

You're Going to Get What You Tolerate, What You Permit You Promote.

Darwinian Evolution Activism Within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

By Dr. Daniel Burdett

Elder Corbitt gave a talk in 2002 titled Activism vs. Discipleship, Protecting the Valiant.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWNzLATnnxI&t=34s>

In this talk, Elder Corbitt states that he sees our “**enemy’s** effort to transform disciples of Jesus Christ into **activists towards** or **against the Lord’s Church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its leaders.**” He describes an effective three step maneuver.

“1) focus the rising generation and the valiant **away** from the doctrine of Christ **and onto** real or imagined unfairness or injustice in the Lord’s church and the imperfections of its leaders. 2) use this shift in focus to **stir** up feelings of disillusionment, annoyance, resentment, anger and **hatred toward** church policies, **declarations**, **proclamations**, principles, **doctrines** and **eventually leaders**; and 3) manipulate these negative impulses to **instigate the use of worldly or secular activism or advocacy** rather than the doctrine of Christ to effect change in the Kingdom of God.”

Elder Corbitt continues: “What do I mean by activism toward the Church? “Activism” has been defined as the policy or action of using (campaigning or) **vigorous campaigning to bring about** political or social **change**” **especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue.**” Thus, activism or advocacy directed toward or against The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a secular, worldly device misapplied in a spiritual, ortherwordly context.”

Activism is a way for people to feel important, even if the consequences of their activism are counterproductive for those they claim to be helping and are even damaging to the fabric of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ as a whole.

The purpose of this paper is to review examples of Darwinian evolution activism within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its educational institutions. First, a review of the definition of **doctrine**. General Authority Seventy, Kevin S. Hamilton shares the following, Jan. 24, 2023. <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/kevin-s-hamilton/why-a-church/>

Decisions in the Lord’s Church always require a **unanimous council**. In the *General Handbook* we read:

*All members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are prophets, seers, and revelators. Together they form the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. **Under the direction of the Lord and by unanimous voice, this council has authority to declare and interpret doctrine and establish policy for the Church** (see Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; 107:27–31).*²⁸

When the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve **speak in unity**, they speak on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ.

From September 27 to October 15, 1909, members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, including John A. Widtsoe and James Talmage, met to discuss and revise a draft of the 1909 statement on **the Origin of Man. The final statement was approved by the Quorum of the Twelve on October 20, 1909** (p.276). *Thomas G. Alexander, Mormonism in Transition. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986*

Knowing this statement was approved by the unanimous council of the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency, the 1909 statement on the Origin of Man fulfills this qualification to be considered as **doctrine** and speaking “**on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ**” as defined from the General Handbook of the Church. The statement was republished 2002.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2002/02/the-origin-of-man?lang=eng>

This paper will focus on what are seen as recent examples advocacy -- the of rejection of this proclamation, its doctrine and obvious resentment towards other Church leaders who have supported the 1909 First Presidency Statement.

Example 1a) Notice when you search on **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints web site** “what does the church believe about evolution?” As of 01/25 the 1909 First Presidency Statement is in 4th place. Behind three unattributed articles. The first two are in fact examples of **advocacy against** the 1909 First Presidency statement on the Origin of Man. Are unsigned articles a priority over the united Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency?

The screenshot shows the search results page on the official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The search query is "what does the church believe about evolution?". The results are displayed in a list format. The first two results are unattributed articles that appear to be advocacy against the 1909 First Presidency statement. The third result is a link to the 1909 statement itself, titled "The Origin of Man". The fourth result is a link to a page titled "My Answer to Evolution". The search results are filtered by "All Content". The page also includes a sidebar with navigation links and a feedback button.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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what does the church believe about evolution?

Search for exact word or phrase | Churchofjesuschrist.org now uses Google search technology. See answers to frequently asked questions.

Search the archive for pre-2000 content

Additional Search Tools

Filter Results

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- Scriptures
- General Conference
- Come, Follow Me
- General Handbook
- News and Events
- Books and Lessons
- Liahona
- For the Strength of Youth
- Children's Content
- YA Weekly

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2016/10/to-the-point/what-does-the-church-believe-a...
What does the Church believe about evolution?
Organic **evolution**, or changes to species' inherited traits over time, **is** a matter for scientific study. Nothing **has** been revealed concerning **evolution**. Though ...

