

What is Religion

Religion is a response to:

- the human condition, namely **anomie** (meaning a lack of meaning)
- chaos
- death

Religion responds to it through putting us in touch with the sacred:

- ultimate in what is real
- ultimate value
- ultimate meaning
- ultimate wholeness

It explains the relationship from my life, to others, to the world.

Religion connects us to what is sacred through:

- myth
- symbol
- ritual

Myths are narratives or stories that touch the core of our being (meanings and values in our lives).

Symbols are a shorthand way of communicating profound information. Connecting complex ideas with an image for communication.

Ritual many kinds of rituals to connect with the sacred, recreate things, rights of passage,

What Makes a Religion

- Theoretical - what is said or written
 - doctrine - what people believe about the sacred
 - philosophy - applies logic and consequences to beliefs
 - myths - provide narrative to those beliefs
- Practical - our action in response to our beliefs
 - ritual - things we do to commemorate/acknowledge/recreate the sacred and our connection to it
 - ethical - how we behave in connection to our religion
- Sociological
 - community - provides support and the way that tradition is passed on

Methodology

We approach religion as a human phenomenon.

Religion can be:

- study
- describe
- analyze

We can provide a picture of the main elements of a tradition such that believers of it will recognize it.

We can examine how religions can remain living.