

УДК 27–4

Christian Theology, Extraterrestrial Intelligence and a Hypothesis of Multiple Incarnations

Alexei V. Nesteruk^{a*}
and Alexander V. Soldatov^b

^aUniversity of Portsmouth

Lion Gate Building, Portsmouth, PO1 3HF, UK

^bThe Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia
48 Moyka Embankment, St. Petersburg, 191186, Russia

Received 14.04.2019, received in revised form 20.05.2019, accepted 04.06.2019

This paper addresses the recently renewed discussions of the possibility of multiple species-specific incarnations of God in the societies of extraterrestrial beings (if they exist) on exoplanets. It gives a scientific, philosophical and theological assessment of some of its claims, arguing that the problem of extraterrestrial intelligence contributes to the hermeneutics of the human condition on Earth. The authors formulate their negative position on the hypothesis of multiple incarnations in the context of modern cosmology and Orthodox theology.

Keywords: anthropology, astrotheology, creation, deification, exoplanets, fall, humanity, incarnation, intelligence, redemption.

Research area: philosophy.

Citation: Nesteruk, A.V., Soldatov, A.V. (2019). Christian theology, extraterrestrial intelligence and a hypothesis of multiple incarnations. J. Sib. Fed. Univ. Humanit. soc. sci., 12(6), 1048–1071. DOI: 10.17516/1997–1370–0440.

If Extraterrestrial Intelligent Life would be discovered, any theology with an insistence on human uniqueness would be doomed!

Paul Davies (The Eerie Silence, 2010: 193)

Introduction

This paper addresses the question of the possibility of multiple species-specific incarnations of God in the societies of extraterrestrial beings (if they exist) on exoplanets. The extensive discussion of this issue was recently updated in the volume

© Siberian Federal University. All rights reserved

* Corresponding author E-mail address: alexei.nesteruk@port.ac.uk

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

on *Astrotheology*¹ (Peters et al., 2018), where a variety of opinions has been formulated. We will respond to some claims in that volume and then conclude discussion by formulating our position on multiple incarnations as it is seen through the eyes of cosmology and theology. We argue that the question on multiple incarnations is related to anthropology and theory of the subject in philosophy. From our point of view this discussion is about the alternative uniqueness–mediocrity of humanity in the universe. Indeed all those who incline to doubt (and refute) religious philosophy which proclaims the uniqueness of man, will take an opportunity to provide an argument against it and hence undermine the basic Christian teaching on *Imago Dei*. It is sufficient to refer to Paul Davies, a famous physicist and a popular writer, quotation from whom is placed in the beginning of this paper, in order to realise the seriousness and timeliness of such a discussion.

The major premise for a modern debate on Extraterrestrial Intelligence originates in recent advances in observational astrophysics of exoplanets, leading to a hypothesis that the *necessary* physical conditions for existence of carbon-based life-forms on these planets (similar to those ones on Earth) could entail that the *sufficient* conditions for their *actual* emergence, and emergence of intelligence are fulfilled. In other words, there is an inference: if exoplanets exist, then there can exist extraterrestrial intelligent life. Evaluated in broad philosophical terms, such an inference (as extrapolation of intelligence to other planets) effectively promotes an idea of plurality of habitable worlds and hence the loss of the sense of the human centrality in the universe not only in cosmographic, but also epistemological and theological sense. The fact that this idea represents a problem manifests itself in history, when the public religious opinion (supported by the Magisterium) struggled with any idea of humanity as an insignificant part of the universe, existing as a contingent outcome of processes in cosmic matter. However, in spite of the fact that classical teleological thinking of man as the crown of creation was put in disrepute since Kant's *Critique of Teleological Judgement* (so that humanity was dismissed from its central position in the universe in an ontological sense), its epistemological centrality has been retained. Then, there

¹ According to the definition by one of the editors of the quoted volume, a Lutheran theologian Ted Peters, “Astrotheology is that branch of theology which provides a critical analysis of the contemporary space sciences combined with an explication of classic doctrines such as creation and Christology for the purpose of constructing a comprehensive and meaningful understanding of our human situation within an astonishingly immense cosmos” (Peters et al., 2018: 11–12). Later he clarifies it further: “We prefix theology with *astro* to create a multi-disciplinary branch of theology that takes up the relationship between God and creation, especially the creation of the universe over time. Our picture of God’s work over time is informed by the natural sciences, particularly cosmology, astronomy, and evolutionary biology” (Peters et al., 2018: 14).

is a question: do modern scientific discoveries in astronomy, increasing a chance of finding new habitable zones in the universe, can change a theological stance on the epistemological (and hence theological) centrality of humanity which, *de facto*, implies that the self-reflective propensity of the universe (through man) makes it unique and effectively human? The answer to this question will entirely depend on the model of extraterrestrial intelligent beings and the extent to which they can resemble humanity on Earth. In other words, the burning issue is not only whether extraterrestrial intelligent beings exist in principle, but whether their existence can be detected by us only if, they are similar to humanity. Only in this context the discussion of the hypothesis of multiple incarnations has sense.

A Brief Historical Insight

Many Christian thinkers in the recent past were agitated by the question as to why did the Logos-Word of God was incarnate in flesh among men (assuming that those who posed this question knew astronomy and appreciated vastness of the universe), that is in this particular location in the universe and a particular historical era. Christian theology (in particular Western theology) was ascertaining that the Incarnation was addressed to man as a measure to heal his sins (after the Fall), that is as a vehicle of Redemption. In this case the uniqueness of the Incarnation is related to the uniqueness of man in the image of God but in a state of post-lapsarian predicament. The Eastern Christian Theology places the Incarnation in a wider perspective as being foreseen by God before creation of the world (according to the Creed “I believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, *begotten before all ages...*”). In this case the situation indeed becomes problematic for if extraterrestrial beings exist and they experience a similar condition (which is associated with the Fall), that is they mimic humanity, then, *logically*, if they are in need of salvation, they need the Incarnation as a premise for it. The question is: do they need their own specific incarnation, or the Incarnation on Earth would be sufficient to transfer its salvific effects to other civilization? In the first case there will be a problem for Christian theology, affirming uniqueness of man and his salvation history. In the second, man indeed becomes a microcosm and mediator, a receiver of the “message of the Incarnation” as the inauguration of the Kingdom of God, in order to understand how to restore the broken union with the creator in the entire universe.