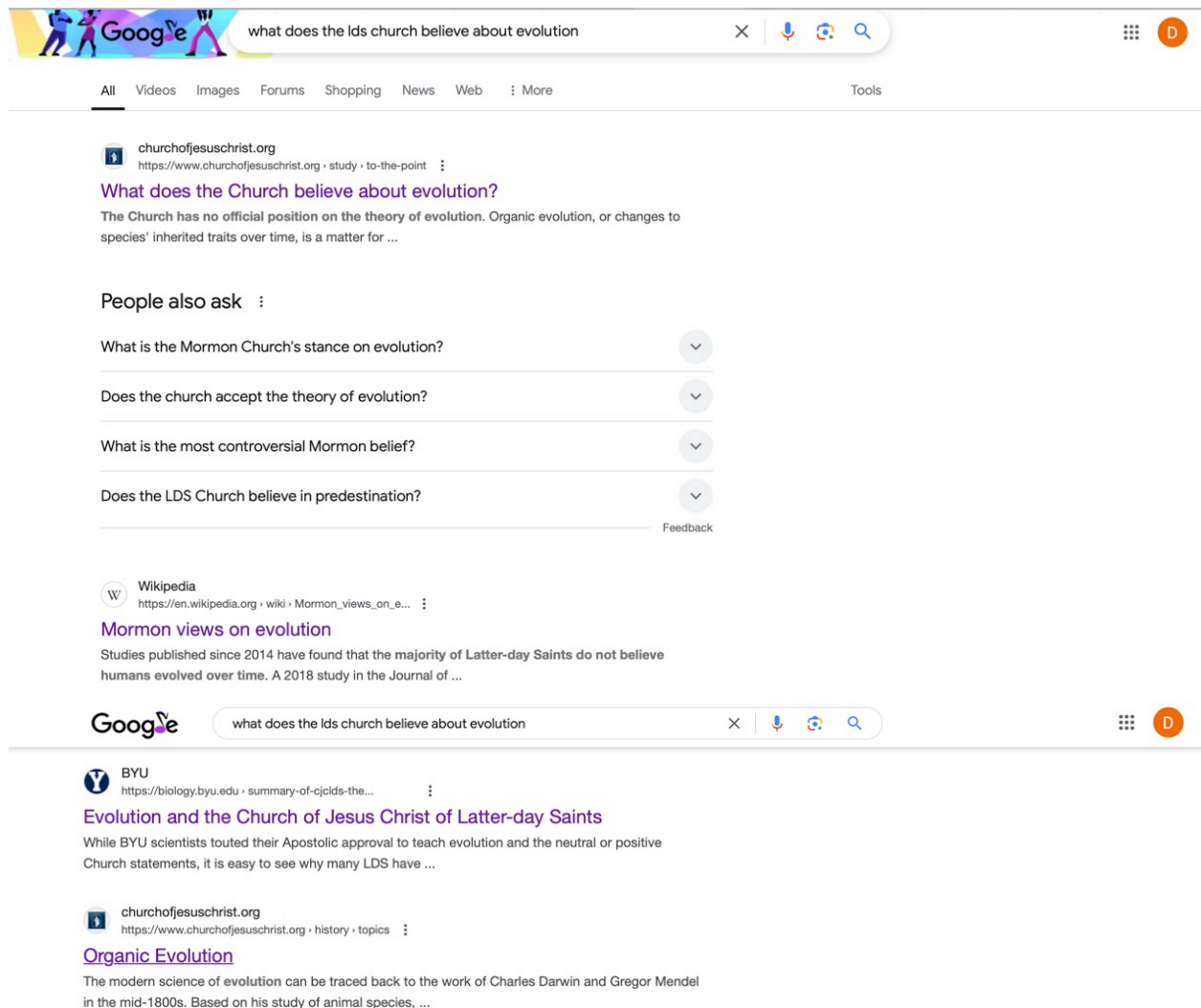
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/organic-evolution?lang=eng
Organic Evolution
Meanwhile, Apostle and future **Church** President Joseph Fielding Smith **believed** that the Biblical account of the Creation **did** not allow for the long spans ...

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2004/05/my-answer-to-evolution?lang=eng
My Answer to Evolution
When your biology teacher says the facts point to **evolution**, what do you **say**? "Do you **believe** in God?" "Yes," I stammered. I couldn't **believe** it. Here I was ...

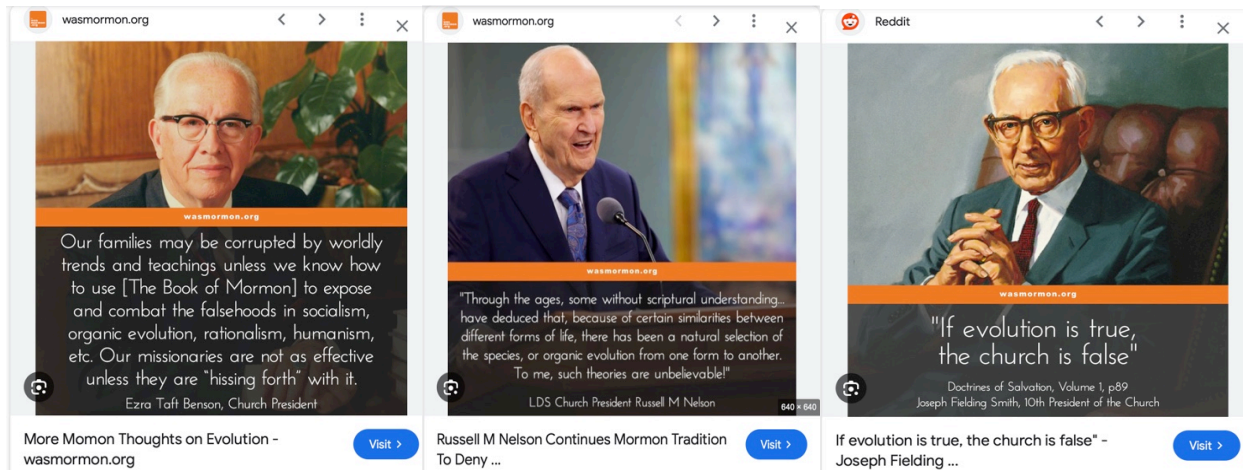
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2002/02/the-origin-of-man?lang=eng
The Origin of Man
"And now, behold, I **say** unto you, that these **are** the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that I, the Lord God, made ...

Feedback

Example 1b) How does google do? “what does the lds church believe about evolution” The 1909 First Presidency Statement does not show up on any of the 16 pages provided ☹️ Its first/top choice on [churchofjesuschrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org) is an unsigned article that appeared in the New Era in 2016 targeting our youth ☹️ **“The Church has no Official Position on the theory of evolution, ...”** Wikipedia comes in second. BYU links to a **BYU** RecoEvo Workshop lecture Ben Spackman. Coming in 4th place the Essay written and approved by an unnamed committee released in 2022 titled Organic Evolution.



Example 1c) Page two of the google search provides links to mockery. Examples shown below. No links to any of teachings of these Prophets of the Lord Jesus Christ ☹️ The results of these searches illustrate a rejection against the word of God as it has come through whom He has called as Prophets, Seers and Revelators -- in favor of the words of scholars ☹️ but approved by the brethren? Prophets say one thing, scholars say another. Some believe the Prophets others think they have been called of God to correct the Prophets because they know better.



