

# Religious Responses

# What is Religion?

- Word derived from the Latin “religare” meaning “to tie back” or “to tie again”
- As a **verb**: focus on what people do and practice
- As a **noun**: focus on religious propositions and principles.
- Religion is complicated and multifaceted
  - A belief system; a way of life; a guide for strategic action

# Religiosity

**The degree to which religion is important to people.**

- Seniors and preteens are most heavily involved in religious activities.
  - Obligation
  - Opportunity
  - Need
- Other factors:
  - Learning
  - Region of country inhabited
  - Social inequality in society

# Does religion have to have a God?

- Could Yoga be a religion?



Photo: Unsplash.com

Could Martial Arts  
Be a religion?



Could  
Hockey?



# Religious Dimensions

1. Ritual (public or private ceremonies)
2. Narrative & Mythic (stories, including overall accounts of the universe and its creatures)
3. Experiential and Emotional (feelings of guilt, dread, awe, devotion, peace, etc.)
4. Social & Institutional (group dimensions involving shared beliefs, identity, and membership)
5. Ethical and Legal (rules concerning human behaviour)
6. Doctrinal & Philosophical (systematic belief structure and intellectual framework)
7. Material (things and places representing the sacred)

# Sacred and Profane

**Sacred** objects and acts are positively regarded, deserving of reverence or respect, and holy

- Some people believe that the sacred reality is usually invisible but occasionally appears visibly in human incarnations

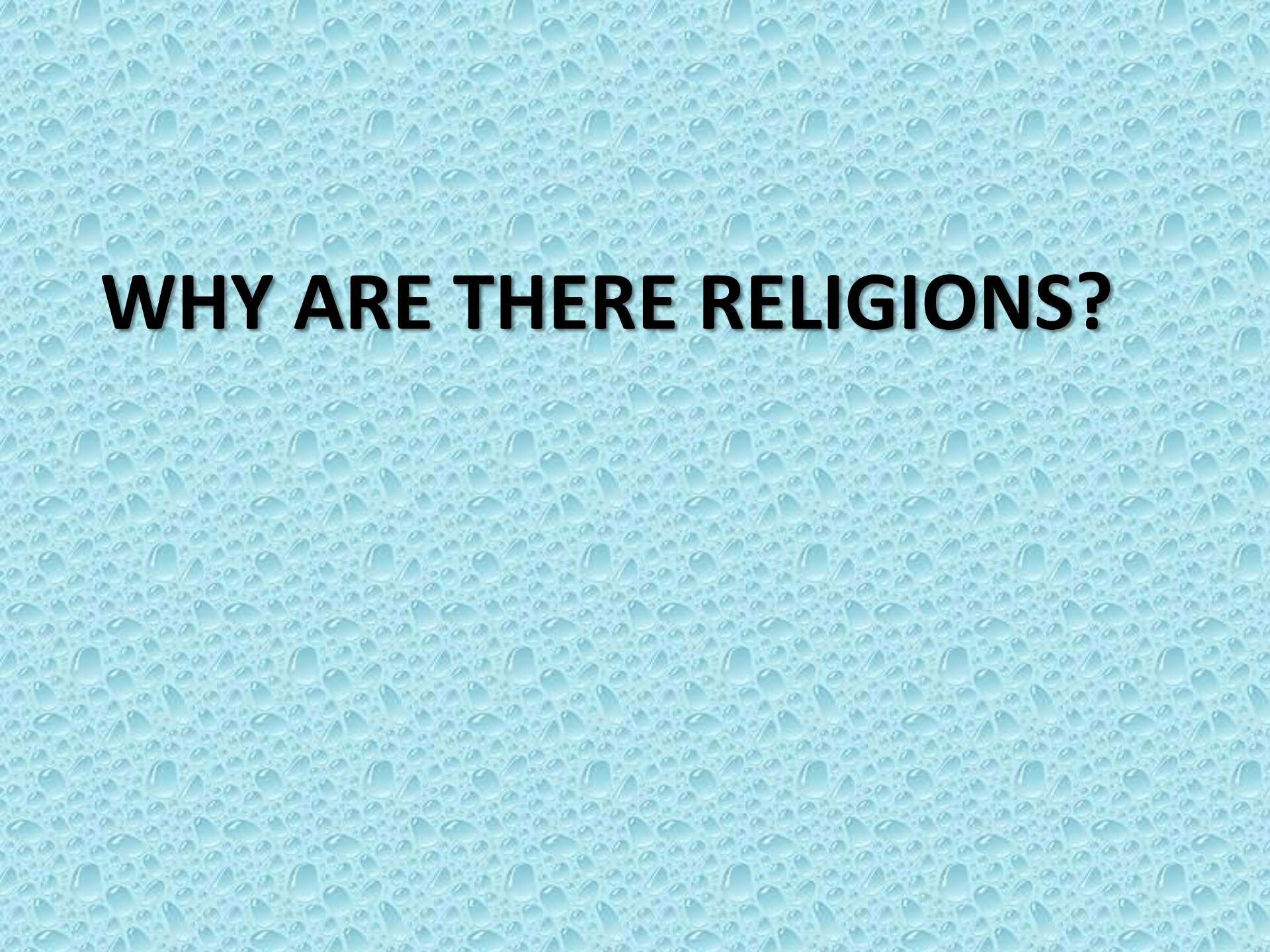
The **profane** are more ordinary objects and acts

## **Atheism**

- is the belief that there is no deity
- Religious beliefs are seen as incompatible with other, rational forms of knowing
- There is little or no proof that God exists.....but can you prove that God doesn't exist??

