general elections are celebrated by the news media for many years and will enhance the careers of any journalist who manages it or forces a minister out of his or her job, thanks to their diligent piece of journalism. And you can tell when there is blood in the water, by the massive pressure the news media piles on their victim, just before they fall. That’s not even mentioning the vicious lampooning and ridiculing, by the comedians that are on the panel show circuits. Making life impossible for inadequate and failing government ministers is one thing. Frightening off talented and competent people from leadership is another. That’s if the public want a competent Prime Minister, because sometimes they just don’t.

Qualifications for politicians is something I have advocated for a lot. I believe there should be university courses for people to take and qualify, along with a professional standards body who can strip politicians of their licence, just as they do with medical professions, architects and other qualified people who mess up, or cause harm. They would be trained in economics, management, health and the constitution, Parliament and writing effective legislation. Once they have qualified to be an MP, they can then choose to stand for election or to go into public service as a civil servant. If for whatever reason, they lose their seat in an election, they can then use their qualifications, to go into the civil service and maybe stand again at the next election, if they want to. They can also be required to stay up to date on a range of subjects, as doctors have to, in areas like budget management, health, technology, economics and so on. The arguments against qualifications is the idea of the ‘professional politician’. Well this is already happening. Many politicians went straight from university to politics and are lifelong career politicians and there are some bad examples and some good. In the end what matters is that we have leaders who know what they are doing, and they have the professional qualifications and standards to back them up.

7. We Don’t Need More Tree Huggers.

The arguments around protecting the planet have traditionally been the preserve of left-wing activists who had a reputation of being soppy liberal, crusties and tree huggers. In the build up to COP 26, Boris Johnson said that acting on climate change isn’t about ‘bunny hugging’. I argued that until big business and the right recognised the dangers of climate change, that nothing would happen to tackle it. This is changing, partly, it has to be said, due to Greta

Thunberg's protest movement and the way she frames the future for her, and others like her. Her age group. But is Greta a tree hugger? I argue she isn't, but I've never asked her, so I don't know. I was never a tree hugger either, because I believed that climate change was a security threat and in the last five years or so, organisations like the CIA and the US military have said similar things. Don't get me wrong, I love a tree and I love the natural world, but survival is the epitome of the right-wing ideology. Survival from the foreign immigrant invasion into Western democracies. The enemy within of Islamic terror. The red and yellow peril in the East and so on. All threats to life and our way of life, which ironically, needs to change. I don't believe that capitalism is structurally capable of being environmentally or financially sustainable in the longer term (more about that later). But we still need those right-wing voices to come over to this side of the argument and if they don't feel like hugging a tree, so be it.

I also thought for a time, that eventually with lack of action on climate change, there would be such a thing as environmental terrorism. Extinction Rebellion is about as hard core as the environmental movement gets, so maybe I was wrong on that one. Again, it relies heavily on whether more militant voices become stronger and our leaders' failures more apparent and severe. Maybe that is why the police often watch leftist groups quite carefully, because they're waiting for those militants to emerge?

8. Complex Solutions Which Maybe Unworkable.

The progress towards greening energy requires great complexity. Designing a green car or building a fusion reactor, requires massively complex systems, and those systems are vulnerable to error, malfunction and as of late, shortages of raw materials needed to build them, such as rare earth metals and cobalt. There have also been shortages of chips to make cars and their computers. And if humanity stumbles in the years to come, the know-how and infrastructure of those complex systems may be lost for centuries. A simpler system may be required. To stare into a crystal ball and find that system, may be impossible, but I believe that complexity in current and future systems, to mitigate climate change, will probably get simpler over time. And as for raw materials, some of the world's richest men are already well on their way to exploring the possibility, of off earth mining. It is thought that asteroids for example, hold trillions of dollars' worth of metals and collecting them for use down here on Earth, maybe possible, with AI directed space craft and the use of mining drones, controlled from Earth.

To ignore the risks of development and complex systems to facilitate and maintain our way of life, is to add another threat to the list of things leaders should be thinking about.