Example 2) BYU Professor interviewed about the intersection of science and religion, 12/24.



Religion and Evolution with Dr. Jamie Jensen



Study and Faith
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5



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237 views 1 month ago CES Letters Podcast

Welcome to the CES Letters podcast! Today we talk with Dr. Jamie Jensen about the intersection of science and religion. She discusses evolution, death before the fall, and early hominids.

...more

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2cf55xv3zQ&t=6s>

“The Church has no official stand on the age of the earth, **nor is there a consensus doctrine on death before the fall of Adam. Science confirms that many organisms lived and died prior to the age of Adam** and that the Earth is around 4.6 billion years old.” We are all evolutions now. Or are we? If you listen to our Prophet President Nelson, he teaches the complete opposite of what BYU professor Dr. Jensen presents in this video. Links to relevant teachings of President Nelson also provided for you to compare.

<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/russell-m-nelson/magnificence-man/>
<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/russell-m-nelson/identity-priority-blessings/>
<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/russell-m-nelson/the-tie-between-science-and-religion/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGFik9H76V0>
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1993/10/constancy-amid-change?lang=eng>
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/video/book-of-mormon-visual-resources/2012-08-1340-three-pillars-of-gods-plan?lang=eng>
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2012/04/thanks-be-to-god?lang=eng>
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2000/04/the-creation?lang=eng>
<https://www.pewforum.org/2007/05/16/in-focus-mormonism-in-modern-america/>

Here is one example from the last link:

MAY 16, 2007, Pew Research Center, In Focus: Mormonism in Modern America, Elder Nelson responded in this interview stating the following (link above):

Different denominations deal differently with questions about life’s origins and development. Conservative denominations tend to have more trouble with Darwinian evolution. **Does the church have an official position on this topic?**

Nelson: We believe that God is our creator and that he has created other forms of life. It’s interesting to me, drawing on my 40 years of experience as a medical doctor, how similar those species are. We developed open-heart surgery, for example, experimenting on lower animals simply because the same creator made the human being. We owe a lot to those lower species. **But to think that man evolved from one species to another is, to me, incomprehensible.**

Why is that?

Nelson: **Man has always been man.** Dogs have always been dogs. Monkeys have always been monkeys. It’s just the way genetics works.

Little did he know that in 2016 an unsigned article in the New Era targeting our youth would **supplant** his old fundamentalist teachings that are corroborated with the 1909 First Presidency Statement. Currently the unauthored article is quoted as if it is more authoritative than both, the teachings of our current prophet and united 1909 First Presidency Statement. How is this

not seen as a modern-day rejection of the teachings of Prophets seemingly consistent with scriptural examples of rejecting Prophets (see topical guide). Surely the Lord has a position. At one time the Church did. Now, due to the influence, and teamwork of revisionist scholars/historians **the church has no position**? None of whom are sustained as Prophets, Seers, and Revelators. They are celebrating (see below).

Example 3) 3 Years ago a Science and Faith Seminar BYU Online with **High School Students**

The screenshot shows a video player interface. At the top left, a black bar contains the text 'Activity #2'. To the right, a blue box contains the text '02 Approach the conflict through pseudoscience'. The video content is split into two panels. The left panel shows a scene from 'The Creation Museum' in Petersburg, Kentucky, featuring a dinosaur and a person. The right panel shows a diagram of Earth's layers, labeled 'Depiction of Earth in the "Universal Model"', with layers listed as Rock - Water, Mantle, Liquid Water, Outer Core, Solid Ice, and Inner Core. A video player control bar at the bottom shows a progress bar at 10:39 / 39:51 and various control icons. A small video inset in the top right corner shows a woman, identified as Jamie Jensen, speaking.

Science and Faith Seminar BYUOnlineHS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXvQkA0FG84&list=PLidmi2o9kVaz_GGVd1ULI6KhujTQC8ujM&index=17

Watch the video. A Small sample of transcript starting at about 11:27--13:40:

BYU Professor Jensen: Yeah so these obviously have problems but these are these are theories being taught right now today and it's kind of this mistaken approach to, you know what **the science is scary** and so what I'm going to do is come up with an alternative model that allows me to maybe interpret Genesis literally for instance, right, that everything was created at the same time um and so, **it's a dangerous way to go...**

Professor Jamie Jensen asks: **When you see model models like this** [one picture depicts a scene at Christian Creation Museum and the other picture is taken from the Universal Model, [the UM was written by an active member of the church, multiple volumes to which he has dedicated his life writing] **What does it make you think about the people presenting these models?**

Her son answers, I'm not sure it would be very appropriate for me to share my view. I mean it's kind of like baffling I guess I don't know.

Professor Jensen then asks, **Do you want to trust anything else they're telling you?** Probably not right. It's **a funny attempt** they're making **to try to make science more compatible with faith** but it ends up driving people away from the faith because they think, what in the world, why are you teaching this when **I know it's not true.**

Another student remarks, **It almost makes me like discredit them it's like wait this isn't true so why would anything else you're gonna say be true you know like it discredits them instead of helping their cause...**

