

What should I tell a young woman who says she feels pressure to go on a mission?

When President Thomas S. Monson announced that young men could serve at 18 years old and young women at 19, he reiterated that missionary service is a priesthood duty and encouraged all worthy and able young men to serve. He then said, “Many young women also serve, but they are not under the same mandate to serve as are the young men. We assure the young sisters of the Church, however, that they make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome their service” (“Welcome to Conference,” Oct. 2012 general conference).

If young women feel pressure to serve a mission, it’s not because of a Church policy or program that sets a new expectation for them to serve. Any person exerting this kind of pressure is not in harmony with what President Monson and other Church leaders have taught. The Church’s stance has been the same for a long time: young women are *welcome* to serve missions, but unlike young men, they are not *expected* to serve. **NE**

What does the Church believe about evolution?

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. Though the details of what happened on earth before Adam and Eve, including how their bodies were created, have not been revealed, our teachings regarding man’s origin are clear and come from revelation.

Before we were born on earth, we were spirit children of heavenly parents, with bodies in their image. God directed the creation of Adam and Eve and placed their spirits in their bodies. We are all descendants of Adam and Eve, our first parents, who were created in God’s image. There were no spirit children of Heavenly Father on the earth before Adam and Eve were created. In addition, “for a time they lived alone in a paradisiacal setting where there was neither human death nor future family.” They fell from that state, and this Fall was an essential part of Heavenly Father’s plan for us to become like Him. (See Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet,” Apr. 2015 general conference.) **NE**

For further reference, see “The Origin of Man,” *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1909, 78; *Ensign*, Feb. 2002, 29. See also *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), “Evolution,” 2:478.

