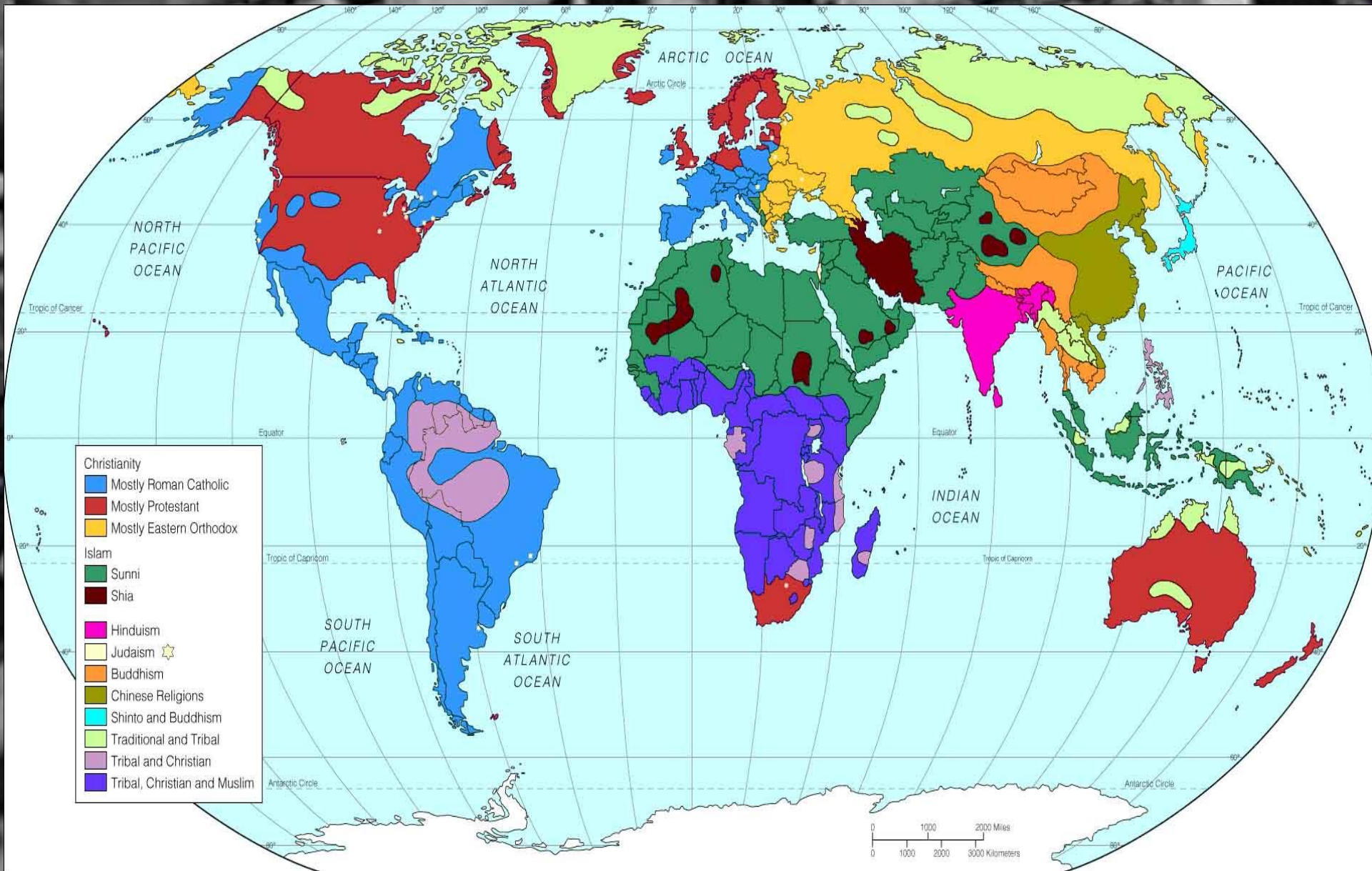


# RELIGION







# Common Themes of Religion



Love



Purpose



Mysteries



Death

# A Sociological Analysis of Religion

## ❖ Characteristics of Religion

### Common Elements:

Beliefs

The Sacred and Profane

Rituals and Ceremonies

Personal Experience

## ❖ Functions of Religion

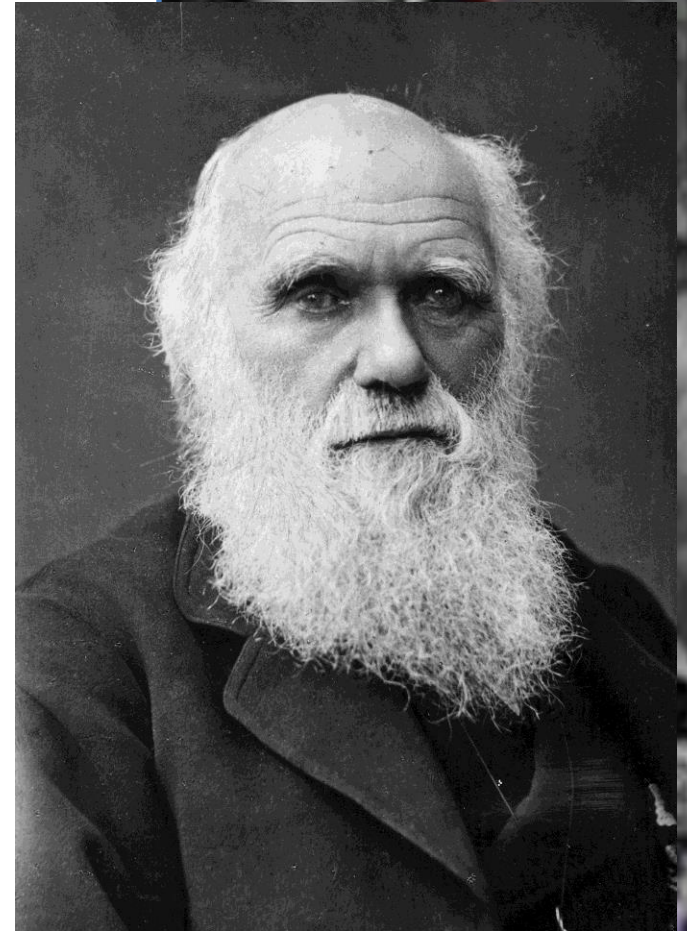
Social Cohesion

Social Control

Provides Meaning and Purpose