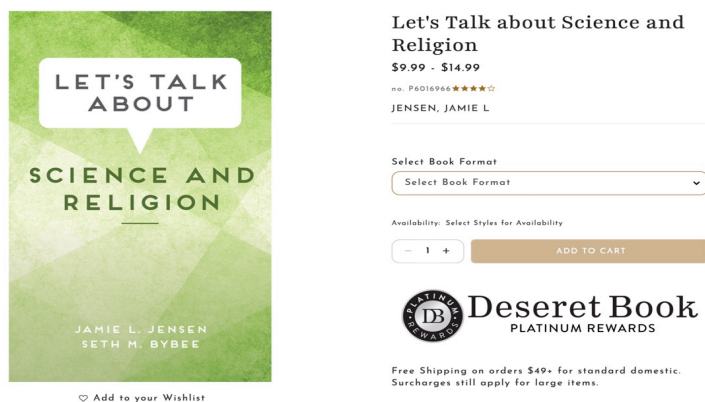
Professor Jensen: and that's unfortunate and that's something also to keep in mind is that if you run into something like this where you think wow **what I was taught was wrong** that doesn't necessarily mean everything about your religion is wrong **it just means that somebody in a misguided attempt to try to help you understand taught you something maybe that wasn't quite true** and so we want to avoid the pseudoscience we want to learn the science because it turns out the science can be totally compatible with the religion if we learn it correctly...

Are the revelations from the Lord to Joseph Smith a dangerous way to go? They were for him. Somethings maybe were not quite true? Do we trust what Joseph, The First Presidency and President Nelson and **"anything else they are telling us?"** Was the First Presidency Statement of 1909 wrong, misguided and just a cultural thing? Are we teaching our youth not to trust our Prophets and to discredit them? Do not trust anyone who does not think like a modern scientist who is a disciple of Darwin. Trust the science is the most anti science statement ever. Questioning science is how you do science!

Example 4)

BYU's Jamie Jensen & Seth Bybee's book may be promoted and available at Desert Book.

<https://www.deseretbook.com/product/P6016966.html>



Some excerpts:

"So while individual Church leaders have frequently shared their personal beliefs both in favor and in opposition to evolution, **these statements do not represent Church doctrine. The Church is effectively neutral toward matters of evolution"** (p. 51). "The question then is

whether these somewhat smallest changes within populations of a single species can lead to diversification into different species. Science says yes” (p.60). “It appears whether God intervened all along the way or He set the plan in motion and stepped back to watch His work, He began with a single Template, the common ancestor of all life on earth” (p.61). **“We lack modern revelation** concerning the exact timing of when Adam and Eve lived,” ... (p. 61).

Example 5) 2022

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/organic-evolution?lang=eng#title1>



Organic Evolution

The following are just a few quotes from this unattributed essay.

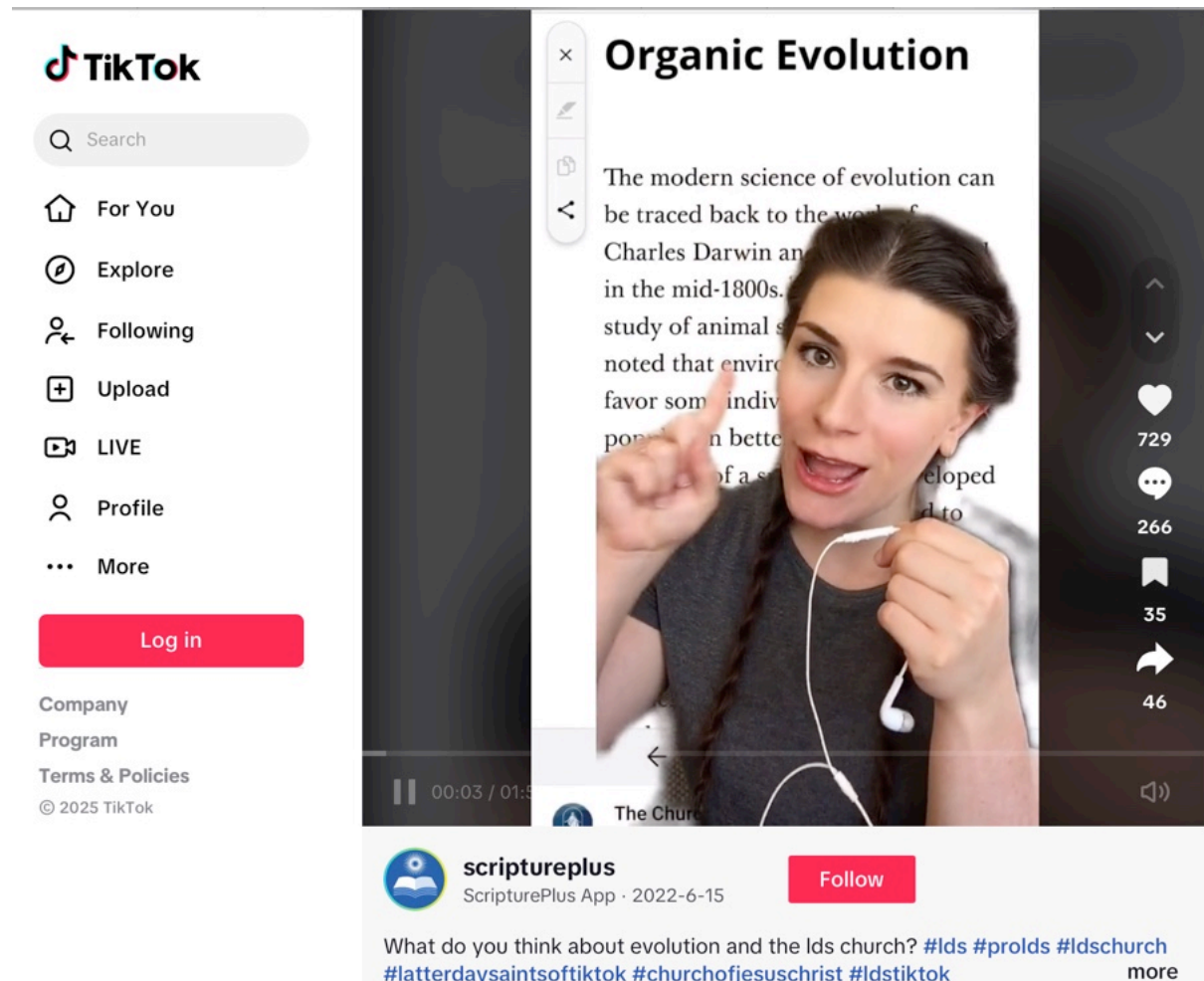
“Leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints **at the time did not take an official stance on the theory of evolution**, but they did take steps to clarify the Church’s teachings related to human origins.” **How can you read the First Presidency’s statement and think this?**

