

Evolution & Creation Notes & Links – Mike Baird

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Mike Baird: Thoughts and Feelings on the Subject

I have read a great deal on the subject of this note and while I feel it is interesting to read and think about the things discussed in the articles and links listed here I don't worry about such things. The fact is Heavenly Father has not chosen to reveal very much about *how* he created all things. What he has revealed is that He is the creator and that we are created in His image and we are placed here on the earth as part of His plan and that His work and glory is the eternal life and exaltation of His children. Those are the things that are important to me. When I read the following quote by Elder Dallin H Oaks it crystallized my feelings about these kinds of topics.

Dallin H Oaks

"Religion tells us *why* man was created; science attempts to tell us *how*" ("Lifes lessons learned, Reflections of Dallin H Oaks", Chapter on Science and Religion p 55)

I also like very much the following statement by Gordon B. Hinckley and feel it represents how I feel.

- Gordon B Hinckley

"I remember when I was a college student there were great discussions on the

question of organic evolution. I took classes in geology and biology and heard the whole story of Darwinism as it was then taught. I wondered about it. I thought much about it. But I did not let it throw me, for I read what the scriptures said about our origins and our relationship to God. Since then I have become acquainted with what to me is a far more important and wonderful kind of evolution. It is the evolution of men and women as the sons and daughters of God, and of our marvelous potential for growth as children of our Creator" ("God Hath Not Given Us the Spirit of Fear," Ensign, Oct. 1984, 5)

Official Published Church Statements

"The Origin of Man"

- 1909 Doctrinal Exposition of the First Presidency (Improvement Era 13 (Nov 1909) :75–81 (*scriptural references modernized*)) Re-published in the February 2002 Ensign: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2002/02/the-origin-of-man?lang=eng>

"Words in Season from the First Presidency"

- 1910 statement by the First Presidency ("*Words in Season from the First Presidency*," Deseret Evening News (17 December 1910), part 1: 3.) http://en.fairmormon.org/Primary_sources/Evolution/First_Presidency_1910

"Mormon" View of Evolution

- 1925 statement by the First Presidency. (Improvement Era 28:11 (September 1925)) http://en.fairmormon.org/Primary_sources/Evolution/First_Presidency_1925

Roberts-Smith-Talmage Dispute

In 1930 B.H. Roberts, then presiding member of the First Council of the Seventy, and Joseph Fielding Smith, then a junior member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles held opposing views regarding death occurring on the earth for millions of years prior to the fall of Adam and whether pre-Adamites had lived on the earth. Robert's views were encompassed in a draft of a priesthood study manual entitled "The Truth, the Way, the Life" that was submitted to the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve for approval. Smith's views were presented in a speech later published in the Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine.

Roberts and Smith were asked to present to the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve their views. The First Presidency subsequently issued a memorandum to the General Authorities (next section). After the memorandum James E Talmage, a member of the Quorum of the twelve gave a speech, with First Presidency permission, in the Tabernacle entitled "The Creation and Man" which promoted views contrary to Smith's. This speech was in a church published pamphlet and later in the Improvement Era. Smith later in 1954, when he was the President of the Quorum of the Twelve published a book entitled "Man, His Origin and Destiny" which gave in depth his views.

First Presidency, Memorandum to General Authorities, April 1931, 6–7.

- "Upon the fundamental doctrines of the Church we are all agreed. Our mission is to bear the message of the restored Gospel to the people of the world. Leave geology, biology, archaeology and anthropology, no one of which has to do with the salvation of the souls of mankind, to scientific research, while we magnify our calling in the realm of the Church. We can see no advantage to be gained by a continuation of the discussion to which reference is here made, but on the contrary are certain that it would lead to confusion, division and misunderstanding if carried further. Upon one thing we should all be able to agree namely, that presidents Joseph F. Smith, John Winder and Anthon Lund were right when they said: "Adam is the primal parent of our race" ("Memo from the First Presidency to the Council of the Twelve, the First Council of Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric", 1931-04-05; reprinted in William E. Evenson and Duane E. Jeffrey (2005). *Mormonism and Evolution: The Authoritative LDS Statements* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Greg Kofford Books) pp. 54–67.)

Other related topics

Creatio ex nihilo (creation of something from nothing)

- http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_science/Evolution:Creation/Creatio_ex_nihilo
http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormon_view_of_the_creation/Creatio_ex_nihilo

No Official Church position on an Issue

There are many issues which the Church has no official position

- J Reuben Clark
" Here we must have in mind—must know—that only the President of the Church, the Presiding High Priest, is sustained as Prophet, Seer, and Revelator

for the Church, and he alone has the right to receive revelations for the Church, either new or amendatory, or to give authoritative interpretations of scriptures that shall be binding on the Church....

When any man, except the President of the Church, undertakes to proclaim one unsettled doctrine, as among two or more doctrines in dispute, as the settled doctrine of the Church, we may know that he is not "moved upon by the Holy Ghost," unless he is acting under the direction and by the authority of the President.

Of these things we may have a confident assurance without chance for doubt or quibbling. " (—J. Reuben Clark, Jr., "Church Leaders and the Scriptures," [original title "When Are the Writings or Sermons of Church Leaders Entitled to the Claim of Scripture?"] *Immortality and Eternal Life: Reflections from the Writings and Messages of President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.*, Vol. 2, (1969-70): 221; address to Seminary and Institute Teachers, BYU (7 July 1954); reproduced in *Church News* (31 July 1954); also reprinted in *Dialogue* 12/2 (Summer 1979): 68–81)

Articles that discuss various related subjects where there is No Official Church Position

It is important to note that on the items listed in this section the church has not taken an official position. Various church leaders have stated their views on some of these matters sometimes disagreeing with each other

Evolution

- No definitive LDS stance on evolution, study finds
<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/1,5143,635188399,00.html>
- FairMormon: Mormonism and science/ Evolution
http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_science/Evolution

Death before the Fall

- FairMormon: Mormonism and science/Death before the Fall
http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_science/Death_before_the_Fall

Pre-Adamites

- FairMormon: Mormonism and science/ Pre-Adamites
http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_science/Pre-Adamites

Age of the Earth

- FairMormon: Mormonism and science/Age of the Earth
http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_science/Age_of_the_Earth

Dinosaurs

- FairMormon: Mormonism and science/ Dinosaurs
http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_science/Dinosaurs