

Mormonism and Evolution: The Authoritative LDS Statements  
edited by William E. Evenson and Duane E. Jeffrey  
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reviewed by Kathleen Dalton-Woodbury

This book is intended for anyone, LDS or not, who would like to have, all in the same place, the authoritative statements of LDS leaders on the subject of evolution.

This book includes what is known as The BYU Evolution Packet, "Evolution and the Origin of Man," a collection of authoritative statements from the President of the Church and the First Presidency that was compiled and made available to BYU professors and students in 1992. Because of the current interest in the Church's stand on evolution, Greg Kofford Books has made the Packet available now, along with an appendix which includes other authoritative documents, so that there can be no question of the Church's stand.

The editors are both scientists and have taught at BYU. William E. Evenson retired from BYU in 2004 after thirty-four years where he was a professor of physics, Dean of General Education, Dean of Physical and Mathematical Science, and Associate Academic Vice President. He is now an administrator and physics professor at Utah Valley State College. Evenson was also chosen by the First Presidency to write the article on evolution for inclusion in the Encyclopedia of Mormonism.

Duane E. Jeffrey is a professor of integrative biology at BYU. He has published professionally in various biological journals and on matters of Mormonism and science. Jeffrey was selected by the BYU Board of Trustees to assemble the BYU Packet. He has received numerous teaching awards at BYU including Honors Professor of the Year and the Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Teaching Award. He serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Center for Science Education.

Associated with each document are explanatory statements by the editors which provide context for the document and which are very helpful to readers. The BYU Packet section contains a statement from The First Presidency dated 1909, an excerpt from a First Presidency message dated 1910, a statement from The First Presidency dated 1925, and the Article on Evolution from the Encyclopedia of Mormonism dated 1992.

The appendix contains other authoritative documents such as an editorial from President Joseph F. Smith, a memo from the First Presidency regarding a disagreement between B. H. Roberts and Joseph Fielding Smith in 1931, an article by James E. Talmage, and quotes from Heber J. Grant, David O. McKay, Spencer W. Kimball, and Gordon B. Hinckley. The editors only included documents that had received official status from the First Presidency and were published with their approval.

There is no discussion. The documents are presented for the information of the reader, and this book is a worthy addition to the library of anyone interested in this aspect of the LDS faith. The editors conclude the book with the hope "that the present publication will be useful in putting the authoritative statements into a more readily available context and format." They and Greg Kofford Books have accomplished this admirably and should be thanked for providing such useful and timely material.

Kathleen Dalton-Woodbury  
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Dalton-Woodbury@sff.net