

Religious Audiences and the Topic of Evolution- lessons from the classroom: Introduction by Connie Bertka

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Dr. Connie Bertka: 00:26

Let me tell you a bit about the Broader Social Impacts Committee, for those of you who haven't attended. One of our events before. This was a committee that Rick Potts and his colleagues, when they were planning the permanent exhibit here in the hall, invited myself and Jim Miller to organize. We help with public communication and outreach around the topic of human origins. And there's about 14 of us, and we come from a variety of different religious and secular perspectives. And I would encourage you to look at the Human Origins website for many reasons, but one of which is that you'll find information about each of the committee members there, as well as resources from them or things they would recommend that might be of particular interest to people who share their particular religious perspective. Let me say, we are a diverse group of people, and although we all agree that this conversation between science and society is a very important one to have, and we'd like to have a positive conversation, we don't all necessarily agree on what the outcomes of that conversation should be. (01:45)

Again, please do visit the website. And another thing you can find on the website is previous events in the past, public events in the past. You'll find video or audio of those events. So if this turns out to be something you thought was pretty interesting, please do go back and look at some of the other events that we've held in the past and the topics that you might explore more on the website. (02:13) So the committee meets in person annually. And part of, again, what we like to do every year, is have a public event, which in the past several years, we've invited an outside speaker. And then we invite a few members from the committee to respond to and reflect on what the visitor is presenting. Again, it should be obvious that one area of interest to this committee is how do you positively engage religious audiences, and all audiences, on the topic of evolution? And this afternoon, we're going to focus on communicating the science of evolution in the

classroom, particularly in classrooms where students are members of religious communities which may have traditionally been very skeptical about the topic of evolution. We are fortunate on the BSIC Committee to have several educators who do work in communities where there has been skepticism about evolution, both at the high school and college and graduate school level. (03:26) I would just tell you that if you're not aware, science education researchers have actually shown that this relationship between religiosity and understand or accepting evolution is actually a pretty complex one. And this is a very vibrant field of research, which I think, particularly in the last several years, is really starting to make an impact, both helping people recognize that complexity, as well as figuring out practical ways to address the topic. And you'll hear about some of that this afternoon. (04:03) One of the things I'm going to do is encourage us to, as we listen to Jamie's talks and the, and panelists' reflection, to think about how these examples might be more broadly applicable to different audiences, both in the formal classroom setting, but as well as outside the classroom. So with that, I'm going to introduce Jamie. And then basically after her remarks, we'll invite the panel to come up and I'll ask each of them to introduce themselves. And then if all goes well, we really would like to have quite a bit of time for all of you to be part of the discussion as well. (04:46) Jamie Jensen is an associate professor of biology at Brigham Young University, and we're very excited that she accepted our invitation to speak with all of us this afternoon about her work with BYU students. She's a discipline-based education researcher in the biology department. So her master's degree is in biology, where she had an emphasis in developmental biology and molecular evolution, and she received that degree at BYU. She also has a doctoral degree in biology with an emphasis in science education from Arizona State University. At BYU, she specializes in the development and assessment of undergraduate biology curricula that employ evidence-based teaching strategies to increase students' scientific reasoning skills and deep conceptual understanding. She teaches both majors and non-majors biology, as well as advanced teaching classes as part of the graduate teaching fellows program at BYU. Jamie.

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