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Writing in the September 2008 issue of the *United Church Observer*, Drew Halfnight [discusses](#) [4] the public understanding of evolution in Canada. With the evolution wars constantly raging to the south, "Canadians see themselves as spectators to someone else's battle," he writes, adding, "Though it may not have the profile or scope here that it has in the U.S., the tension between a Bible-based understanding of the origins of creation and the science of evolution evidently does not stop at the border."

As NCSE previously [reported](#) [5], according to the latest poll of Canadian public opinion, 58 percent accept evolution, while 22 percent think that God created humans in their present form within the last 10,000 years, and 20 percent are unsure. (In the United States, 50% of respondents preferred the pro-evolution responses, with 44 percent preferring "God created human beings pretty much in their present form at one time within the last 10,000 years or so," and with only 5 percent volunteering a different response or declining to answer.)

The article devotes several paragraphs to the [episode](#) [6] in which Brian Alters's project to study the effects of the popularization of "intelligent design" on Canadian students, teachers, parents, administrators, and policymakers was denied funding by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, in part on the grounds that the proposal lacked adequate "justification for the assumption in the proposal that the theory of evolution, and not intelligent-design theory, was correct."

Halfnight writes, "The problem, of course, is that evolution is a scientific theory, while ID theory is not. Evolutionary biology is based on mountains of observable evidence, while ID cannot be tested at all. In

short, ID has nothing to do with science, and everything to do with belief." Jason Wiles, who manages the Evolution Education Research Centre at McGill University, commented that the SSHRC "put evolution and ID on the same footing, then said, 'Our position is to have no position.'"

Evolution is neglected in Canada's public school curricula, too: "In all but one provincial science curriculum, evolution is relegated to a single unit in a Grade 11 or 12 elective course taken by a sliver of each graduating class. It would not be a stretch to say the majority of Canadian high school students graduate without ever encountering Darwin's theory of natural selection." Additionally, private religious schools are allowed to teach creationism alongside evolution.

As in the United States, there is plenty of opposition to the teaching of evolution in Canadian schools. Leesa Blake, vice-president of the Science Teachers' Association of Ontario, told Halfnight that teachers often experience pressure from parents or students to teach creationism. And as with their counterparts in the United States, Canadian teachers often feel unprepared to teach evolution: "A lot of the people who are teaching biology don't actually have the training" to teach evolution, Blake told Halfnight.

The article ends with a plea for keeping religious views out of science classes, quoting Denis Lamoureux, described as "a devout evangelical Christian and confirmed evolutionist who teaches science and religion at St. Joseph's College in the University of Alberta." (He is also the author of [Evolutionary Creationism](#) [7] (Wipf & Stock, 2008). "So how are we going to teach biology?" he asks. 'Teach the science as metaphysically free as possible. In other words, keep God out of it, keep the atheistic world view out of it.'"

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