

Patrick Collison Uses *The Winged Gospel* to Question AI’s “Last Chance” Narrative

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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The clearest recommendation is a book Collison uses to test millenarian claims that AI makes this the final window to start a company, joined by a substantive Sam Altman interview and a resurfaced demographic video.

Most compelling: *The Winged Gospel*

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Not named in the interview; no URL supplied.
- **Recommended by:** Patrick Collison. [1]
- **Key takeaway:** Collison introduces it as “a great book” while describing how aviation-era enthusiasts believed civilization had entered an entirely new era. He uses that analogy to temper today’s millenarian AI narratives, then says he would “take the under” on this being the last couple of years in which people can create companies. [1]
- **Why it matters:** This is the strongest recommendation because it comes with a reusable test for “now or never” claims about AI and entrepreneurship: compare the present’s transformative rhetoric with earlier technologies whose social effects were real but less total than their advocates predicted. [1]

A strategic AI interview: Sam Altman with Patrick O’Shaughnessy

- **Content type:** Podcast/video interview
- **Title/participants:** Patrick O’Shaughnessy’s conversation with Sam Altman, identified in Packy McCormick’s newsletter as Sam’s *Invest Like the Best* appearance. [2]

- **Link:** Packy McCormick’s post containing the conversation
- **Recommended by:** Packy McCormick. [3]
- **Key takeaway:** Packy calls the conversation a “masterclass” in how Altman communicates about AI. The episode announcement lists Kimi, distillation and open source, OpenAI’s compute bets, the Hugging Face incident, life after AGI, and raising children amid abundant intelligence. [3] Packy’s own takeaway is that he is biased toward seeing “AI as more oil than god,” but the interview made him wonder whether an oil-like AI system would need to become even larger to sustain long-term exponential growth at this scale. [3]
- **Why it matters:** The recommendation has a concrete analytical payoff rather than resting on guest prominence alone: it connects OpenAI’s communication strategy to a question about the scale and economics required to keep AI’s growth trajectory going. [3]

Mark Steyn’s demographic clip

- **Content type:** Short video clip
- **Creator:** Mark Steyn
- **Link:** Original post with the clip
- **Recommended by:** Elon Musk, in a quote-post. [4]
- **Key takeaway:** The original post identifies the clip as from 2010 and presents Steyn’s argument that a population split between 90% having 1.3 children per couple and 10% having 3.5 would produce roughly equal numbers of grandchildren in two generations. Musk calls the clip “extremely important to understand,” restates the point as a blended Western fertility rate, and concludes: “Demographics is destiny.” [5, 4]
- **Why it matters:** It is a compact statement of the demographic lens Musk is elevating. Treat it as a thesis to investigate rather than a substitute for a full demographic study; its value here is the clarity of the frame and the unusually explicit endorsement.

Sources

1. Patrick Collison: “What If You Succeed?”
2. Weekly Dose of Optimism #204
3. Packy McCormick (@packyM) on X
4. X post by @elonmusk
5. X post by @FrncsFlmng