We provide a few examples from the history of this puzzling issue. One may start with a characteristic quote from Emanuel Swedenborg’s *Earths in the Universe* (1758)

where the title of one of the chapters says for itself “The reasons why the Lord willed to be born on our Earth, and not on any other?” Swedenborg asserts that “... it pleased the Lord to be born on this earth, and to make this manifest by the Word, that it might not only be known on this globe, but also might be made manifest thereby to spirits and angels even from other earths, and likewise to the Gentiles from our own earth” (Swedenborg, 2009: 453). Here one finds two assumptions: 1) there is life on other planets which has anthropomorphic similarity in terms of its created predicaments and capacity to perceive God’s presence through a specific communion; 2) willingness of angels (spiritually related to the divine economy on Earth) to participate in promoting message about salvation to extraterrestrials on other planets where no one knows whether the Divine economy was in place. Thus, according to Swedenborg, Earth is theologically the central place in the universe. However, in spite of the Christian conviction that it is from Earth that the transfiguration of the universe in the perspective of the Kingdom of God will be initiated by deifying man, thus fulfilling man’s initial God-given command for the whole creation, Swedenborg assigns angels a mediating function communicating the message of the Kingdom (inaugurated on Earth through the Incarnation of Christ), to other species. What is implied here is that non-human angelic forms will mediate with non-human alien forms (somehow embodied), making irrelevant any direct human contacts with other beings. Yet, Swedenborg promotes the centrality of Earth and humanity in the created universe.

Approximately a century later a Cambridge scholar William Whewell in his unpublished manuscript *Astronomy and Religion* (1850s) asserted even more strongly that “God has interposed in the history of mankind in a special and personal manner... what are we to suppose concerning the other worlds which science discloses to us? Is there a like scheme of salvation provided for all of them? Our view of the saviour of man will not allow us to suppose that there can be more than one saviour. And the saviour coming as a man to men is so essential a part of the scheme... that to endeavor to transfer it to other worlds and to imagine there something analogous as existing, is more repugnant to our feeling that to imagine those other worlds not to be provided with any divine scheme of salvation...” (Quoted in (Darling, Schulze-Makuch, 2016: 445)). The Incarnation is unique because human beings in the image of God are unique.

A century later a British cosmologist Edward Milne, in times of no explicit evidence for existence of exoplanets, invoked the question of multiple incarnations in his book *Modern Cosmology and the Christian Idea of God* (1952): “God’s most notable intervention in the actual historical process, according to the Christian outlook, was the

Incarnation. Was this is a unique event, or has it been re-enacted on each of a countless number of planets?... We cannot imagine the Son of God suffering vicariously on each of a myriad of planets. The Christian would avoid this conclusion by the definite supposition that our planet is in fact unique” (Milne, 1952: 153). Regardless whether life could exist on other planets, Milne’s position conforms Christian stance on the uniqueness of humanity understood within the doctrine of the Incarnation.

At the same historical period an Anglican theologian E.L. Mascall discussed in his book *Christian Theology and Natural Science* (1956) whether the salvation history on Earth can be transferred to other locations in the universe. Mascall presses a point that salvation in Christian theology is related only to the “world of man”, saying that the salvation history as it is portrayed by Christian theology is human history, so that its extension towards other worlds in a literal, not an eschatological, sense seems to be unjustified. However later on, he exercises a theological hypothesis, referring to an a-priori ignorance of ours in the matters concerned that “... there are no conclusive theological reasons for rejecting the notion that, if there are, in some part or parts of the universe, rational corporeal beings who *have sinned and are in need of redemption*, for those beings and for their salvation the Son of God has united (or one day will unite) to his divine Person *their nature*, as he has united to ours...” (Mascall, 1956: 40) (emphasis added). The latter passage seems to be in a sheer logical contradiction with the previous one if we do not make the following observation: the implied unification with the Son of God (the Word-Logos, through whom and by whom everything was created) does not assume that it will be in the same physical and historical circumstances that pertained to humanity on Earth. If other intelligent species have their own physical and biological organization, their redemption and salvation will have a different natural modality, so that there is no need to equate the sense of the incarnation of the Word-Logos on Earth with that “communion” with other intelligent life-forms God could establish in the midst of other realms of the created universe. But in this case, the hypothesis remains only a hypothesis, with no serious theological and soteriological significance for human beings for whom the Incarnation of Christ has a constitutive meaning, providing humanity with the archetype of God-manhood. Humanity retains its special status relating to the “world of man and man’s relationships.” It is this human world that is the major concern of theology and the history of the universe with all its possible alien forms is seen as a part of the history of salvation.

Modern scientific creationists confirm the same conviction: “The Bible says nothing to indicate that God created life anywhere but Earth. But it does not explicitly

deny it. Some have speculated that God's omnipotence and glory might be expressed by many planets with life. However, Scripture strongly implies that no *intelligent* life exists elsewhere... The second person of the holy trinity incarnated on Earth alone, took on human nature, died for the sins of those with whom He was the kinsman redeemer relationship, then ascended to the right hand of God the Father... It would therefore seem hard to reconcile intelligent life on other worlds with the doctrine of the incarnation. It would also seem odd for God to create microscopic life on other planets, but we should not be dogmatic on this" (Sarfati, 2004: 5).

Thus there is wide range of religiously inclined thinkers who, while entering the discourse of possible extraterrestrial life or intelligence, promote a conviction that Christian theology can hardly to be reconciled with the idea of other intelligent species, and the main argument in this skepticism is the dogma of the incarnation which effectively justifies the uniqueness of humanity providing an archetype of communion between man and God and ultimately the archetype of man as such. However the abovementioned volume on *Astrotheology* offers a variety of opinions as to whether multiple incarnations are possible or not depending on the conditions of alien species on exoplanets. Our objective is to give a brief analysis of such suggestions and provide the reader with a theological position which arises from the Eastern Orthodox Christianity as characteristically different in comparison with those views which have their base in the Western theology. However, before we proceed to the further discussion of the issue of multiple incarnations among possible intelligent beings in the universe, there is one particular aspect of the whole discussion that seems to be disregarded, but whose theological significance is enormous.

