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## OPSOMMING

# DIE ANTIEKE RUIMTEVAARDER-TEORIE

- 'n Godsdienwetenskaplike studie -

DEUR

GERHARDUS STEFANUS DE BRUIN

GRAAD. PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR (PhD)

Die Antieke ruimtevaarder-teorie stel voor dat wesens uit die ruimte die Aarde in die antieke verlede besoek het. Hierdie wesens was betrokke by die vroeë geskiedenis van die planeet. Hulle het bewoonbare toestande geskep asook menslike intelligensie deur 'n proses van genetiese ingenieurswese. Hul besoeke is opgeteken en deur mense oorgelewer in godsdienste, mitologieë en antieke legendes. Hul teenwoordigheid is ook nog waarneembaar in antieke fisiese oorblyfsels. Voorstanders van die Ruimtevaarderteorie bied dit aan as 'n wetenskaplike hipotese en as die “mees perfekte algemene noemer van alle tye” wat 'n moderne verklaring vir die oer-godsdienste bied.

Afdeling A van die studie bied 'n oorsig oor die teorie en die bewyse wat daarvoor aangebied word. Daar word aangetoon dat, hoewel die meeste van die postulate nie deur die moderne wetenskap as “onsinnig” beskou word nie, dit nie oortuig as 'n werkbare wetenskaplike teorie nie. Omdat daar weinig verskil tussen die basiese onderneming van die wetenskap en die godsdienste bestaan (beide vertrek vanaf onbewysbare aannames om waargenome data te verklaar) word daar vermoed dat die Antieke ruimtevaarder-teorie eerder funksioneer op die vlak van religieusiteit. Hierdie tese word ondersoek in Afdeling B van die studie: Daar word voorgestel dat die Fenomenologiese metode van godsdienwetenskaplike ondersoek, wat poog om 'n fenomeen te verstaan nie soos dit



manifesteer nie, maar op die dieper vlak van die funksie en betekenis daarvan, die mees paslike metode vir dié ondersoek is.

Met gebruikmaking van die insigte van 'n Fenomenologiese benadering, word aangedui dat die Antieke ruimtevaarder-teorie funksioneer as 'n **godsdienstige beweging** met eienskappe van 'n **kulte** en 'n **nieu-mitologie**. Die aanvaarbaarheid van die teorie vir die vele volgelinge daarvan, en die gepaardgaande groei van die beweging wat dit propageer, word verklaar uit 'n kombinasie van sosiologiese en psigologiese faktore wat aan die werk is in die moderne Westerse beskawing. Vanuit 'n fenomenologiese gesigspunt word gekonkludeer dat die Ruimtevaarderteorie baie suksesvol op religieuse vlak is. Dit slaag daarin om die Bybel weer "geloofwaardig" te maak en skep weer 'n "kosmiese raamwerk" vir die betekenis van die menslike bestaan. Die teorie kan ook beskou word as 'n prysenswaardige poging tot die sintetisering van godsdiens en die moderne wetenskap vir die aanhangers daarvan, en om die geestelike behoeftes van mense in 'n verwarrende en verwarde wêreld aan te spreek.

In 'n slotafdeling word die bevindinge van die studie teologies oorweeg en word die waarde daarvan vir die Christelike godsdiens aangetoon

## CURRICULUM VITAE

**Gerhardus Stefanus De Bruin** is op 21 September 1963 in Adelaide in die Oos-Kaap gebore. Hy groei op in Bloemfontein en matrikuleer in 1981 aan die Hoër Volksskool te Heidelberg. Hy verwerf hierna die grade BA (1984) en BA (Honours) (met lof) (1985) asook BD (met lof) (1988) en MA (Bybelkunde) (1989) - **algar aan die Universiteit van Pretoria**. In 1988 ontvang hy Akademiese Ereklure van die Universiteit van Pretoria asook die Nico Prinsloo prys vir die beste student in Ou-Testamentiese Wetenskap aan die Fakulteit Teologie (Afd A). Hy is in 1989 georden as **evangeliedienaar** in die Nederduitsch Hervormde kerk van Afrika en nadat hy as **hospitaalkapelaan** by die Suid-Afrikaanse Geneeskundige Dienste werksaam was, bedien hy sedert 1990 voltyds die gemeentes Barberton en Secunda.