# HISTORY OF RELIGION

- Religion has been around for roughly 40,000 years
  - Animism
  - Polytheism
  - Monotheism
- In Industrial Societies
  - Science is replacing religion
    - Still some gaps
    - Science conflicts with religion





# Science and Religion Interact

- **Faith**
  - Belief anchored in conviction
    - Not Evidence

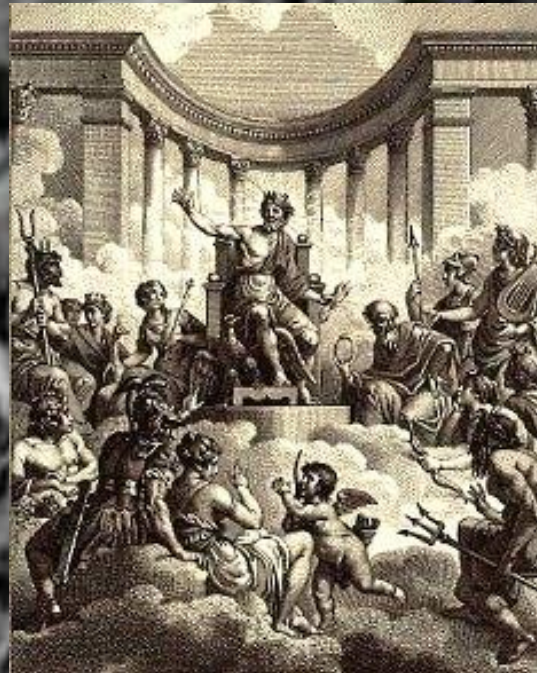
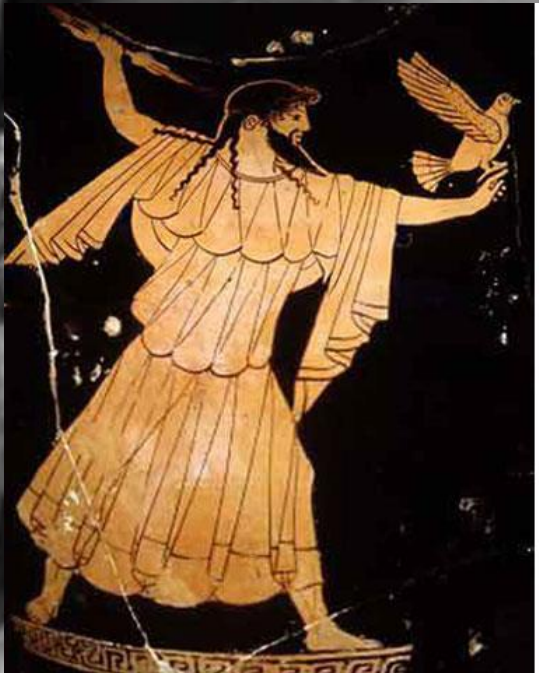
## Role of Sociology