All contemporary discussions related to extraterrestrial life (ETL) or extraterrestrial intelligence (ETI) have a strong input of physics, positioning the search for both ETL or ETI in outer space. Correspondingly the anticipated presence of either ETL or ETI is presumed in a sort of a physically embodied form, that is through something which is comparable with biological objects on Earth. This assumption is logical if one admits the universal nature of the physical conditions for the carbon-based life-forms in the universe. No one seriously discusses some forms of life or even intelligence based, for example on non-consubstantial to us parts of the universe, such as dark matter or dark energy. The biological premise is decisive for any discussion of ETL or ETI. However, the question arises whether the intelligent beings must be embodied in those forms of matter which are similar to those which constitute human bodies. The ETL or ETI research assumes that we encounter them on the same level of phenomenality as

we are presented to ourselves. Indeed only in this case it is probably worth or talking about interaction between ETL/ETI and us, for if the realm of phenomenality does not intersect, any chance for their detection and representation in our subjectivity will effectively be nil. This is a simple philosophical conclusion following, for example from Kant's transcendentalism.¹ Does not follow from here that it is a-priori evident that we can either passively detect ETL or ETI, or enter in any contact with them only if they are effectively anthropomorphic, that is their phenomenal world will be the same as ours? If this is true, then by searching for ETL or ETI we are looking for some copies of us, that is anthropic analogies or some branches of humankind which somehow emerged beyond Earth. In this case a theological question about the similar predicaments of off-Earthly anthropic species, and necessity for their healing and redemption, reminds Christian missionaries of the past imposing the Gospel message on some indigenous peoples in non-European continents. By this analogy, in the same sense as the question of the special incarnation for "primitive" humans did not have any sense and the message about salvation came from the missionaries, one can suggest that if ETL or ETI represent a certain branch of the anthropic tree, the question about a special incarnation for them either does not have any sense. This conclusion seems to be trivial for it is based in a simple philosophical fact that man can know only that which is adequate with his cognitive faculties. If one goes beyond this and dares speculate about some ETL or ETI species which are beyond the anthropic tree, the major question arises as to how to identify those natural phenomena which are indiscernible in human forms of sensibility and categories of the understanding as being associated with ETL or ETI. The second question is the necessity of this. Do we really need to enter in communication with them in the conditions when we do not understand the sense and origin of our own species. Can such a knowledge be beneficial for humanity? To elucidate this question let us appeal to a theological analogy related to the non-human intelligible entities known from Christian history as angels. This analogy is concerned with spiritual worlds, but we discuss whether it can be extended to other physical worlds.

In fact, the question of alien worlds and beings has a deep theological history simply because "heaven and earth" of the first day of creation signified the entirety of the universe, intelligible and corporeal. The intelligible realm comprised of innumerable angelic spheres, surrounding our terrestrial being. But the Bible

¹ See how this type of argument is developed in the paper (McLaughlin, 1985).

narrative does not speak much about them because it asserts that “in our fallenness, we cannot even place our world amidst these spiritual immensities” (Lossky, 1989: 64). This silence of the Scriptures of the other spiritual worlds underlines the fundamental geocentrism of Christian faith because the planet Earth is considered to be the body of humanity, the central being in creation destined to link the visible universe (Earth) with that which is invisible (the heaven). The centre of the universe is man, his heart, capable of contemplating distant galaxies and posing a question on the necessity of their salvation. But, as it was emphatically stated by V. Lossky: “The mysteries of the divine economy are... unfurled on earth, and this is why the Bible wants to bind us to the earth. Not only does it forbid us to lose ourselves in cosmic immensities (which our fallen nature cannot grasp anyway, except in their aspect of disintegration), not only does it want to win us from the usurpation of fallen angels and bind us to God alone, but when it *speaks to us of angels, it shows them to us turned towards terrestrial history where the divine economy inserts itself, as servants (or adversaries) of this economy*” (Lossky, 1989: 64) (emphasis added). In a way, since theology admits existence of intelligent beings of different kind (assuming that some of them can be embodied in forms of the universe’s substance which is not consubstantial with that of humanity¹), it was always an issue of whether man must interact with them at all. All corpus of ascetic Christian literature deals with the human struggle with those “alien” forms of intelligible existence which threaten Christian humanity’s longing for achieving union with God. This struggle of man in the conditions after the Fall with any non-human influence,² capable of distorting its Divine Image, must be taken seriously in view of a sheer historical endurance of such a phenomenon. The moral of this theological caution originates in that any transgression of the boundary of the earth-centred humanity can led to the distortion of the human condition to the extent of overcoming the human understood theologically as endowed with the propensity of salvation. Man occupies the central place in creation so that angelic beings, are, according to Lossky, turned towards Earth and human interaction with them takes place only in the context of the Divine economy on Earth. The meaning of this clarification is of a great importance: human beings do not have access to those intelligible spheres which are not related (turned)

¹ V. Lossky writes: “The angels cannot be defined as ‘incorporeal spirits.’ Even though called this by the Fathers and the liturgy, they are not ‘pure spirits.’ There is an angelic corporeality that can even make itself visible... Whatever the case, angels do not have a biological condition similar to ours, and know neither mortality nor reproduction. They have no ‘garments of skin’ (Lossky, 1989: 81).

² “Yet evil has its origin in the angelic worlds...” (Lossky, 1989: 81).

to Earth. One can suggest that the celestial hierarchies affirmed in the Scriptures and theology, whatever is their impact on us, protect humanity from those spiritual realms which are disjoint from the human universe, which are incomprehensible and thus existentially irrelevant.¹ The Bible cautions man not only from attempting any contacts with them, but also any meditation of them as soteriologically empty and existentially futile. Can then one suggest, on the basis of this analogy, that before man investigates the cosmos and develops programs like SETI (Search for ETI) and SETL (Search for ETL), he carefully estimates existential risks of such an endeavour as they are articulated by theology. The problem here is not the investigation of whether organic life forms (consubstantial with us) exist in the universe (indeed, the only hope for us is to find such forms), not either whether we can encounter other intelligible beings whose sense of existence, in relation to us, is completely unclear. Unclear in the sense whether any contact with them can undermine a human goal of deification. Taking into account this theological insight on how humanity is protected by angelic forms, it seems to us that what we can identify in the outer cosmos as ETL or ETI will inevitably be the Earthly image of life and intelligence, that is ETL and ETI in the image of man.

The search for ETL and ETI as an anthropomorphic assumption

As we have asserted above, the major optimistic premise for search of ETL and ETI related to the existence of exoplanets is the inference: if exoplanets exist, then there can exist extraterrestrial intelligent life. Despite the fact that this assumption implies a biological reductionism, assuming intelligence as an epiphenomenon of the biological, it is considered in scientific circles as a reasonable extrapolation. Philosophy, which considers the phenomenon of humanity in a wider perspective (relating the human condition to personhood, morality, rationality etc.), doubts that the phenomenon of the Earthly humanity can be wide-spread and mediocre in the universe. The major caution proceeds from a simple observation that the necessary physical conditions which are required for life of the Earthly type to appear on the planet do not entail the actual appearance of organic life (one implies the emergence of a cell from inorganic material), not saying at all about intelligence. The actual facticity of life and intelligence requires a different type of sufficient conditions which exceed the scope of physical

¹ Angelic spheres form a “shield” stopping humanity from “seeing” of alien spiritual worlds. One can guess that it is this “shield” that forms a boundary in the human condition related to the conditions of the Fall.

