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## **Editorial: Evolution, creation aren't on same plane**

**Neither deserves to be pitted against the other.**

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Julie Haberle sounds like a wonderful woman, fun to have as a friend and neighbor, and we salute her for taking this country's cherished freedom of speech to heart with her creationist billboard and website. But ...

And, yes, there is a big BUT here. Haberle, the Minnetonka woman whose billboards were the subject of a Monday Star Tribune story, views evolution as one opinion and creationism as another. That's about 180 degrees from right. Opinions on grandma's turkey recipe may have equal validity. But evolution isn't an opinion; it's a scientific theory, backed up by decade upon decade of increasingly confirming research. It's as close to a truth as just about anything gets.

In the lay world, we use "theory" quite loosely. In the scientific world, they do not. A hypothesis needs a lot of proof before it earns the label "theory." Evolution has earned that label in spades. Creationism, on the other hand, is a metaphysical opinion, actually a belief. Surely, it is dearly held by its proponents, and no one begrudges them that. But it doesn't belong in the same arena as evolution.

The puzzle is why that should even be in dispute. Folks like Haberle base their lives on faith -- "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Such things do not mix well with science, and the two communities ought not ever seek to mix them. Numerous learned men and women have devoted years of thought to ways people faithful to both God and science might avoid futile attempts at mixing. Many a good scientist and Christian, Muslim, Jew has managed to do just that.

Haberle's logic is deficient in one other way worth mentioning: She seems to suggest that her creationist belief has special cachet because she started out in the other camp and by dint of her intellect came to see the light.

Reason doesn't work that way. Where you started doesn't matter. Only where you ended is significant, and that significance is only as meaningful as the proof you can offer. Where creationism is concerned, there is no proof, only belief.