

## It's a conspiracy!

Some governments claim they're 'following the science' in their response to the coronavirus pandemic, while others are blatantly ignoring all scientific and health advice in favour of politics and economics. Unfortunately the public are often left confused and ill-informed, many choosing to follow the 'alternative facts' provided by unreliable social media. These include a range of crazy ideas that have been thoroughly debunked and discredited but still attract attention.



A recent reputable survey of a representative cross-section of Americans found that half of regular Fox News viewers believed the pandemic is being exploited by Bill Gates and other super-rich moguls to gain control of the world by using vaccination as a trick to insert microchips into everyone. This Matrix-like plot combines features of several so-called conspiracy theories, completely unfounded viewpoints based on anti-authority attitudes and a rejection of objective evidence-based truth.

The 'world domination' theory is believed by many who accept that the pandemic and the virus causing it are real, but others think the whole thing is a hoax, with reports of infections and deaths invented by those in authority in order to restrict our freedom, or undermine democracy, or some other evil scheme. This is conspiracy on a massive scale, with huge numbers of officials, scientists and health workers complicit in the fraud! Believing it must take an enormous suspension of reason and common sense. Social media carry lots of claims of supposedly positive Covid-19 test results sent to people who've never actually been tested, but these always seem to be at best second-hand reports of what happened to someone else, never a personal experience that can be proved.

We all know that advice on face coverings has been variable and confused, but we can



certainly reject any notion that their use is dangerous because it prevents oxygen from reaching our lungs or forces us to breathe our own waste carbon dioxide; these ideas have no supporting evidence, they contradict many years of experience of health professionals using PPE (personal protective equipment), and they are ridiculous in view of the size of atmospheric gas molecules compared with the dimensions of fabric fibres. A simple cloth face covering is not supposed to protect the wearer from infection (unlike clinical PPE); it reduces the risk of transmission from the wearer, who may be infected but showing no symptoms, to other people, for which there is plenty of scientific evidence.

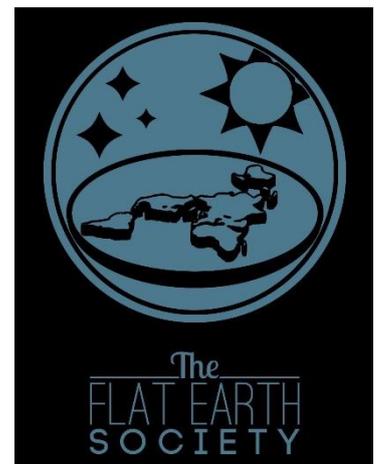


Untrue claims of danger are also made about vaccination, one of the biggest health improvements and lifesavers ever introduced into medical science. Unfounded scares about vaccines keep cropping up, rather like outbreaks of the nasty diseases they're supposed to prevent, and those who spread them usually refer constantly to the same old claims that have long been proved false. The reality is that viruses such as C-19, measles, and even the familiar winter flu, are far more dangerous than any vaccine that

has been developed, properly tested, and approved for use against them. Granted, I'd hesitate to accept the new rushed Russian vaccine, but any approved for use in the UK will be as safe and effective as possible, with an insignificant risk compared with the virus.

Among the most ridiculous theories is that C-19 is spread by 5G technology, either in direct transmission or by suppressing our immune system. I've discussed 5G scares in a previous article, but these ideas tend to be supported by claims like the introduction of 5G in Wuhan, China before anywhere else and just before the start of the pandemic, which simply isn't true. Incidentally, you can find all my TVE articles at [bigquestions-anyanswers.org](http://bigquestions-anyanswers.org), usually with some extra pictures.

I haven't yet come across any widespread claim that the coronavirus is a result of alien abductions, but it wouldn't surprise me. People who accept and promote these conspiracy theories tend to go for a whole package of them as an expression of personal freedom and a rejection of conventional truth claims. You'll find them popular, for example, among members of the Flat Earth Society and other odd belief systems. Unfortunately they're also far too common among those with some strong forms of religious conviction, including many so-called 'fundamentalist Christians' in the USA and elsewhere. This is not mainstream Christian belief!



A recent virtual conference run by the organisation Christians in Science sought to bring Christian scientific perspectives to the current pandemic. If you're interested, you can find video recordings at [cis.org.uk/online-conference-god-and-pandemics/](http://cis.org.uk/online-conference-god-and-pandemics/). And I've just come across 'a Christian statement on science for pandemic times' and have added my own signature to it as a reasoned, balanced summary of what I think is the right approach. It's at this address: [statement.biologos.org](http://statement.biologos.org) and there are already several thousand signatures.



**Bill Clegg**

*This article was written for the Tyne Valley Express (September–October) 2020, but the Editor would not publish it because he considered it to be out of touch with reality as he saw it. Judge for yourselves!*