## SUMMARY

# THE ANCIENT ASTRONAUT THEORY

- A study in the Science of Religion -

BY

GERHARDUS STEFANUS DE BRUIN

DEGREE: PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR (PhD)

The **Ancient astronaut theory** proposes that beings from outer space came to Earth in the distant past. These beings were involved in the early history of the planet: They created habitable conditions and human intelligence by genetic engineering. Their visits were recorded and handed down by humans in their religions, mythologies and ancient legends. Their presence is also visible in ancient physical remains. Proponents present the Astronaut theory as a scientific hypothesis and as “the most perfect common denominator of all time”, allowing a modern explanation for old-time religion:

**Section A of the study** provides an overview of the theory and the evidence presented in support of it. It is shown that, although many of the postulates are being accepted by modern science as “not unreasonable”, it is not convincing as a workable scientific theory. Since there is little difference between the basic enterprises of science and religion (both departing from unproven suppositions to explain perceived data) it is suspected that the Astronaut theory rather functions on a level of religiosity. This thesis is investigated in **Section B of the study**: It is proposed that the Phenomenological method of studying religion, which attempts to understand a phenomenon not in the way it manifests itself, but on the deeper level of its function and meaning, is the most appropriate for this investigation.



Using the insights of a Phenomenological approach, it is shown that the Ancient astronaut theory functions as a **religious movement** with attributes of a **cult** and a **neo-mythology**. The acceptability of the theory for its many followers and the resulting growth of the movement that proposes it, is explained from a combination of social and psychological factors at work in Western society. From a phenomenological point of view it is concluded that the Astronaut theory may be considered very successful on a religious level: It succeeds in making the Bible “respectable” again and it recreates a “cosmic framework” for the meaning of human existence. The theory may also be considered a praiseworthy attempt to synthesise religion and modern science for its supporters and to address the spiritual needs of man in a confusing and confused world.

In a final section of the study, the results are being considered theologically and their value being shown for Christianity.

### CURRICULUM VITAE

**Gerhardus Stefanus De Bruin** was born in Adelaide in die Eastern Cape (South Africa) on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1963. He grew up in Bloemfontein and matriculated at the *Hoër Volksskool* in 1981. He received the degrees BA (1984), BA (Honours) (Cum laude) (1985), BD (Cum laude) (1988) and MA (Biblical studies) (1989) – all from the University of Pretoria. He also received Honorary Colours for Academic Achievement from the University of Pretoria and the Nico Prinsloo Price as best student in Old Testament Studies from the Faculty of Theology (Section A) in 1988. He was ordained as a Minister of Religion in the *Nederduitsch Hervormde kerk van Afrika* in 1989 and after serving as Hospital Chaplain at the South African Medical Services, he served the congregations of Barberton and Secunda as full time pastor since 1990.



## SLEUTELTERME

- Antieke Ruimtevaarder-teorie
- Paleo-SETI navorsing
- Godsdienfenomenologie
- Godsdienssosiologie
- Godsdienpsigologie
- Godsdienfilosofie
- Nieu-mitologie
- Kulte
- Nuwe godsdienstige bewegings
- New Age-beweging
- Kosmologie
- Godsdien-ontologie
- Tegnologiese interpretasies van die Bybel
- Exo-teologie
- Ongeïdentifiseerde Vlieënde Voorwerpe (UFO's)
- Teologie van die natuur
- Konflik: Wetenskap/godsdien



## KEY-TERMS

- Ancient Astronaut theory
- Paleo-SETI research
- Phenomenology of religion
- Sociology of religion
- Psychology of religion
- Philosophy of religion
- Neo-mythology
- Cult
- New religious movements
- New Age movement
- Cosmology
- Ontology of religion
- Technological interpretations of Biblical texts
- Exo-theology
- Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO's)
- Theology of nature
- Conflict: Science/religion



## CURRICULUM VITAE

Gerhardus Stefanus De Bruin

**Gerhard (Nols) De Bruin** is op 21 September 1963 in Adelaide in die Oos-Kaap gebore. Hy groei op in Bloemfontein en matrikuleer in 1981 aan die Hoer Volksskool te Heidelberg. Hy verwerf hierna die grade BA (1984) en BA (Honneurs) (met lof) (1985) asook BD (met lof) (1988) en MA (Bybelkunde) (1989) - algar aan die Universiteit van Pretoria. Die titel van sy MA Verhandeling was "*Prediker 1:12-2:26 aan die hand van 'n multidisiplinêre leesmetode*". Hy ontvang die graad onder studieleiding van prof P.M. Venter van die Universiteit van Pretoria. In 1988 ontvang hy beide Akademiese Erekleure van die Universiteit van Pretoria asook die Nico Prinsloo prys vir die beste student in Ou-Testamentiese Wetenskap aan die Fakulteit Teologie (Afd A). Hy is in 1989 georden as evangeliedienaar in die Nederduitsch Hervormde kerk van Afrika en nadat hy as hospitaalkapelaan by die Suid-Afrikaanse Geneeskundige Dienste werksaam was, bedien hy sedert 1990 voltyds die gemeentes Barberton en Secunda.

Prof P.J. van der Merwe