9. AI Will Reorder the World – Leading to the Consumer Class and the Death of Democracy.

The other danger of course, is that AI and robots will make so many jobs obsolete that there won't be enough consumers left to buy the goods and services that AI and robots produce. And don't be fooled by promises of being idol because the population is rich, because we no longer need to work. The Silicon Valley class won't want to share their profits with all and sundry and governments won't want to force them to either. What will happen is the consumer society will shrink over time, to the consumer class. There will be billions of destitute people with gated communities of a few hundred million (maybe more), who are either wealthy enough to live within the consumer class, because their jobs haven't been

cancelled or they will work for the consumer class in jobs that cannot be replaced by robots. The alternative: the only alternative in the end, would be a form of centralised redistribution of wealth, which the rich elite would have brought upon themselves, through their greed. To achieve that, democracy must not only be functioning properly, but also enough people must vote in a more socialist political movement, into every available democracy at the time. And let's also accept that democracy prevailing, is not by any means guaranteed, as we saw with Trumps coup attempt in 2020/21 and the seizing of democracies, such as with Sisi in Egypt, Putin in Russia, and Erdogan in Turkey. A good example of abuse of power creeping in and chipping away at democracy, is Boris Johnsons attempt (should he make one), to pass a law limiting the power of the courts to make judicial reviews of policies and laws enacted by the government. Johnson has a large majority and if he's going to move against the courts in this way, then now is the time, while he has the numbers. It would rely on how many conservative members of parliament are willing to do this.

Losing our democracies might seem an impossible scenario, but democracy in its current form is incredibly young and may well be a transient thing. It may be lost, and it maybe regained. Who knows? But if jobs and standards of living decline because of AI and robots, then what is there to stop people voting in parties who will reverse this trend? If there is a great deal of money to be made, powerful people, seeing democracy as a threat to their profits, may decide that democracy is only for that consumer class.

10. Should We Maintain and Expand Western Levels of Standards of Living?

Whether a nation begins to get access to healthcare, access to knowledge and technology and access to better paid work, relies heavily on a growing middle class. The middle class, if it successfully takes hold, can bring about a lot of positive change. When they demand change it happens. Governments listen to them. And when they demand certain Western levels of access to consumer products, the market will oblige them willingly and quickly. As the developing nations expand their infrastructures to supply a burgeoning middle class, they have been building power stations, housing, roads at vast quantities, putting pressure on supply, that the West has traditionally laid claim to with ease. They supplied us, with our stuff. This is changing rapidly. Much of the global poor would have had a largely vegetarian diet for example. Now many of them can afford meat products in their diet as regularly as we do. The recent spike in gas prices have also been driven by more consumer and industrial demand in China. The Chinese will pay any price to turn around that super tanker on its way to Europe to deliver its cargo and put pressure on prices at home. What have we done? We have unleashed a perfectly predictable price war on essential items, such as energy supply. Surely that's good for the environment as the West will invest more quickly and in higher numbers in renewable energy, such as wind and solar. It may be the catalyst to finish the job of making us completely fossil fuel free. But renewable technology relies, as I said earlier on rare earth metals and highly complex manufacturing processes, which are currently placed largely outside of Western economic territory – in other words in China. This presents great danger in maintaining our quality of life. The rich will be fine. But the rest of us may find that certain products and services that were previously available are now not available. So, should we remodel our way of life a little, or a lot? Willingly or not? These are the questions we will be forced to ask ourselves sooner rather than later. Again, it is about how wealth and resources are distributed. Is it all for the rich and none for the poor? Will people accept that premise? Will they rise up against the elite and take them down? It is a process where the forces of the elite become too separate from the mass of the poor, which causes a massive rebound. It happens in revolutions all the time. Egypt this century and France in the 19th.

Russia in the 20th. But the poor cannot have a share of very little in the end. If there aren't enough resources to stretch across all strata of society, then where does that leave us?