and biological causality.¹ The very fact of emergence of *Homo Sapiens* (as featuring personal self-consciousness) out of a variety of other organic life forms and human descendants, cannot be explained by purely physical or biological reasons. There is a sort of “eventuality”, that is the event-like phenomenality, which is present in the rise of the intelligent humanity, which points to some factors which cannot be explained on the grounds of causality and metaphysics. Theology supports such a philosophical caution by advocating the uniqueness of humanity as experiencing creaturehood, longing for immortality and attainment of the union with the creator. In both, philosophy and theology, the phenomenon of humanity is treated as distinctively unique with no justification within *metaphysica generalis*, that is as unexplainable “event” such that ultimately man is incapable of answering a perennial question “What is man?” (Marion, 2010: 8–50). In its present condition humanity, using the words of K. Jaspers, “... cannot exhaust man’s being in knowledge of him, we can experience it only in the primal source of our thought and action. Man is fundamentally more than he can know about himself” (Jaspers, 1954: 63, 66). The sciences, philosophy and theology, all, pose questions to man about himself but cannot lead to any definitive answer, thus provoking further questions about the essence of things which are ultimately the questions about man himself (Moltmann, 1974: 2). The purpose of finding the ultimate sense of existence is not ontologically achievable and “if [man] ever finally got ‘behind himself’, and could establish what was the matter with him, nothing would any longer be the matter with him, but everything would be fixed and tied down, and he would be finished. The solution of the puzzle what man is would then be at the same time the final release from being human” (Moltmann, 1974: 2).

Theology strengthens the stance on man’s unknowability by relating the phenomenon of humanity to God (*Imago Dei*), characterising it through the paradox of human subjectivity (being bodily in a particular location in the universe while being able to articulate the entire universe through consciousness)², the paradox whose sense

¹ At the present stage of scientific knowledge we do not have any convincing model of appearance of the living cell through the physical or biological causality from the inorganic matter. Saying differently we do not have any convincing evidence for that “process” which initiated biological evolution.

² See, e. g. (Kant, 1959: 260), (Husserl, 1970: 179), (Merleau-Ponty, 1982: 71–72), (Scheler, 1994: 160) etc. The review of different formulations of the paradox can be found in (Nesteruk, 2015: 136–161). We give a couple of quotes in order to remind the reader the sense of this paradox: “We can describe the relations between subject and world as purely intentional relations as opposed to (objective) spatial, temporal, and causal relations. We can appeal to the distinction between belonging to the world of objects and being a condition of the possibility of the world of objects (as meaning). Perhaps the broadest terms for these relations would be the *transcendental* relations and the *part-whole* relation” (Carr, 1999: 116); “It is necessary to combine the recognition of our contingency, our finitude, and our containment in the world with an ambition of transcendence, however limited may be our success in achieving it” (Nagel, 1986: 9).

was explicated by Christ in the Incarnation (Nesteruk, 2015[2]). Correspondingly, if such a phenomenon of humanity is elevated to a mediocre status in the universe (in the hypothesis of extraterrestrial life), this kind of thinking is manifest of *anthropomorphism* in its strongest possible sense, transferring the human sense of existence from Earth to other locations in the universe.¹ Only in this case the question about moral predicaments of the supposed extraterrestrial beings, their religion and their salvation can be raised. Only in this case a theological question on whether the other beings need incarnation of the Word of God has sense. Correspondingly, our assessment of existing views on multiple incarnations is based on the premise that the implicit anthropocentrism is present in the very formulation of the problem (in spite of its intention to overcome such an anthropocentrism).

Ted Peters in his paper “One incarnation or many?” lists four logical positions on the possibility of multiple incarnations of the Logos of God in different locations in the universe (we comment on them below) (Peters, 2018: 297). All these positions assume unconditionally two things: 1) there are *necessary* physical conditions in the universe such that the phenomenon of humanity and hence the Incarnation on Earth is possible in principle; 2) there have been actualised the *sufficient* conditions for the appearance of humanity in the universe and actual event of the Incarnation on Earth. The necessary conditions can be interpreted in terms of the natural aspects of the universe by using science, whereas the sufficient conditions escape physical causality and place both the phenomenon of humanity, as well as the historical Incarnation in rubrics of “events”. This means that the issue of existence of extraterrestrial life-forms, as well as multiple incarnations has sense not so much in the context of physics of the universe (covered by the necessary conditions), but related to some trans-natural, theological factors. This is the reason why the four logical positions formulated by Peters on multiple incarnations are essentially reduced to the differences in theological views on the concreteness of the Incarnation and its link to the essence of humanity.

The first, theological, alternative, according to Peters, is the difference between the position of whether the actual historical Incarnation was caused by the Fall of man in order to heal it, or the Incarnation would happen anyway regardless human actions and thus is inherent in the logic of creation of the world by God. Interestingly enough in both of these positions *the cause* of the Incarnation is shifted towards either

¹ This is the reason why R. Russel’s claim, based on the postulate of the “universality of *imago Dei*” (following in his logic from the similarity of the physical and moral conditions), that God provides multiple incarnation wherever ETI has evolved (Russel, 2018: 303–305) seems to be philosophically unjustified.

the event of the Fall, or to something inherent in creation. All discussions related to the causation between the Fall and the historical Incarnation are thus related to an attempt to formulate the *sufficient* conditions of the Incarnation in terms of the Fall. An alternative to this is to say that the actualisation of the *sufficient* conditions of the Incarnation has nothing to do with the Fall and human concerns, thus being inherent in the motive of creation *in parallel* with the necessary physical conditions. In both cases, that is either referring the motive of the Incarnation to the Fall, or to the intrinsic fabric of creation, the historical contingency of the event of the Incarnation is neutralised by referring to some other *inaugural events* which have a status of its ontological justification. If the world was initially created through physical laws in order to sustain human flesh in the state of the Fall, the real significance of the event of the Fall in the whole history of salvation becomes blurred, because the necessary conditions for existence of humanity in the state of the Fall (in “garments of skin”) are pre-existing in the very creation of the world. However, the event-like essence of the Fall is then rooted in the sufficient conditions related to that specifically human history which is not necessarily linked to natural history.

Then there is the second pair of logical positions, according to Peters, which brings into play human beings: if the Incarnation happened on this planet either because of the Fall or through the inherent logic of creation, the question is about its uniqueness. Whether its happening on Earth is unique and theologically sufficient for the whole universe (regardless alien life-forms) or, it can happen somewhere else. As we stated above, the assumption of intelligent subjects elsewhere in the universe represents an anthropomorphic extrapolation of humanity into space. The assumption of the Incarnation on other planets then represents the fortification of this anthropomorphic stance even further, by assigning to other intelligent beings either the predicaments of humanity in its earthly condition, or by endowing alien forms of life by the dignity of the *Imago Dei*. In either cases the major issue is on the sense of humanity in its link to the Incarnation and whether this sense can be transferred to other possible intelligent species in the universe.