The next year, President Smith urged Church leaders not to undertake “to say how much of evolution is true, or how much is false.” **This is taken out of context** read the article. No link was provided ☹ to the article written by President Joseph F. Smith, but may be read here: <https://archive.org/details/juvenileinstruct464geor/page/208/mode/2up?view=theater>

“Latter-day Saints and their leaders found themselves on both sides of this issue.” **Today probably, not the united Q12 and First Presidency of 1909.**

I have addressed this essay in another write up. The paper asserts that the essay on Organic Evolution is a biased rendition of revisionist history **advancing one side** of the issue. As a fellow member and father, I expect better. This is yet another example of **advocacy** within our ranks against teachings of Prophets, Seers and Revelators. Prophets wrong, scholars exercising their freedom of speech are now empowered and permitted to publish their thoughts and advance them as the current position of the Church. The Church Handbook needs to be updated and rewritten.

Example 6) This essay on Organic Evolution was advocated, promoted and celebrated by Scriptureplus on TikTok. The link provided below.



<https://www.tiktok.com/@scriptureplus/video/7109574018227031342>

Example 7) Also promoted in my stake, the Ogden Utah Weber Stake **March 14, 2024**, the Organic Evolution essay and the book by Jamie Jensen and Seth Bybee.


Example 8) Weber State University Institute **March 20, 2024** invited Professor Matthew Cook to speak. His talk was titled Jesus Christ, a God of the Gap? A copy of which I have obtained. He mentions Darwin's books On the Origin of the Species 1859 and the Descent of Man 1871 where it is theorized that evolution and speciation were driven by natural selection. "Over time, enough changes would accumulate in successive generations of a population that it would come to constitute a new species." The Big Bang is also promoted. "Keep in mind that the Scriptures are not meant to be a history book..." Many Scriptures contradict these assertions.

Finding Answers to Sometimes Difficult Gospel Questions

SCHEDULE:

January 18th	The Necessity of Questions
January 25th	Polygamy
February 1st	No class
February 8th	Race and the Priesthood
February 15th	LGBTQ+ and the Church
February 22nd	Mental Health, Scrupulosity and Legalism
February 29th	No class
March 7th	Mother in Heaven / Women in the Church
March 14th	Science and Religion

Where:
Stake Center, Relief Society Room
When: 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Child care is available during the class



DEVOTIONAL SCHEDULE

Ogden Weber UT Campus Institute-Spring 2024

WEDNESDAY DEVOTIONALS

Jan 10 - Brad Mortensen: President of Weber State University

Jan 17 - Matt Jensen: Successful Business Man & Stake President.

Jan 24 - Dallin Woodbury: Accident Survivor & Bro Woodbury's Son.

Jan 31 - Brad Oldroyd: Entrepreneur & Former Mission President of the Philippians.

Feb 7 - Jenny Oaks Baker: Grammy Nominated, Billboard No. 1 performer & Recording Artist.

Feb 14 - Chris Peterson: Pre-service Trainer & Religious Educator

Feb 21 - Mark Spencer: Religious Educator

Feb 26 - Heather Van Boerum: Motivational Speaker

Mar 13 - Gary Boatright: Church Historian

Mar 20 - Dr. Matthew Crook: WSU Professor in Microbiology.

Mar 27 - Shayden Bertonioli: Marriage & Family Therapist

Apr 3 - Justin Shaw: Coach, Department Head of English at Roy High, & Sister Shaw's Son.

Apr 10 - Institute Choir: Directed by Alan Saunders

Apr 17 - Karlie Guyman: Host of Latter-day Saint Women Podcast

JOIN US!!

WEDNESDAY:
Devotionals are held at 12:30pm in the chapel

SUNDAY:
Devotionals are held at 6:00pm
Jan 7th- Chapel
Mar 17-Dee Events Center

MORE INFO?
Call the Ogden Weber UT Institute at 801-621-1800

SUNDAY DEVOTIONALS

Jan 7- Brad Wilcox: First Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency

Mar 17- Elder D. Todd Christofferson: Member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

weberinstitute.org

Example 9) 2023, The teaching of evolution celebration at BYU gleefully reported here.

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IMPACT MAGAZINE

50 Years of Teaching Evolution at BYU

By [Aubrey Johnson](#), July 26, 2023

“Science dominated by the spirit of religion is the key to progress and the hope of the future.”—David O. McKay

<https://lifesciences.byu.edu/magazine/50-years-of-teaching-evolution-at-byu>

Among other things, notice the \$ involved in promoting this narrative below.

10



lifesciences.byu.edu/magazine/50-years-of-teaching-evolution-at-byu

BYU

College of Life Sciences
Impact Magazine

Faculty & Staff

Departments

Student Resources

News

Monte L Bean Museum

Get Fun

NOTE

1 Doctrine and Covenants 88:118

2 Nalia Tafua, "Life Sciences Building dedicated by Elder Russell M. Nelson," *The Daily Universe*, April 10, 2015, <https://universe.byu.edu/2015/04/10/life-sciences-building-dedicated-by-elder-russell-m-nelson/>

3 "What does the Church believe about evolution?," *New Era*, October 2016, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2016/10/to-the-point/what-does-the-church-believe-about-evolution?lang=eng>

4 William W. Winder, *History of the Department of Zoology and Entomology and the Zoology Department at Brigham Young University* (2016), 17.