Off-earth mining as I mentioned before, may offer solutions here. But that is possibly hundreds of years away – certainly decades away. And sustainability. We cannot live this consumer lifestyle forever. It's harmful and dangerous to all areas of life on Earth. A reduced version of capitalism perhaps? A renewal of socialism or communism perhaps? Or something new. The market already decides who gets what. So maybe there is some semblance of self-regulation in the madness of a capitalist society where the elite have it all, and the rest the scraps. A higher tax regime and a universal income? Tight regulations on new and current products available to consumers? Much more stringent rules on waste? Complex systems of good practice enforced by good regulation. We have a long way to go and a lot of developing to do.

One idea that I and others had, which is very much on the fringes, was a non-monetary economy, where money is no longer the method of exchange for goods and services and instead it is a system, where people are given the things they need. Everyone will choose a job, which would depend on qualifications and experience (like now), and we will be given food and furniture and anything we need to work and live. High quality goods, made to last with a close eye on resource use and distribution. Everything, or as much as possible would be made and sourced locally and would be designed for sustainability of resources, so that smaller regions would be self-sustaining, rather than shipping goods round the world, when they could be made closer to home. This kind of economy, if it ever were to happen, would require a great deal of co-operation and harmonisation between nations – something we have always struggled with and maybe something for the long-distance future (see Harmonisation). However, in the short to medium term, capitalism could collapse for a whole range of reasons, or for a series of crises, in quick succession. A major war, massive global catastrophe, large debt bubbles that burst, resource scarcity. Whatever the reason, capitalism depends very heavily on using raw materials, and using energy. If it could ever really reach a sustainable level – reducing resource and land-use, recycling raw materials and stopping the emissions of chemicals and carbon, I doubt very much.

11. Egalitarian or Inequitable?

Separating the haves and have nots is easy enough. But is there a choice to be made, whether we continue to keep the poor, poor and the rich richer still? In the longer distant future, should growth in population continue, if the 1% continue to hoard wealth to themselves and if resources become so scarce that anything we need or want, will simply be out of range for the majority of the people. At what point do we decide to do something to equalise things? Socialists have always claimed to be able to do this for the people. But time and again they fail. High tax economies for the most part led to lower economic activity, lack of investment in industry and jobs, which enters into a downward spiral into economic decline. However, if the 1% continue to hoard wealth without paying their taxes, should we accept the idea that it would be their philanthropy that will help the poor and not the government? As I said earlier, continuous production of useless products, just to keep the economy afloat cannot continue indefinitely, at least without very sophisticated and comprehensive reuse of raw materials and zero greenhouse gas emissions. Also is there a midway level of income, which will keep poorer people from starving to death or dying from drinking dirty water or from easily curable diseases? Many people around the world live like this. Enough income to feed themselves and perhaps live in a shack in a ghetto, or favella. The rich haven't shown many signs that they will help people like this improve their housing and access to clean water and

sanitation and because of the dysfunctional and inadequate tax system, government won't be able to do this either. So where does global development come from, in the end? Is it a slow process via better education leading to better paid work? All this takes time, and because of the failures of leadership, progress is slower.

China of course has lifted millions of people out of grinding poverty, via the adoption of capitalism, a rampant, wild West version of it, where cheap labour and heavily subsidised supply of materials, has drawn vast amounts of jobs from the West to China. This economic miracle has helped many people to find work and migration into the cities has been happening at a phenomenal rate. This kind of egalitarianism, works in the medium term, but as resources begin to be demanded from these new middle classes, to continue to move from the agricultural jobs, into engineering and other professions, pressure on resources will increase massively, to the point where the East and the West will be competing with higher and higher prices being offered, for scarcer and scarcer resources. In this scenario I cannot see the rest of the developing world, moving from a subsistence economy into a burgeoning middle class, with Western levels of consumerism. The West has spent what was in the kitty already and the late comers will have to bid for what's left, highest bidder takes all.

This struggle will hold down development and will also slow the Western economies, where never ending yearly growth in GDP may become a thing of the past. Our luxury items may not be as accessible, and we may have to make do with what we have or get richer and pay more.