Peters himself takes, according to him, the most coherent position of a fix-a-broken-creation Christology relying on the single Earthly incarnation event (Peters, 2018: 297, 272). Robert Russel argues that God provides multiple incarnations wherever extraterrestrial intelligence has evolved (Russel, 2018: 303). Peter Hess follows Russel by asserting that “the postulation of multiple incarnations overcomes the time and distance problems, allowing the one God fellowship with creatures whenever and

wherever they live throughout the universe” (Hess, 2018: 327). Joshua Moritz takes a negative stance on multiple incarnations accentuating the central role of humanity in the universe as being “an elected image of God...chosen from among the myriad of life forms in the cosmos ...and given the tasks of obedience and commandments, peace-keeping dominion, and cosmos-healing atonement” (Moritz, 2018: 344). Our position radically differs from those ones of Russel and Hess, for I argue that the hypothesis (postulation) of the multiple incarnations is an extreme anthropomorphic extrapolation having only an hypothetical and heuristic sense with no ontological justification. As to Peter’s position I argue, contrary to him, for the incarnation-anyway model with the exclusive role played by humanity in the Divine image similar to that which was advocated by Moritz, but inclining towards its fundamental theological-ontological exclusiveness related to unknowability of man by himself. It is this unknowability that entails the incomprehensibility of the Incarnation and hence a purely hypothetical quest for its multiple doubles in other worlds.

Centrality of Humanity:

One Incarnation Suffices for the Entire Cosmos

The phenomenon of humanity and the vision of Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God make the Incarnation an empirical *fact*, the fact which predetermines the contingent facticity of the whole universe. For the Word-Logos of God to assume human flesh, there *must be* this flesh. Since modern physics and biology are clear with respect to the necessary conditions of existence of such a flesh requiring at least ten billion years of a cosmological evolution, it seems evident that for the Incarnation to take place the *necessary* physical conditions must have been fulfilled. To have a body of Christ and his Mother (Virgin Mary) the universe must have had from the beginning the propensity to produce them. Correspondingly the ontological aspect of the Incarnation¹ is always present in the reversed history of the universe as it is described in modern cosmology.² According to T. Torrance the whole surrounding world, being created *freely* in the act of Love between the Persons of the Holy Trinity

¹ The ontological view of the Incarnation can be seen through a modern theological development called “deep Incarnation”. The term “deep incarnation” was coined by a Danish theologian Niels Gregersen in the paper (Gregersen, 2001). See also his paper (Gregersen, 2010).

² These conditions are summarised in various versions of the Anthropic Principle (AP), which detects consubstantiality of the physical stuff of the universe and human corporeal beings. Seen in this angle a hypothesis of the alien corporeal intelligence represents the extension of the AP with respect to other life-forms. In this sense when one invokes an idea of alien life one does not overcome anthropocentrism (whereas one can claim that it overcomes geocentrism) on the substantial level, for the physical and biological stuff on other planets will be the same, consisting of the evolutionary products of the burning stars.

the world, exhibits nevertheless *contingent necessity* related to its physical structure, its space and temporal span, encoding the motive of the Incarnation in the fabric of creation (Torrance, 1998). Torrance related the whole spatial structure of the universe (which is responsible for the necessary conditions of existence for all constituents of the universe¹) to the Incarnation.² By uniting hypostatically his Divine nature with human nature, the Logos subjected the freedom of creation to its particular realisation in human flesh. The Incarnation, being an “event” in space and time defines the modus of existence of the universe being implicitly present in the motive of creation.

But as an empirical fact the Incarnation is intimately linked to humanity as part of creation. Maximus the Confessor, for example, refers to man created in the image of God as a key to understanding creation in his process of divinization when he may elevate it to the supreme level of its full soteriological comprehension. Since the actual historical Incarnation happens in the midst of the human subset of the universe (recapitulating the universe on the level of consubstantiality and epistemological acquisition), its proper sense can be directly related to the constitution and meaning of the cosmos.³ In this case one can claim that by contributing to the constitution of the cosmos, the Incarnation predetermines the existence of other exoplanets and possible life-forms thus involving them into its own logic from the beginning of the world. Then one can infer that the *necessary* conditions for existence of alien forms of life in some other locations in the universe have in their deep foundation the logic of the Incarnation on Earth, not requiring any *ad extra*, related to the physico-biological functioning of these aliens. In this sense the existence of Earth and human beings represents that fact which suffice for a claim that the necessary conditions of the Incarnation are fulfilled in the entire cosmos.

At the same time the actual happening of the Incarnation provides us with the transcendent indications (*paradeigmata*) of the undisclosed *sufficient* conditions responsible for existence of intelligible life and hence the articulated image of the

¹ The dimension of space $d=3$, for example, is responsible for the stability of atoms and hence all astrophysical objects (see, for example (Barrow, Tipler, 1986: 258–276)).

² The Strong AP transforms into a *Theo-Anthropic Principle* related not to the possibility of a biological organization of man, but to the possibility of the Incarnation. The structure of the material world has a direct relation to the providential action of God to fulfill his design. This means that in order for the Incarnation of God to happen on Earth, in visible universe, this universe must have some qualities making possible the creation of man in the Divine image and the descent of God in the conditions of human flesh. Seen in this perspective, the development of the universe before and after the event of the Incarnation has different sense. The constructive development of the universe for the conditions of habitation of intelligent being and God’s taking of a human nature took place only before the event of the Incarnation.