5 The Broader Social Impacts Committee, <https://humanorigins.si.edu/about/broader-social-impacts-committee>

6 The First Presidency Statement, *Improvement Era*, November 1909, 75–81.

7 Priesthood Quorums' Table, First Presidency, *Improvement Era*, April 1910, 570.

8 "Words in Season from the First Presidency," *Desert Evening News*, December 17, 1910, part 1, 3.

No Link :(



Incorporating evolution into BYU's curriculum has provided students and faculty with opportunities to participate in research, receive grants, and publish papers on the topic.

112

grants by the National Science Foundation, worth \$20.5M

40

other grants by external funding, worth \$3.5M; top grant givers include: US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Land Management, National Institutes of Health

934

papers by 8 faculty members who research evolution; each of the 8 faculty publish an average of 4.7 times a year

(1997–2021)²³

<https://universe.byu.edu/2015/04/10/life-sciences-building-dedicated-by-elder-russell-m-nelson/>

The article begins by citing D&C 88:118.

And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, **seek ye out of the best books** words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.

This scripture is a point of agreement, however, “seek ye out of the best books” for Darwin’s Disciples would **not** include books supporting and defending the 1909 First Presidency Statement, *The Bible*, *The Book of Mormon*, *D&C*, *The Pearl of Great Price*, *The Power Within Us*, by President Nelson, *Man His Origin and Destiny* by President Joseph Fielding Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* by President Joseph F. Smith, or *Mormon Doctrine* by Elder Bruce R. McConkie. Darwin’s Disciples list of best books would include, *The Origin of the Species* and *The Decent of Man* by Charles Darwin, proof mentioned above.

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No Link :(

→

10 Bruce C. Hafen, “Religious Education in BYU’s Prophetic Historical Context,” transcript of speech delivered at Brigham Young University, August 28, 2019, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-c-hafen/religious-education-in-byus-prophetic-historical-context/>

11 “B. Y. U. Students Destroy Reply of Presidency and Make Public the Protest They Formulated,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 16, 1911, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=14191661>

12 “B. Y. U. Students Make Position on Evolution Clear,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, March 16, 1911, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=19014128>

13 “B. Y. U. Controversy on Higher Criticism,” *Logan Republican*, March 18, 1911, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=4791263>

14 Joseph F. Smith, “Philosophy and the Church Schools,” in *Juvenile Instructor* (Deseret Sunday School Union, 1911), 208–9.

15 The First Presidency to the Council of the Twelve, the First Council of Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric, memo, April 5, 1931.

16 James E. Talmage, “The Earth and Man,” address delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 9, 1931, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, reprint from *The Deseret News*, November 21, 1931.

17 Talmage, “The Earth and Man.”

18 Brigham Young, “Conference Remarks on Science and Religion,” transcript of speech delivered at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, May 14, 1871, <http://mldb.byu.edu/byoung.htm>

19 Duane Jeffery, foreword, in Howard C. Stutz, “*Let the Earth Bring Forth*”: Evolution and Scripture (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 7–12.

The article written by, Aubrey Johnson, July 26th, 2023 promotes this article targeting our children in the Oct. **2016**, *New Era*, mentioned above. Which is--

Example 10) <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2016/10/to-the-point/what-does-the-church-believe-about-evolution?lang=eng>



The **unnamed** article asserts:

“The Church has no official position on the theory of evolution. Organic evolution, or changes to species’ inherited traits over time, is a matter for scientific study. **Nothing has been revealed concerning evolution.”**

If “the Church has no official position” why the celebration? Is the 1909 First Presidency Statement on the Origin of Man an official position? For those celebrating—no, it is “anti-science.” <https://universe.byu.edu/2019/07/30/the-church-and-byu-an-evolution-of-evolution/>

Aubrey includes a link to evidence of BYU’s student Darwinian enthusiasts destroying **the First Presidency’s** response regarding the 1911 conflict at BYU involving the Chamberlins and Petersons. <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=14191>

Example 11) 2019

<https://universe.byu.edu/2019/07/30/the-church-and-byu-an-evolution-of-evolution/>

“This message from the First Presidency was anti-evolution and science.”

Rachel Keeler, July 30, 2019



Example 12) 2018 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6221276/>

[PLoS One](#). 2018; 13(11): e0205798.

PMCID: PMC6221276

Published online 2018 Nov 7. doi: [10.1371/journal.pone.0205798](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0205798)

PMID: [30403685](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30403685/)

A longitudinal study of attitudes toward evolution among undergraduates who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

[William S. Bradshaw](#), Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing,^{#1} [Andrea J. Phillips](#), Data curation, Formal analysis, Project administration, Writing – review & editing,^{#2} [Seth M. Bybee](#), Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – review & editing,^{#2} [Richard A. Gill](#), Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – review & editing,^{#2} [Steven L. Peck](#), Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – review & editing,^{#2} and [Jamie L. Jensen](#), Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing^{#2,*}

Some paragraphs shared below:

“Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, Mormon), a generally conservative denomination, have historically harbored strong anti-evolution sentiments. **We report here a significant shift toward acceptance**, compared to attitudes 30 years earlier, by students at Brigham Young University, which is owned and operated by the LDS church.”

“More importantly, **there has been a significant decrease in negative messaging from Church authorities and in its religious education system.**”

“For members of the LDS Church, then, there has been a discrepancy between an official statement, of limited circulation, that there is no doctrinal objection to biological evolution, and a widely-disseminated set of opinions by some high-placed church authorities condemning evolution.”