12. Social Harmonisation.

The idea of social harmonisation is, as far as I know a new idea. We have fierce rivalries between nations, between religions, between ethnic groups and even neighbours, among many others. We have differences of political ideologies, which at times can appear completely intractable. Right verses left. Free market, low tax economy, verses tax and spend. However, what role will evolution play, in our collective mental development? What forces are at work, which change us and is that change for good or ill? We could settle down and become more law abiding, more peaceful, should our brains evolve to be quiet and sensible. The amount that societies abide by the law and live quiet, sensible lives, varies wildly from nation to nation, city to city, town to town. But should we find that living a chaotic life wanes away from what we need to do in our lives, what motivates us, a better world will follow. Criminal laws won't be used as much. Policing would be scaled down. Individualism would begin to fade and a social harmonisation would come about, where each of us knows what to expect from everyone else. But the fact is, to assume that evolution only goes forward – only brings us new advantage is wrong. 99% of all species on Earth, that have ever existed, have died out. And evolution of human beings, could go wrong as much as go right. We might go right for a while and then go wrong and vice versa.

A growing global middle class, although putting extra pressure on sustainability, will take us halfway there, if it can be maintained. However, conflict and tribalism still exist in this group. The middle class can still be prejudiced, still develop violent rivalries if in government. They can still ruthlessly exploit people and nature. So just being middle class, isn't the full picture.

In this future evolved, state of being, we would no longer experience murder, greed and cruelty. But I believe if we ever get there (and there are zero guarantees), this will supercharge our development, in terms of technology, health and architecture. This would lead to more space exploration and the building of space stations and the colonisation of other worlds. But also, medical technology will become so sophisticated that we will live longer,

upwards of 200 -400 years old. There would little point in having large families, and birth rates will decline dramatically. Our population would level out and become more static. We will dispense with money and this will mean that we will be unshackled from the limits of budgets. And instead of a budget limiting what we can do, it will instead only be limited by our imagination. There is much to look forward to, should we survive this Mess Age, and the challenges it presents.

13. Fixing the Wobble.

The Earth, as we know is being put under pressure to the point where we could be facing an anthropic extinction event, if we don't act. However, there is another developing and urgent issue. We in the North (America and Europe) have been locking up fresh water in so many swimming pools that it is affecting the Earth's rotation on its axis. There is a slight wobble. However, the building of megacities around the world (China, US, Japan etc), this is also affecting the Earth's rotation. This issue is barely mentioned, but if left unchecked could continue to develop and get much worse. I'm not a geology expert, but causing the Earth to wobble, at least to the layman, sounds very bad and the only way to fix it would be to demolish megacities and build a new way of life, where housing and workplaces are low-rise and equally distributed. Otherwise, the next big issue will be Earth moving in towards the sun; away from the sun, into the moon, or shifting around so that poles move dramatically along with the equator, causing untold misery and destruction. When I first started to discuss global disasters, and in particular asteroids, no-one took me seriously. This was back in 1995. Now NASA has launched a satellite to try and move the orbit of a large asteroid, to see if it can be done, what the effects might be and whether the method of moving asteroids away from Earth is workable. Fixing the wobble maybe one of those issues that hasn't made a great dent in political or scientific circles, but I fully expect it too soon.

14. Disaster Preparedness.

To remodel the world – to destroy much of what we have built these last few thousand years and in particular, the last 100 years, is a big ask. But sooner or later, a global disaster or a major shift in thinking, might mean that we need to make very big changes. A disaster resistant town or city would be small, structurally resistant to earthquakes, flood resistant and self-sustaining. I have advocated for such a design since 1995 and have found no-one really believes that we should remodel our lives from top to bottom. Denial or not, I think at some point in the future it will happen. Three centuries, or six or more, it doesn't matter. We might need to rebuild after a global disaster or we may rebuild because we have reached a point where we recognise our old way of life, is obsolete and unliveable. Whatever the reason, I believe we can and must do it, sooner or later and we will need to remodel every couple of millennia. We can do it in one big effort or in sections, or do it more slowly with some nations moving ahead more quickly than others.

See: <https://vagabondunlimited.wordpress.com/2017/12/01/visions-of-the-city/>