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THE CHALLENGE OF EVOLUTION TO RELIGION

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The Challenge of Evolution to Religion

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Abstract: We focus on three challenges of evolution to religion: teleology, human origins, and the evolution of religion itself. First, religious worldviews tend to presuppose a teleological understanding of the origins of living things, but scientists mostly understand evolution as nonteleological. Second, religious and scientific accounts of human origins do not align in a straightforward sense. Third, evolutionary explanations of religion, including religious beliefs and practices, may cast doubt on their justification. We show how these tensions arise and offer potential responses for religion. Individual religions can meet these challenges if some of their metaphysical assumptions are adapted or abandoned.

Keywords: evolution, teleology, human origins, cognitive science of religion

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