- Find Religions role in society
  - Not Critique



# Sociological Analysis of Religion

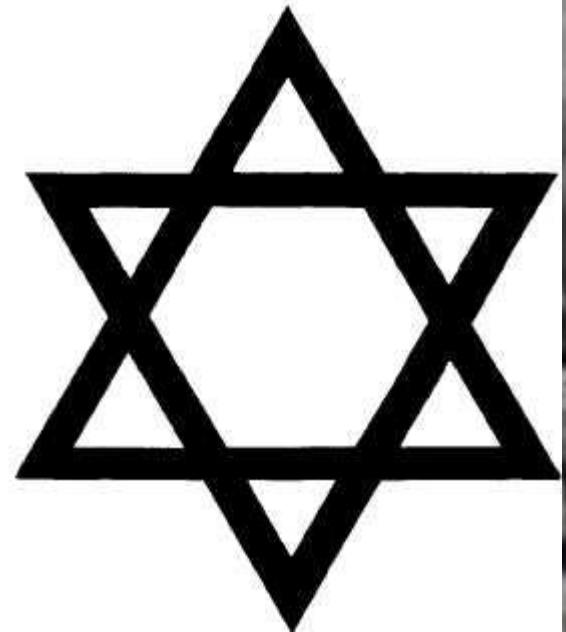
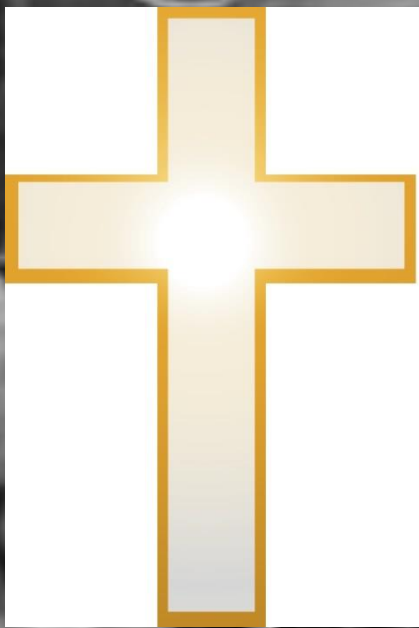
- Polytheism
  - Belief in Many Gods





# Sociological Analysis of Religion

- Monotheism
  - Belief in one god





# THE PROFANE AND SACRED

- Durkheim
  - Religion focuses on things that surpass our own knowledge
    - The Profane
      - Ordinary Elements of everyday life
    - The Sacred
      - The Extraordinary that inspires awe, reverence, or fear
- Religion
  - The Social institution involving beliefs and practices based upon a conception of the sacred.

# A Sociological Analysis of Religion

- Rituals and Ceremonies
  - Prayer as a ritualistic and/or ceremonial link to personal experience.





# A Sociological Analysis of Religion

- **Moral Communities**
  - religious groups that share common beliefs and values.
- A religious community serves several functions:
  - Provides continuity from one generation to another
    - (education or indoctrination?)
  - Allows the laity to look after the profane matters while an elite tend to the sacred
  - Provides social support
  - In times of threat, religious communities can offer some protections

# A Sociological Analysis of Religion

- Functional Perspectives
  - Religion is just one the social institutions that contribute to the stability of a society through the social processes of:
    - Societal cohesion
    - Social control
      - religion applies authority and direction to important points of a person's life cycle including marriage, birth, and death
    - Provision of purpose
      - religion helps reduce social anxiety by providing answers to broad questions about the meaning of life, existence, and non-existence



# The Conflict Perspective

- Conflict theorists are highly critical of religion.
- By diverting thoughts to future happiness in a coming world, religion relieves one of suffering.
- Religion legitimizes the social inequalities of society.