

Scene 1:

(Camera does a wide shot of church then focuses on me standing on the other side of the road.

Camera then moves towards me)

Me: According to the 2001 Canadian Census 83.5% of Canadians claim affiliation with some kind of religion. Few things have the power to capture a large amount people like religion. So why is religion so popular? And what are its origins?

Scene 2:

(Camera focuses on me sitting on the steps)

Me: Evolutionary psychology provides insight into the emergence of religion and why it continues to be so prevalent to this day.

Scene 3:

(Camera continues to focus on me sitting on steps)

Me: According to evolutionary psychologists religion can be seen as an adaptation because of its potential survival and reproductive value.

During the EEA group cooperation would have been essential for survival. Religion is related to relationships and the cooperation needed to maintain strong ones. According to research conducted by Hauser and Ilkka in 2010 religious acts would have emerged during the EEA because

of a need to distinguish committed members from potential “free riders”. Free riders refers to those group members who want to reap the benefits of being part of the group but who do not want to contribute resources in any way. The study by Hauser and Ilkka suggests that religion emerged because it involves dedication and sacrifice, which only committed members, would be willing to give.

The theory of reciprocity contends that when a group member helps another member this member will then aid them in some way in the future. Meaning that sharing resources with others is beneficial only if they return the favor in some way. By only sharing resources with those who will reciprocate an individual can increase their own chances of survival. Painful religious acts would have emerged as a way to test a group member’s level of commitment, which would be an indication of their likelihood to reciprocate resources when part of the group. Only those group members who are truly dedicated would endure the cost of engaging in a painful ritual. By proving that they are committed to the group, other members can be sure that they will reciprocate the benefits they receive as being part of the group.

Me: A lot of rituals are painful and highly demanding therefore only committed members will choose to participate, as seen in this picture of a Hindu ritual which shows a man getting his cheek pierced with a metal rod.

(I open the book to show the picture and camera zooms in on picture)

(Camera focuses back on me)

Resources are essential to survival and sharing them only with those willing to do the same is an important practice.

Scene 4:

(I am leaning on church doors. Camera does a wide shot of this)

Me: According to Buss 2002 evidence for the adaptive value of religion is seen. Commitment to a partner has definite reproductive benefits. Both men and women benefit from having their partner commit to being faithful to them. During the EEA paternal certainty would have been impossible to prove therefore a ritual that involves a woman promising to be faithful would have arose as a possible solution to this issue. By increasing his paternal certainty a man can be more certain that he is not wasting resources on a child that is not his own. Meaning he only encourages his own child's survival and as a result the survival of his own genes.

(I am leaning on side of church. Camera does a wide shot of this)

A woman benefits by ensuring that her mate is not dispensing resources on another woman's child. Resource allocation was important during the EEA because it was related to survival. If a man is unfaithful to his partner and has a child with another woman he must then divide his resources amongst more children. For his partner this means fewer resources for her child decreasing its chances of survival, which in the end hurts her reproductive value. The act of marriage can be seen as beneficial to both man and woman.

Scene 5:

(I am standing at the top of the stairs came does a wide shot of me and follows me as I woke down the stairs)

Me: Ultimately some evolutionary psychologists contend that religion helps us with cooperation, which is a part of our everyday lives. Whether it is cooperation with other group members or a spouse religion can be seen as an adaptive trait that will continue to prosper for many years to come.

(Camera watches as I walk away and does one last shot of the church)

References:

Buss, D.M. (2002). Sex, marriage, and religion: What adaptive problems do religious phenomena solve? *Psychological Inquiry*, 13(3), 201-203.

Ilkka, P., Hauser, M. 2010. The origins of religion: Evolved adaptation or by-product? *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 14(3), 104-109.

Image Reference:

http://inapcache.boston.com/universal/site_graphics/blogs/bigpicture/hindu_09_07/h14_20012299.jpg