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Astrobiology

"At last, a comprehensive and level-headed analysis of what it means for humanity should we discover alien life – an event that would utterly transform our worldview. Steven Dick, the world's foremost scholar in this field, leads us from the lessons of history to the tantalizing promise of astrobiology's emerging technologies. Admirably, he does not shy away from confronting the ethical, societal, and theological ramifications that most commentators fudge. This is a 'must-buy' book for anyone who thinks seriously about the age-old question of whether or not we are alone in the universe."

Paul Davies, Regents' Professor, Arizona State University, and author of *The Eerie Silence: Are We Alone in the Universe?*

The search for life in the universe, once the stuff of science fiction, is now a robust worldwide research program with a well-defined roadmap probing both scientific and societal issues. This volume examines the humanistic aspects of astrobiology, systematically discussing the approaches to, and critical issues and implications of, discovering life beyond Earth. What do the concepts of life and intelligence, culture and civilization, technology and communication mean in a cosmic context? What are the theological and philosophical implications if we find life – and if we do not? Steven J. Dick argues that, given recent scientific findings, the discovery of life in some form beyond Earth is likely and so we need to study the possible impacts of such a discovery and formulate policies to deal with them. The remarkable and often surprising results are presented here in a form accessible to disciplines across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

Steven J. Dick is one of the best-known and most respected voices in the field of astrobiology. He is the NASA/Library of Congress Chair in Astrobiology at the Library of Congress. He served as the Charles A. L. Library at the National Air and Space Museum from 2011 to 2012, and as the NASA Chief Historian and Director of the NASA History Office from 2003 to 2009. He is the recipient of numerous awards, and is author or editor of twenty books.

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