

[www.trinityunitedottawa.ca](http://www.trinityunitedottawa.ca)

# Many Christians believe in evolution

As published in the Ottawa Citizen - March 23, 2009

Re: Tories don't need resurrected creation debate - March 18, 2009

---

Given the startling opinions of Canada's minister in charge of science and technology and the bus-advertisement debate in Canadian cities, religion is much in the news.

As a journalist and a United Church of Canada minister, I'm amazed by the outdated, sophomoric level of discussion framing both the "God or Evolution" question and the "God or no God" on the bus debate. Many journalists seem to start from a fundamentalist premise that Christians either believe in the Bible or believe in evolution.

This offends me and millions of other religious folk, because in my experience, most mainstream Christians embrace both the Bible and evolution.

We do not read the Bible literally, because for decades, biblical scholarship has been educating us to understand the Book of Genesis and much of the Hebrew and Christian Bible as treasured myth, not record of fact.

Myth is a time-honoured way in all cultures of passing wisdom and meaning down through the generations, in the memorable form of metaphor and story.

Therefore, the six-day myth of creation sits wisely alongside eons of scientific evolution.

My Christian theology must stand the test of embracing all the best thinking of our age, all good "hard" science and social science, supported by the revelations of quantum physics which offer striking parallels to a mystical or religious understanding of reality.

As for the existence of God, mainstream Christianity understands that word today in a way that is wide and deep and real. We do not rely on the "old man in the sky" mythical figure.

God, as revealed in the Bible, is widely understood as that unnameable presence or spirit or energy or organizing force that is active throughout all of Creation and all time.

No religion has any exclusive claim on God, but each has a culturally inherited way of appreciating and aligning our living with the "something more."

The word "God" is shorthand for our awe-inspiring personal experiences of a mystery that is generative of beauty and works creatively through us and with us, toward unity, justice and peace.

My Christian God works through the natural world, including evolution and fractals and all forms of creative inspiration.

How about yours?

Journalists, please look up the word "panentheism" for a start. Let's get this debate up-to-date, for God's sake.

Rev. Eleanor (Ellie) Barrington, Ottawa