# Avoiding Human Extinction

As a retired systems engineer, I have acquired some understanding of how various factors can influence outcomes and lately have been thinking about our world’s problems. I believe (as well as many scientists) that the human race is teetering on the edge of extinction, but there is hope

## A Hypothesis for Extinction

At a fundamental level, God’s universe created each of us as a configuration of organic chemistry. After our conception, individual brain cells begin communicating with each other and start to develop an awareness of self and not-self. We begin forming a mental model of the factors that further our self-preservation and those that threaten it. This model develops based on the accumulation of our personnel experiences related to where, when, and to whom we were born. Our worldview model of these factors drives our actions in the pursuit of our survival and well-being.

As primates evolved into humans, communication between individuals began to develop. The evolving communication methods of early humans allowed individuals to begin sharing their primitive worldview with neighboring individuals, resulting in the formation of families and tribal communities with common beliefs.

The worldview models of these early communities were based on tangible physical encounters and the goal for action was simple; find food and shelter for survival. A tribal community was more successful at this goal than a single individual. As a natural consequence, individual self-preservation increased when individuals sharing similar beliefs contributed to the goals of the community. The well-being of individuals within these early communities was linked to the well-being of the community. Thus, natural selection favored a strong individual commitment to the community and its worldview model.

The leadership of a community benefited when its worldview resonated with its members. Reciprocally, the well-being of individual members benefited by accepting the community’s worldview. This relationship generates a form of reinforcing positive feedback. Once a particular belief emerges (whether true or false) and begins to acquire acceptance within the community; the momentum of this reinforcing feedback deepens the credibility of the belief within the community. This process occurs because evolutionary heritage has linked the individual ‘s survival with the acceptance of their community’s worldview model.

Early communities, in the pursuit of food and shelter, would encounter other communities pursuing the same resources. This could result in a merger or an alliance if the leadership of both communities viewed the encounter as beneficial to their well-being. However, more frequently the encounter would be labeled an enemy and a threat to the community’s well-being. In addition, a sub-community could form due to a real or imagined disagreement with their community’s worldview, resulting in civil strife or civil war.

Hence the continuous human history of wars over disputed resources or worldview models; and the desire for increasingly deadlier weapons to prevail over their perceived enemies. This evolutionary history motivates community leadership to rally its members and perpetuate a dialog of fear and animosity toward perceived enemies.

## The Risks of Today

This same systemic behavior continues today. Regrettably, technological developments have evolved and continue to evolve nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction that can exterminate humanity and virtually all life on this good earth [untitled (rutgers.edu)](http://climate.envsci.rutgers.edu/pdf/RobockToonSAD.pdf). Even more disturbing is the likelihood that the use of such weapons could occur as the result of an error. Consider the seventeen incidents in the past when we came close to accidental nuclear Armageddon ([List of nuclear close calls - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_nuclear_close_calls#5_November_1956)).

Everyone will occasionally make a mistake. Thus it’s virtually inevitable that someone, sooner or later, will eventually make a catastrophic error. How many times can you roll the dice before you encounter snake eyes? Consider the Fermi paradox; i.e., why don’t we see evidence of alien life considering the vastness of our universe? It may be the natural evolution of intelligent life to destroy itself. Competition and greed for diminishing world resources, accelerated by global warming, will only increase the likelihood of aggressive behavior and the potential for self-annulation.

## What Can We Do?

All of us must tell our world leaders that they are accountable for our survival. They must set aside short-sighted geopolitical issues, communicate with the members of their communities, and seriously work together toward the common goal of our survival. Our most important self-interest is to set aside our pursuit of destabilizing self-interest actions. Consider that we are a single community of humans on this earth. Of what value is some issue of perceived self-interest compared to the survival of humanity? Let’s start a new dialog between the leaders and members of all countries, religions, sects, political parties, etc. that we must act together if we are to prevail against the end of everything.

Pray that God gives us the intelligence to save us from ourselves.