“An important conclusion to be drawn from all the existing information is that the LDS Church has no official statement on the theory of evolution. In spite of this, several influential authorities have expressed anti-evolutionary opinions [30–32] that have imprinted several generations of Mormons with highly negative views about the subject, creating a cultural memory with strong staying power.”

“There has never been a formal declaration from the First presidency addressing the general matter of organic evolution as a process for development of biological species.”

“War on Science”

“Examples of this phenomenon—a rejection of compelling evidence generated by empirical science—include the popularity of efforts to introduce “Intelligent Design” (ID, a theology-

inspired anti-evolution notion) into the biology classroom of the public schools, parents who refuse to vaccinate their children as a hedge against autism, and the refusal of significant numbers of American to accept the reality of climate change in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Persons espousing these or other views would be expected to also reject the evidence that supports an evolutionary explanation for living organisms”...

“In 2005 the Utah State Board of Education approved, and the Utah Science Teachers Association adopted, the “Utah State Board of Education Position Statement on Teaching Evolution” [50]. This strongly worded endorsement of evolution as a primary unifying concept in science defined and defended the concept and urged sensitivity by teachers in relating to the belief systems of students. **Many of those responsible for this pro-evolution movement are former and current BYU faculty members** who continue to work in a partnership with school district administrators, school boards, and state education officers in implementing sound science education standards in the state [51].”

I encourage you to read the whole paper, after reading all of the above links to the teachings of President Nelson. See the difference!

Example 12) <https://humanorigins.si.edu/about/broader-social-impacts-committee/thoughts-science-religion-and-human-origins>



After reading *The Magnificence of Man* by I do not think President Nelson would be welcomed to participate here, but I am glad **BYU** could send someone to participate. Uniting with other Religious organizations to help us all embrace theistic evolution. **BYU** professors do not represent the view of the First Presidency Statement of 1909.

“But **culturally there has been a divide** that I think results from just this, the fact that our leaders are people and they have fallen on both sides of the arguments in **their opinions**, and those opinions have been shared and church members fall on both sides **so culturally** there has sort of arisen this division, especially with evolution. **But if you look at the actual doctrine of the church, um we have no official statement towards evolution for or against.** We are in

essence neutral. ... The article in 2016 reiterates that we do not have a position on evolution, for or against, including human evolution in the origins of humans.

Example 13) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWvREdn8Zm0>

A zealous Darwin Disciple Professor at BYU testifying of the truthfulness of evolution.

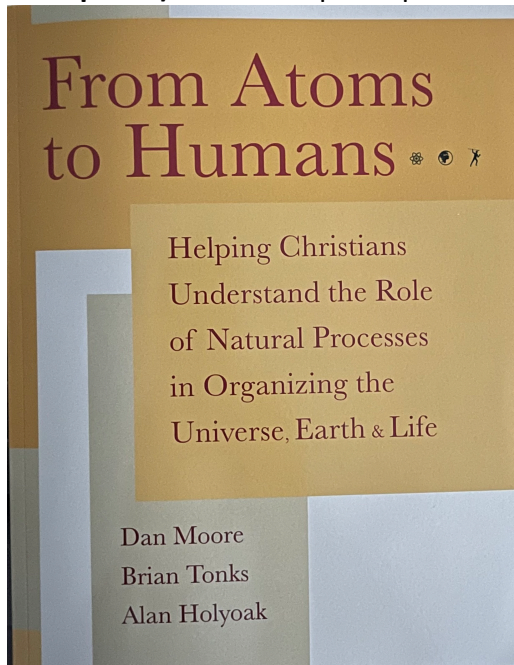


Intro to Human Evolution Display

Example 14) Part 1 of a 7 part series <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LeCI2NliPfe>



Example 15) BYU Idaho participation in advocacy.



The following quotes taken from this text book BYU written by BYUI Professors.

“Thankfully, those who understand the core meaning and appropriate uses of reasoned, discovered, and revealed truths cannot be misled by **fundamentalist blowhards**—scientific or religious” (p.70). In closing, the witness of natural scripture is unequivocal: the Earth is ancient. It formed as part of our solar system about 4.54 Bya” (p.87).

“Although a several-thousand-year-old Earth appealed to **the dogmatists** of that time (and, unfortunately, to some today), **observations of natural scripture** easily falsify this notion” (p.81).

“Are you starting to look at the rock bodies that surround you differently? For example, have you begun to see how humanity can read these **important books of natural scripture**” (p.83)?

“If you find that you react skeptically to scientific explanation of the history of life, we invite you to consider **why you mistrust the natural scripture** upon which these interpretations are founded” (p.126).

Now some words of wisdom from this article:

<https://learningandteaching.byui.edu/editions/fall-2011/perspective-magazine/seeking--truth-through--science-and--religion--being->

