

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOAL OF SPACE EXPLORATION?

Five hundred years ago, Christopher Columbus boldly "discovered" a new world. As a result of his brave feat, I am here writing this essay about why we should continue another great journey. This journey--space exploration--has already started. In 1969 we landed on the moon, but that was only a first step. The three goals of space exploration should be to learn more about our solar system, to establish a space station, and to search for other life and phenomena.

First and foremost, it would be proper to understand a great deal about our neighborhood (our solar system) before we travel abroad. Mars is our closest relative and next project. As we did with the moon in 1969, we must send astronauts to explore the surface of Mars in the near future. Is Mars inhabitable? NASA is discovering new facts about Mars, such as the existence of life on the planet. Next, we must find out about the moons of our neighboring planets. With the discovery that there could possibly be life on Jupiter's moon Europa, other moons may be inhabitable. Again, our solar system is our next greatest adventure.

A space station is another goal for NASA to achieve in the coming future. Russia has a space

station, but it is necessary for the United States to have their own space station. Astronauts could conduct their own experiments without Russian interference. If the Russians or Americans ever needed assistance in their space station projects, the two nations could help each other. A final reason for a space station is the convenience it presents. Astronauts could build a place to park space ships and space shuttles. The ability to refuel at a space station would allow our ships to travel farther and farther within our own solar system. A space station is an incredible but very possible undertaking.

Finally, the enjoyable part about the space program would be discovering "new" life and other phenomena. The possibility of other life in our universe is looking very optimistic. How advanced the other forms of life are is unanswered. Mars and Europa show signs of life. Why would only three places in the entire universe have life? The possibility of life is very enticing and it opens many fields of discovery. Other phenomena is also exciting for the imagination. Black holes are very mysterious and forbidding, and it is a part of human nature that gives us the desire to find out about black holes. Eleven dimensions also exist, according to theory. Imagine the possibilities!

Our solar system, a space station, and new discoveries are the foundations for future space exploration. If we only had a president in office like John F. Kennedy, who promoted the moonwalk, then the space program would, again, take off. We need a leader, a president, to step forth and guide us into the next era of space exploration.