## **Agnosticism**

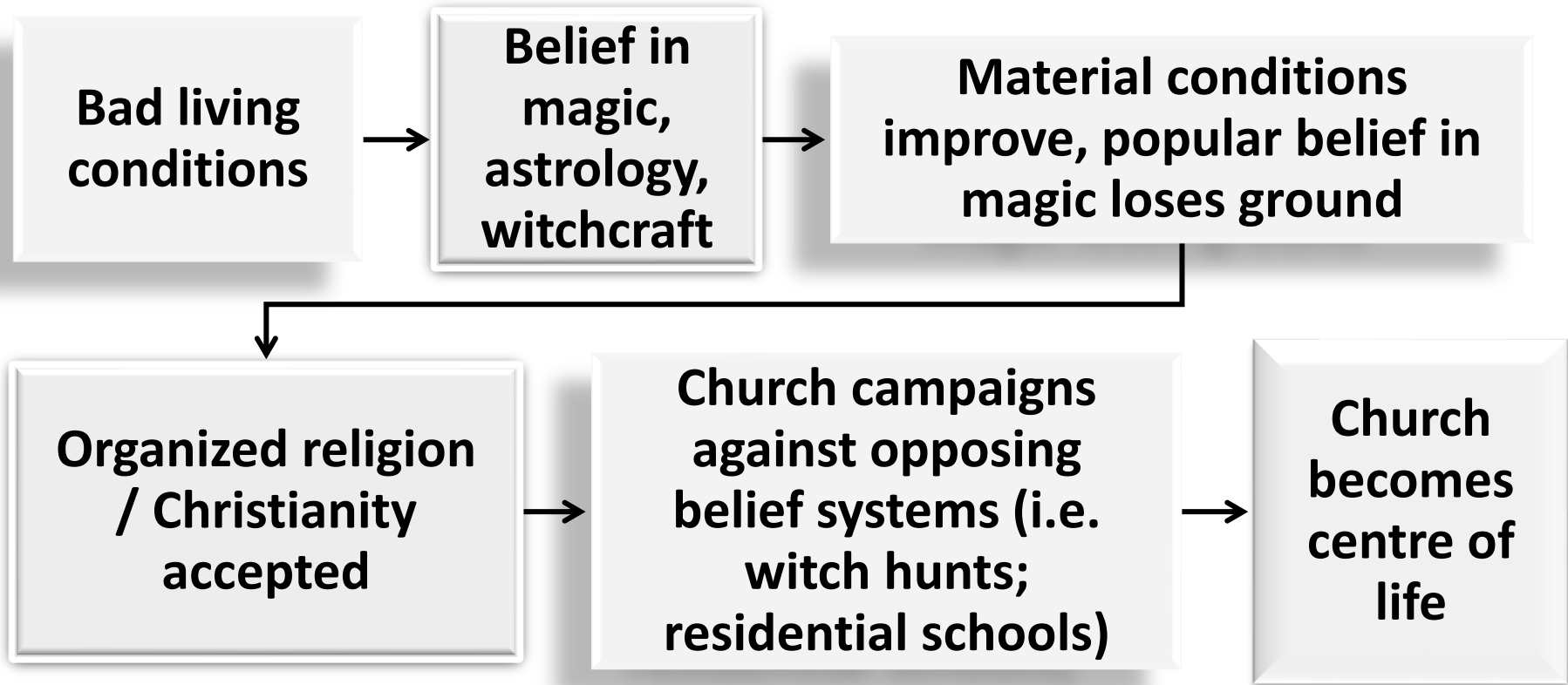
- not the denial of the divine but the feeling, "I don't know whether it exists or not," or the belief that if it exists it is impossible for humans to know it.



**WHY ARE THERE RELIGIONS?**



# The Rise and Decline of Religion



# The Rise and Decline of Religion

**Church as the  
centre of life /  
solution to  
concrete human  
problems**



**“The Age of Reason”  
Scientific / other forms of rationalism  
replacing religious authority**

# Belief Perspective

- Some simply accept what has been told to them or what is written in their holy books. Others have come to their own conclusions.
- In general, we have two basic ways of apprehending reality: rational thought and nonrational modes of knowing (Fisher, 7).

# Non-rational modes of knowing

- Techniques:
  - Meditation; fasting; prayer; chanting; dancing; drugs
- nonrational modes tend to emphasize the limitations of human reason and its perceived ability to describe everything in the world.
- highlight the mystical ways in which one “reconnects” to the sacred

# Functionalist Perspective



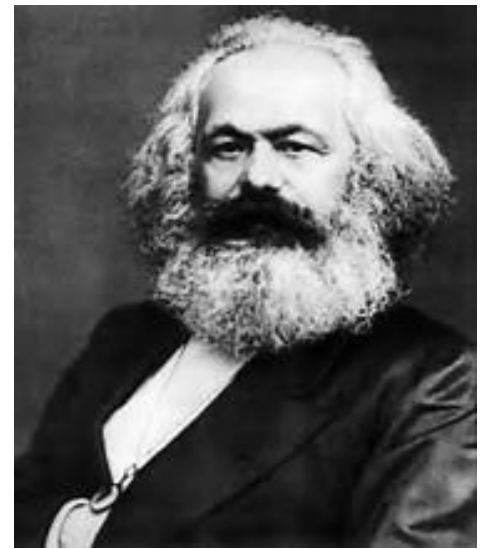
Emile Durkheim 1858-1917

## Religions “do things” for us

- **Psychologically:** it makes sense of seemingly senseless things
- **Sociologically:** because it provides the glue that holds societies together
- **Biologically:** because of its survival value. Religion can be good for your health and in some situations actually reduce mental stress.

# Materialist Perspective

**Marx – Religion is “the opium of the people”**



Karl Marx 1818-1883

- only the material (physical, observable) world exists.
- Religion is an illusion. It is “the sigh of the oppressed creature”
- Religion exists to control, manipulate, and exploit large groups of society.