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### August 13, 2017: Why Go to Mars?

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Title: Why Go to Mars?

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8/13/2017--As I was traveling, I had occasion to watch the series, Mars, on the plane. In the opening, the question arises, why go to Mars, both for the planners in 2016 and for the astronauts in 2033. The answer they give is to prevent humanity's extinction in some event, natural or otherwise. This answer is reminiscent of the current debates in the US over healthcare. It is defensive. Not dreaming of a better world or life. Just an insurance policy. We don't want to die. But on Saturday, the New York Times reviewed a documentary about the two Voyager spacecraft, still sending us messages from deep space after 40 years. This story begins with a healthier human instinct than mere self-preservation: "For any true believer in humankind's instinct to transcend boundaries... ." Even better might have been a reference to our desire to know about everything, including the universe. Now why the difference? When the spacecraft were sent--and even more when the idea was hatched and worked out--America was a spiritually healthier culture. A culture that could still dream of something important and hope for something better. Was it a culture of racism and mysogony? Certainly. But even in those ways, it could dream of something better. Not anymore. The producers of the Mars series had it right about us today. Only ourselves. Only our health. How small minded.