

What would *really* happen if we discovered alien life? Humor me with this thought experiment on the potential creation of a unified world government as we discover alien life.

I believe that in order to discover alien life or remnants of alien life, we first should expand into space farther. Will we have cities or outposts on other planets in our solar system? I would like to think of Mars or the Moon, which I think we would formally adopt the name Luna, for example, as a sort of 'halfway-house' between Earth and other settlements in space.

A pan global culture develops. The world keeps seeming smaller and smaller as we become increasingly interconnected. We are seeing the onset of this with how communication has been revolutionized within the 21st century, but we still identify as belonging to a country or nation instead of 'from Earth'.

Any sort of ambitious space exploration/colonization would be a massively costly effort. To achieve this, I think that world governments will have to pool their resources. An EU/NATO kind of organization or alliance perhaps? This can potentially be very sudden should there be an accidental discovery of alien life.

So we are getting established in space and the 'inciting incident' that will trigger would be the 'First Contact' scenario discussed ad nauseum across science fiction stories and tropes. I believe, again, that our initial expansion into space would increase likelihood of this scenario occurring. This could be other living sentient life or ruins of a long-dead alien species.

This would be mind-blowing for scientists, and sociological resources. Tech companies, religious institutions, defense contractors, and militaries all go crazy rushing to decipher/interpret what all of this means. If it is ruins, maybe some archives containing their history/tech? If they are alive, hopefully they are friendly.

What could happen to religion, in particular, is particularly interesting. The head organizations would do a complete backflip. They could crumble into obscurity or incorporate the aliens into their existing dogma. Abrahamic religions for example: Are the aliens created by God? Did Jesus die for their sins also? These questions will **have** to be addressed. Maybe religion ceases to exist on an organized level? I believe that religion will exist, but on a smaller, more low-key scale in this scenario.

Some religious and political leaders may be deniers. Aliens? Fake news. Conspiracy theories would certainly develop. "We never went to the moon" sort of stuff.

Will there be new religions? An active alien religion that gets adapted/adopted by some? Perhaps an 'Interventionist' religion that states that 'We were being watched/guided the whole time!' Was our existence being manipulated/influenced by them? I don't believe that this would not be mutually exclusive to religion and can coexist alongside religious concepts/existence of God(s).

Time for the elephant in the room: if there are alien germs/viruses, this likely would play out similarly to the massacre of Native Americans by Europeans, but on a far worse, global scale. For the sake of this scenario, we are going to disregard this likelihood.

This tectonic shift in human/earthling identity combined with the economic price of space exploration and the increased pan global culture will further unite humanity. An 'us vs. them' mentality develops. "Oh, we were just fighting, but at least you are human. Now there are aliens out there? We should band together." Pro-human and Earth-centric goals develop. Potential alien racism will start to develop here.

Nations willing to participate draft legislation outlining a new supranational world government. This will facilitate further expansion into space, protect humanities' interests, and defend Earth's colonies in space. Other countries unwilling to cooperate with this legislation will be forced to band together in order to stay relevant with this advent/evolution in humanity. All human/earthling technological, industrial, and mechanical might is now pooled together and focused on the stars.

-James Shannon