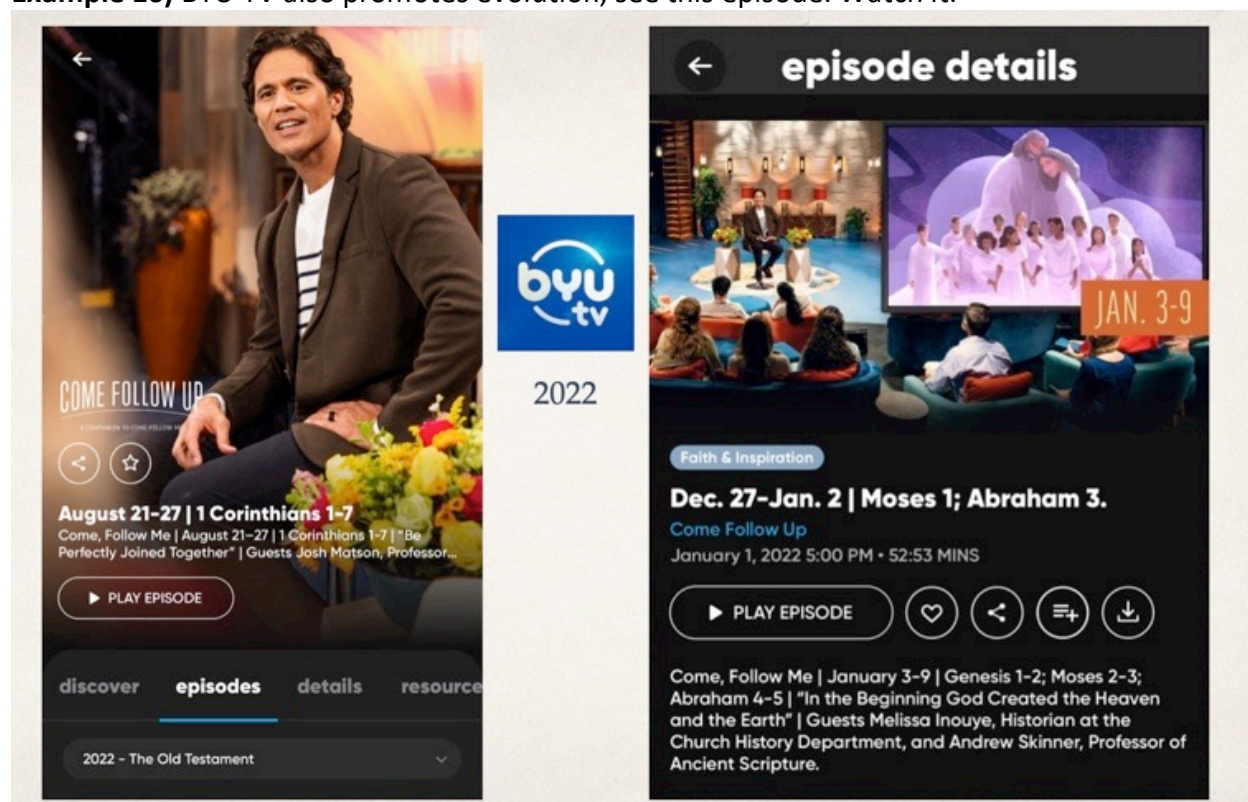
“Sensitive topics are those that appear to be at odds with our **cultural standards**, religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal biases. By this definition, some topics addressed in science courses are sensitive. Examples of scientific explanations that some church members

consider controversial include the “Big Bang” model of the universe, a 4.6-billion-year-old Earth, and the evolutionary origin of the human body.”

“While we can do little to change **the extremists** of the world, we can and must do everything in our power to become Disciple Scholars and **root out** any scientific and religious fundamentalism that may exist in our lives and at BYU–Idaho.”

President Nelson=extremist, fundamentalist blowhard, dogmatist, root out him and his teachings, his cultural standards, for he is unable to read the words written in the rocks? Yes, let’s promote this.

Example 16) BYU TV also promotes evolution, see this episode. Watch it.



Some take-a-ways:

...You are reminding me of my first of many faith crises when I was a high school student. I was studying biology and chemistry and I went to my bishop and said well um, what do we think about evolution? And um, the Bishop gave me this published book, and it said in the book, it said you cannot be a latter-day saint who believes in evolution and the atonement of Jesus Christ at the same time. So I just, I just didn’t know what to do at that point? I was like, I thought, you know it’s published, it’s a church book, so where does that leave me? Am I really supposed to study this science stuff? What do you say scientist?

Yahaha, **That's a common misconception.** And I **think it's a cultural thing.** The big part that it stems from is that **people misunderstand the nature of science**, both how it works and the limitations of science. Right and so, but also understanding that science can't make any statements about the nature of God. Learning about evolution shouldn't be something that has any kind of power over your belief in God. There's no conflict there.

We are so blessed as Latter-day Saints to have more revealed scripture. If I may, I'd like to read just a couple of things from Abraham. So in Abraham 4: 18 it says:

JJ: I like to think of this as God being a very knowledgeable scientist and using natural laws and preparing the earth to bring forth the creatures that we have today and everything that we have today, plants, animals and humans. And saying alright we are going to set it in motion and we're going to watch and see if it obeys. and so, in my mind God is a scientist who using processes that we can study in science as his tools of creation.

MI: Can I ask a follow up question? I'm sure you get all the time. What do you think about Adam and Eve? How do Adam and Eve fit into that perspective?

JJ: **The short answer is we don't know. There is no modern revelation, or revelation of any kind as to where exactly Adam and Eve fit into this** but they do fit in. Right. ... but the idea is that Adam and Eve were placed into appropriate bodies, but where on the time line is anybody's guess.

It seems strange to me that a person who supports the interpretation of the scriptures from Apostles and Prophets can find little if any support, let alone additional knowledge and training, at BYU or in CES. It's a big challenge for missionaries to gather Israel, not only because of squabbles about whether God has a body and other interpretations of Biblical passages, but more fundamentally, because there is little room in current LDS media/publications for literal beliefs in such basic Biblical teachings as the creation of the Earth and Adam and Eve. This is all the more challenging because those basic Biblical teachings are corroborated by the Book of Mormon, the D&C, and the Pearl of Great Price. But we are now Darwin's disciples. I thought we were the Lord's. The position advocated above is clear opposition to the 1909 first Presidency statement of a united q12 and 1st Presidency on the Origin of Man and the teachings in support of that statement from our current President, President Nelson.

Who in the Church is advocating the positions of the Lord's Prophets? "We look to Him whose Church this is and acknowledge that the Lord's ways are not, and never will be, man's ways... One by one, our best efforts as individuals will be required to correct errors that have crept in through the years" President Nelson. Sadly, the best efforts are those above and they are correcting the errors that have crept in -- Presidents Nelson's teachings. We are all evolutionists now.