³ See e. g. (Thunberg, 1985: 76) referring to Maximus’ *Questions to Thalassius* 35.

universe. The *sufficient* conditions for the Incarnation are not part of the underlying ontology of the world and here the *revelational* aspect of the Incarnation that enters the discussion framed in terms of the inauguration of the Kingdom of God in rubrics of space and time. Then there is a question: do the contingent *sufficient* conditions for a single historical Incarnation on Earth entail the *necessity* of its salvific consequences in the whole universe? If humanity is unique, then the Incarnation is addressed to this humanity and, strictly speaking, has a very tangential meaning to the rest of the universe. In this case it is humanity that is responsible for the salvation of the entire cosmos. If, on the contrary, one assumes existence of different forms of intelligent life, what is not clear is their relation to the Earthly Incarnation. One does not mean the physical conditions of their existence, but the relevance of their existence to God of Christian Faith. Indeed, all species in the universe were created by the same divine Logos, but the Incarnation is not part of the *natural conditions* in the world. Even if the world was created in order to attain the union with God, it is humanity which is granted the means of such an attainment through a special call. If this is true, humanity is capable of doing the same thing with respect to extraterrestrials which are part of the same corruptible world. The possibility of such an attainment effectively contributes to the definition of man: only in communion with God man becomes “himself” (Zizioulas, 2006, 248). In this sense man, in spite of being consubstantial to the visible creation and having solidarity with it, is a special creation whose essence requires *grace*, the mechanism of acquiring of which proceeds through the Incarnation.¹ On this basis I doubt any evidence that the rational creatures would be *by nature* attuned to the presence of God (Peters, 2018, 285). If this would be true, then we should identify these creatures with humanity. But this seems to be a weak point not only scientifically, but first of all philosophically: we do not have any evidence whatsoever to expect to encounter another type of “humanity” in a different world, unless we produce this “humanity” ourselves in a manner of science fiction. If this would be the case, still it is the Earthly humanity would have responsibility for “off world doubles.”

The unity of creation and the integrity of the human commitment to its transfiguration was asserted by patristic theologians and expressed explicitly by Maximus the Confessor advocating the mediating role of man in overcoming the moral tensions between different parts of creation², including, one can suggest, extraterrestrials. Man

¹ This goes contrary to that which Russel asserts that “God’s grace will redeem and sanctify every species in which reason and moral conscience are kindled” (Russel, 2018: 305) unless the mentioned species is part of the humankind.

² See, for example (Thunberg, 1995: 387–427).

is the “microcosm” who resumes, condenses, recapitulates in himself the degrees of the created being and because of this he can know the universe from within” (Clément, 1976: 90). Correspondingly, if God’s plan “consists in deification of the created world” (some parts of which imply salvation), and man is aimed to be a subject of this deification, then the plausibility of the plan of deification of the whole world is rooted in the fact that man is ontologically united with the created nature. Correspondingly man’s created propensities placed in the framework of his Divine image would be sufficient to transfer the aim of creation, revealed through the Incarnation, to other alien beings. In this sense Orthodox theology clearly links the Incarnation to humanity as that subset of the created universe which is capable of conducting a mediating role between different parts of creation, creation and God, where creation includes all alien forms of intelligence.

However, in view of the fact that life and intelligence emerged recently in history of the universe, the claim of the central role of humanity for the deification of the universe, including possible alien life-forms, demands a comment. Indeed, the phenomenon of humanity is a very short fragment of the universal history. But, as we have discussed above, this event predetermines not only the representation of the universe by humanity, not only it anticipates the future Kingdom, but, *de facto*, it defines the whole span of creation in its temporal extension from the past to the future. Here is an inherent eschatological dynamics (Peters, Hewlett, 2003: 163) of humanity which drives all material creation, including possible aliens forms of life, to perfection in God. By paraphrasing Peters, the Incarnation is an abbreviated cipher for the entire *human* life and death, the promise for the resurrection and renewal of all that exists in the creation (c. f. Peters, 2018: 300). Any abstraction of the idea of the Incarnation from the human condition on the planet Earth to other locations in the universe can only be treated as an advance of “an incarnational anthropocentrism” as an unjustified imposition of the human qualities on non-human species. As it was argued by E. Mascall, “it would be difficult to hold that the assumption by the Son of God of the nature on one rational corporeal species involved the restoration of other rational corporeal species...Christ, the Son of God made man, is indeed, by the fact that he has been made man, the Saviour of the world, *if the ‘the world’ is taken to mean the world of man and man’s relationships*” (Mascall, 1956: 39 (emphasis added)). One agrees with Mascall that the concrete redemptive event of the Incarnation happened only in the context of the human reality, but one can add to this that its efficacy for creation’s perfection and renewal can effectuate its redemptive power with respect to the non-human part of creation.

In view of that which has been said it seems to us that the idea of multiple incarnations by its functioning in the ETL/ETI discourse implies that extra-terrestrials do have the same “anthropology”, that is they effectively represent a copy or extension of humanity so that the incarnational narrative can be transferred to other locations and other species of living beings in the universe remains an unjustified hypothesis.

**The Eastern Orthodox Theological Position:
Single Anyway Incarnation
(the Arch Creation-Deification *versus* Fall-Redemption)**

The formulation of the Orthodox position on multiple incarnations starts from a referral to the ancient question of why God became man (*Curs Deus Homo?*). The traditional link between the Fall and the Incarnation is that the latter is treated as a redeeming act of God towards saving the transgressing humanity. The discussion of “*Cur Deus Homo?*” has never been a part of the canonical corpus of Orthodox literature and constituted, in words of Georges Florovsky, a *theologumenon* (theological opinion). However Florovsky pointed towards a connection between creation and the Incarnation, as being, *de facto*, a *necessary and sufficient* condition for the created to be brought to union with God. In other words, the motive of the Incarnation is linked to the aim of creation. According to Florovsky, “It seems that the ‘hypothesis’ of an Incarnation apart from the Fall is at least permissible in the system of Orthodox theology and fits as well enough in the mainstream of Patristic teaching. *An adequate answer to the ‘motive’ of the Incarnation can be given only in the context of the general doctrine of Creation*” (Florovsky, 1976: 170 (emphasis added)). Maximus the Confessor asserts that the creation of the world contained the goal for which all things were created: “For it is for Christ, that is, for the Christic mystery, that all time and all that is in time has received in Christ its beginning and its end” (Maximus the Confessor, *Ad Thalassium*: 60). The motives of creation and the Incarnation are inextricably intertwined.

In accordance with this and, as we articulated above, the structure of the created world intrinsically contains the conditions for the *possibility* of the Incarnation. However, there remains a basic question on whether the actual happening of the Incarnation depends on human actions and the Incarnation becomes a measure to rectify the human fault. By linking the motive of the Incarnation to the intrinsic logic of creation of the world by God, Orthodox theology extends the scope of the Incarnation beyond the opposition Fall-Redemption, towards a more wider span of the plan of salvation as related to the deification of man and bringing the whole creation to the

union with God. The lesser arch of the Fall-Redemption becomes a tool in restoring the greater arch Creation-Deification (Louth, 2008: 34–35). In this sense the conditioning of the Incarnation by the human concerns would be a mistake: “Christ is not a mere event or happening in history. The incarnation of the divine Logos was not a simple consequence of the victory of the devil over man...The union of the divine and the human natures took place because it fulfilled the *eternal* will of God” (Nellas, 1997: 37 (emphasis added)), so that it “...showed us that this was *why* we were created, and that this was God’s good purpose concerning us from before ages, a purpose which was realised through the introduction of another, newer mode,”¹ that is the entrance of “the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God [into] our world” (Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 8, 1996: 33). A famous phrase from Athanasius that God “assumed humanity that we might be made God” (Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 54, 1996: 93) implies that humanity, being created, has a potential to be in union with God (not based in the natural laws related to creation). One can say stronger that a creaturely modus of existence becomes unavoidable for the very possibility of deification. This assertion has a cosmological dimension, for the whole creation is recapitulated through the human flesh in the Incarnation. The Incarnation becomes a central event in the arch Creation-Deification which aims the fulfilment of the Divine intention for the world regardless any human concerns.² The true goal of humanity is to transcend physical flesh thus transfiguring it from “corruption in incorruption.”³

