



# Religion and Socialization

Agents of Socialization

# Elements of a Religion

- Four Common Themes of what makes up a religion
  - Love – How can we make the world better?
  - Purpose – Why are we here?
  - Mysteries – How to explain the unexplainable
  - Death – What happens when we die?
- Faith important in following of religion
  - Belief anchored in conviction not evidence



# A Sociological Perspective 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



# Relationship Between Religion and Sociology

- Sociology seeks to examine Religion's role in society
  - Not Critique
- Seeks to examine how religion dictates the responsibilities of someone within the society and what sort of participation is required



# Perspectives of Religion: Structuralism

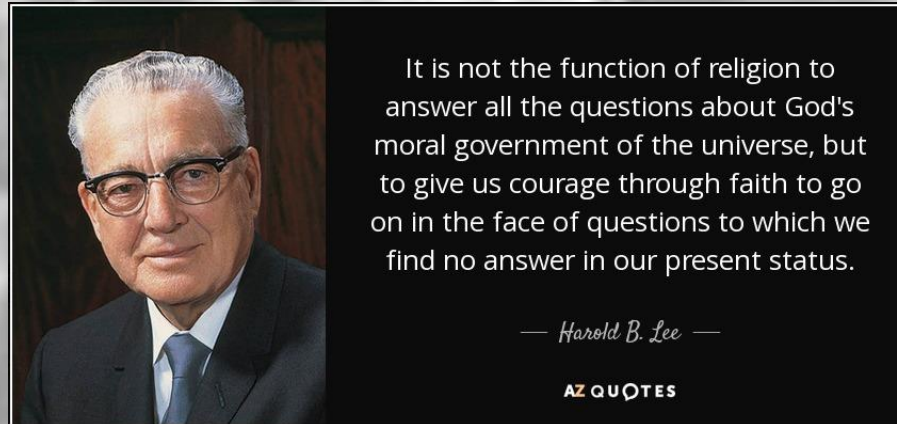
- Developed by Emile Durkheim
- Defined Religion As:
  - The Social institution involving beliefs and practices based upon a conception of the sacred.
- Religion focuses on things that surpass our own knowledge by dividing events in the Sacred and the Profane
  - The Profane
    - Ordinary Elements of everyday life
  - The Sacred
    - The Extraordinary that inspires awe, reverence, or fear
- Rituals and Ceremonies
  - Prayer as a ritualistic and/or ceremonial link to personal experience.

# Purpose of Religion: Build Moral Communities

- Moral Communities
  - Religious groups that share common beliefs and values.
- A religious community serves several functions:
  - Provides continuity from one generation to another
    - Argument as to whether it is 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

# Perspectives of Religion: Functionalism

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



# Perspectives of Religion: Conflict

- Conflict theorists are highly critical of religion.
  - Marx called religion the “opiate of the masses”
  - Religion has been used to keep the masses in check for fear of divine punishment
- By diverting thoughts to future happiness in a coming world, religion relieves the suffering of this world
  - Religion legitimizes the social inequalities of society.
    - Divides society into “Chosen” classes and those out of “god’s graces”

