

LETTER TO THE EDITOR


The genesis of a setback?

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Creationism could be taught

in funded schools, Tory says

Sept. 6

Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory has disqualified himself as competent to lead this province. His comments that faith-based schools could teach creationism alongside evolutionary theory as equally valid viewpoints shows a distinct lack of understanding of the nature of the word "theory."

Evolutionary theory is more than just a plausible idea to explain life as we know it; it is tried, tested and true. We refer to gravitational theory, magnetic theory and electrical theory as "theories," and yet no rational person doubts those as being sound and quite real. The preponderance of fossil evidence and the frequent mutations of viruses staying one step ahead of vaccines are proof that evolutionary theory is as sound and as factual as gravity, magnetism or electricity.

Tory would lead Ontario into the Dark Ages of ignorance and sectarian schisms with his promise to extend funding to faith-based schools and allow creationism to be taught.

Brian Stavert, Mississauga

"It's still called the theory of evolution," John Tory says. Here, Tory makes the mistake of assuming that "theory" in science means the same as "theory" in common usage. In common usage, it means "an unproved conjecture, or opinion." When used in a scientific context, a theory is necessarily based on facts and is required to be consistent with true descriptions of reality and can be tested experimentally.

Tory should know that in any argument or discussion, one should always define the terms in order to minimize confusion, and – in the case of creationism versus evolution – to differentiate what is purely faith from what is testable, observable and demonstrable fact.

Jonathan O'Mara, Whitby

Basically I agree with John Tory that creationism should be taught in publicly funded schools, but not in religious studies classes. Creationism belongs in a course that examines world and/or ancient mythologies. But do any of these stories about sacred turtles, Zeus and his goddesses, an Eve-beguiling Serpent or a vengeful God have a basis for scientific verification as to our origins? No.

Helena Hughes, Toronto

I am so disappointed that John Tory wants to take us back to the Dark Ages, when religion was the centre of every community. This mentality is what continues to divide people around the world.

Considering that educational funding is already tight, would it not make more sense to just have one school system that embraces all Canadians? If people

want their children to have a religious education, they can take them to their church, temple, mosque, etc.

Lisa A. Sharples, Toronto

The prospect of electing as premier a man who does not seem to understand the difference between religious dogma and science is indeed frightening. There are no "other theories" in the realm of science. People are free to reject science in favour of whatever belief system they please, but they cannot have it both ways. Students must be taught the truth, which is that to reject evolution is to reject the scientific method itself.

Max Williams, Brampton

John Tory has talked his way out of the job of premier. Creationism should not be part of publicly funded education. If certain faiths want to teach it in their churches, that's their right. However, it is faith, not science, and I will never accept its teaching in any education system that uses my tax dollars. Good luck to Tory in his next career.

Barry Johnstone, Vineland Station, Ont.