The cosmic sense of the Incarnation is also articulated by Maximus the Confessor, as such an event that brought a landmark in the temporal evolution of the universe, namely the division of its temporal span onto two fundamentally different aeons: “... according to this plan, it is clear that God wisely divided “the ages” between those intended for God to become human, and those intended for humanity to become divine.”⁴ This sheds the light on the inclusion of the lesser arch of Fall-Redemption into the greater one of Creation-Deification as the different degrees of participation in God. This excludes a possibility of treating the movement from creation to deification through the Incarnation as a “natural process” inherent in the fabric of creation. On the one hand created things participate in God through the fact of their existence, that

¹ Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua* 7 [PG 91: 1097C] [ET: (Constas, 2014: 131–133)].

² “The Incarnation of the Logos, according to Maximus [the Confessor], is not caused or motivated only by the fall and by sin, but by man’s position vis-‘a-vis God, by...the divine-human reciprocity. Maximus shows very clearly that the Incarnation would have taken place even without the fall” (Thunberg, 1985: 55).

³ Maximus the Confessor, *Ad Thalassium* 22 [ET: (Blowers, Wilken, 2003: 115)].

⁴ Maximus the Confessor, *Ad Thalassium* 22 [ET: (Blowers, Wilken, 2003: 115)].

is through “being in communion.” However, when Maximus enquires in the human capacity of deification, he stresses that it does not belong to man’s natural capacity: “...what takes place would no longer be marvellous if divinization occurred simply in accordance with the receptive capacity of nature.”¹ Maximus is concerned with the reciprocity between God and man. However the “reciprocity” has a passive character until the movement of God towards man fulfils in the Incarnation. The reciprocity by creation in the perspective of the Incarnation, however, does not achieve the *likeness* of man to God. This is the reason why Maximus claims that the aeon after the Incarnation corresponds to a contrary movement of man to God, whose possibility was effected by the Incarnation. By separating the aeons before and after the Incarnation Maximus makes a difference between the participation in God which is bestowed to man by creation and that participation which is bestowed by deification. The latter requires *grace* which is not implanted in the natural conditions of existence, but which is bestowed by God on the grounds of man’s personal extent of perfection.²

On the basis of such views one can conclude that, if there are other places in space of the universe which allow existence of intelligent life, their existence is conditioned by the logic of the Incarnation on Earth. Correspondingly, the main question that remains is not about the participation of possible extra-terrestrial aliens in God bestowed by their being created but about their possible participation in deification *after* the event of the Incarnation on Earth. Since the Incarnation on Earth predetermines the whole spatial structure of the universe in its relation to God, the deification of man and transfiguration of all created universe is effected by the actual Incarnation in both temporal directions — either towards physical past of those civilisations which could exist before humankind, or towards the future.³ If the Incarnation was thought by God before the ages, its transcendent efficacy as of the event happened two thousand years in Palestine, being, by (as a motive of creation) commensurable with the whole span of the universe, has the sense of the inaugural event granting the universe its past and its (transfigured) future, exceeding the measure of the quality and quantity, beyond

¹ Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua 20* [ET: (Constas, 2104: 411)].

² L. Thunberg, with reference to Maximus, asserts: “There is in man no natural power that can deify him, but there exists on the other hand a reciprocal relationship between God and man that permits him to become deified to the degree in which the effects of the Incarnation are conferred on him” (Thunberg, 1985: 55).

³ Marcus Plested, in his paper on pneumatology and new creation in Macarius of Egypt, recapitulates the latter in following words: “But need realities such as the Fall be considered solely in linear terms? Might we not think of the Fall rather like a crack in the ice, spreading in all directions (and dimensions) from its center?... Might not the very fabric of creation be patterned on and adapted to the drama of Fall and Redemption in a non-linear and non-historical fashion?” (Plested, 2012: 169–170).

modality and relation, the manifestation of the impossible in that which has become possible.

Conclusion

In view of Ted Peters' classification of four logical positions with respect to the perspective of multiple incarnations, our position corresponds to anyway-incarnation model that relies upon a single Incarnation on Earth. Here is the recapitulation of the main points which rule out other logical positions.

1. The historical incarnation of Christ is theologically treated as a contingently-necessary outcome of the arch of creation-deification, that is that motive of creation which can potentially lead (through man) to the attainment of the union with God. The role of humanity is not to condition the facticity the Incarnation through the Fall, but to use it as an archetype of acquiring grace making possible man's deification, renewal of creation and its transfiguration. Thus the Incarnation on Earth inaugurating the Kingdom of God suffices for transfiguration of all creation including alien forms of intelligence. On the grounds of this we consider a fix-a-broken-creation Christology as an incomplete constituent of the greater arch creation-deification. Hence, the incarnation-anyway position which can receive further justification.

2. The actual existence of humanity on Earth and the historical event of assumption of human flesh by God provides one with the evidence that the necessary physical conditions for the possibility of the Incarnation are fulfilled in the universe (anthropic principle, specific structure of space (Torrance), deep incarnation (Gregersen)) so that multiple incarnations (if they imply a similar mechanism) cannot be excluded on physical grounds. The issue becomes strictly theological and philosophical.

3. Since the essence of humanity relies not only on a physico-biological structure but on the archetype of the Incarnate Son of God, the Incarnation can be treated as the constitutive principle of the human hypostatic intelligence on Earth, providing humanity with the mechanism of attainment of communion with God-creator. The latter is not implanted in the natural conditions of humanity and requires grace through an exercise of a particular type of transcendence pertaining to humanity as a special creation in the image of God. Hence there is no *logical* necessity for the Incarnation of the Son of God on other planets unless one makes an unjustified extrapolation of the human condition to other life-forms in the universe. Any speculation on the multiple incarnations seems to be an exercise of a strong incarnational anthropocentrism which is admissible epistemologically, but not ontologically.

4. The Incarnation of the Son of God on Earth cannot be considered in isolation from the totality of the Christ-event that includes Resurrection, Ascension and the entrance of the Holy Spirit in the channels of history (Pentecost) within the arch creation-deification. Since this event happened on Earth, the latter is considered as soteriologically central in the universe. Hence there are no substantial evidence for transferring this quality to other places in the universe. In other words, Earth's cosmographic mediocrity (implied by the discovery of exoplanets) does not influence its theological centrality. Indeed, according to Torrance the universe is uniformly theogenic thus effectively making the location of the Incarnation theologically equivalent to all possible locations in the universe. Thus the fundamental alteration in the order of nature effected in the Resurrection of Christ on Earth (impossible without the Incarnation), being an initial step in transfiguration of the universe, is efficacious for the whole creation.

Acknowledgement

Alexei Nesteruk is grateful to Elisabeth Teokritoff (Institute of Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge) for discussion and some literature related suggestions.

References

- Athanasius (1996). *On the Incarnation*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Barrow, J.D., Tipler, F.J. (1986). *Anthropic Cosmological Principle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carr, D. (1999). *The Paradox of Subjectivity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Clément, O. (1976). "Le sens de la terre" *Le Christ terre des vivants. Essais théologiques. spiritualite orientale*, n. 17. Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellfontaine.
- Darling, D., Schulze-Makuch, D. (2016). *Extraterrestrial Encyclopedia*. Sarasota, FL: First Edition Design Publishing.
- Davies, P. (2010). *The Eerie Silence. Renewing Our Search for Alien Intelligence*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Florovsky, G. (1976). "Cur Deus Homo? The motive of the Incarnation". In: *Creation and Redemption*, The collected works of Georges Florovsky, vol. III. Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing Company, 163–170.
- Gregersen, N. (2001). "The Cross of Christ in and Evolutionary World". In: *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 40 (3), 192–207.

Gregersen, N. (2010). "Deep Incarnation: Why Evolutionary Continuity Matters in Christology". In: *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 26 (2), 173–87.

Hess, P.M.J. "Multiple Incarnation of the One Christ", T. Peters et al. In: *Astrotheology*, 317–329.

Husserl, E. (1970). *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Jaspers, K. (1954). *Ways to Wisdom*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Kant, I. (1959). *Critique of Practical Reason*, Conclusion, trans. T.K. Abbot. London: Longmans.

Lossky, V.N. (1989). *Orthodox Theology. An Introduction*. Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press.

Louth, A. (2008). "The place of *Theosis* in Orthodox theology". In: *Partakes of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, M.J. Christensen and J.A. Wittung. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 34–35.

Marion, J.-L. (2010). *Certitudes negatives*. Paris: Bernard Grasset.

Mascall, E.L. (1956). *Christian Theology and Natural Science*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.

Maximus the Confessor (2014). *Ambigua*. In: *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers. The Ambigua*. 1–2, Ed. and tr. N. Constat. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Maximus the Confessor (2003). *Ad Talassium* 22. In: P.M. Blowers, R.L. Wilken, *On the cosmic mystery of Christ*. Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 115–118.

McLaughlin, W.I. (1985). "Kantian Epistemology as an Alternative to Heroic Astronomy". In: *Vistas in Astronomy* 28: 611–39.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1982). "The Battle over Existentialism". In: *Sense et Non-Sense*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 71–82.

Milne, E.A. (1952). *Modern Cosmology and the Christian Idea of God*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Moltmann, J. (1974). *Man. Christian Anthropology in the Conflicts of the Present*. London: SPCK.

Moritz, J.M. (2018). "One Imago Dei and the Incarnation of the Eschatological Adam". In: T. Peters et al., *Astrotheology*, 330–346.

Nagel, T. (1986). *The View from Nowhere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nellas, P. (1997). *Deification in Christ. Orthodox Perspectives on the Nature of the Human Person*. Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

Nesteruk, A.V. (2015[1]). *The Sense of the Universe: Philosophical Explication of Theological Commitment in Modern Cosmology*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Nesteruk, A.V. (2015[2]). "Universe, Incarnation and Humanity: Thomas Torrance, Modern Cosmology and Beyond". In: *T.F. Torrance and Eastern Orthodoxy. Theology in Reconciliation*, eds. M. Baker and T. Speidell. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 218–246.

Peters, T., Hewlett, M. (2003). *Evolution from Creation to New Creation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Peters, T. (ed.), Hewlett, M., Moritz, J.M., Russel, R.J. (2018). *Astrotheology. Science and Theology Meet Extraterrestrial Life*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books.

Peters, T. (2018). "One Incarnation or Many?". In: T. Peters et al., *Astrotheology*, 271–302.

Plested, M. (2012). "Pneumatology and the New Creation in the Macarian Writings: An Ecumenical Legacy". In: M. Welker (ed.), *The Spirit in Creation and new Creation*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 161–170.

Russel, R.J. (2018). "Many Incarnations or One?". In: T. Peters (ed.) *Astrotheology*, 303–316.

Sarfati, J.D. (2004). "Bible Leaves no Room for Extraterrestrial Life". In: *Science and Theology News* 4, (7), 3–7.

Scheler, M. (1994). *Die Stellung Des Menschen im Kosmos*. Moscow: Gnosis.

Swedenborg, E. (2009). *Earths in the Universe. Which Are Called Planets and Earths in the Starry Heaven and Their Inhabitants; Also the Spirits and Angels There From Things Heard and Seen, 1758*. Swedenborg Foundation.

Thunberg, L. (1985). *Man and the Cosmos*. Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

Thunberg, L. (1995). *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*. Chicago: Open Court.

Torrance, T. (1998). *Divine and Contingent Order*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

Zizioulas, J. (2006). *Communion and Otherness*. London: T&T Clark.

Христианское богословие, внеземной разум и гипотеза множественных воплощений

А.В. Нестерук^а, А.В. Солдатов^б

^аУниверситет Портсмута
Англия, PO1 3HF, Портсмут, корпус Лайон Гэйт

^бРоссийский государственный педагогический
университет им. А.И. Герцена

Россия, 191186, Санкт-Петербург, набережная реки Мойки, 48

В статье обсуждается, в контексте христианского богословия, гипотеза множественных воплощений в гипотетических внеземных сообществах, существование которых связывается с открытием экзопланет. Проводится богословская и философская оценка подобных предположений и показывается, что сама проблема поиска внеземного разума вносит вклад в герменевтику человеческого состояния на планете Земля. Авторы формулируют свою отрицательную позицию по вопросу множественных воплощений в контексте современной космологии и православного богословия.

Ключевые слова: антропология, астробогословие, воплощение, грехопадение, искупление, обожение, разум, сотворение, человек, экзопланеты.

Научная специальность: 09.00.00 — философские науки.
