



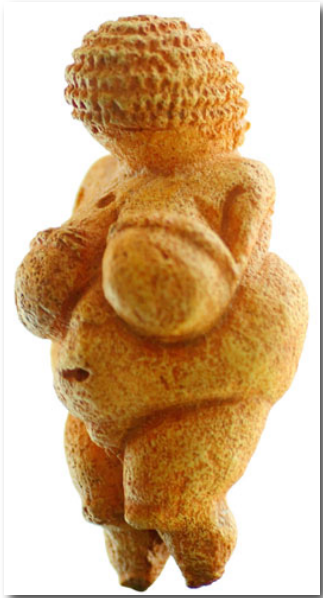
Sometimes I think we're alone. Sometimes I think we're not. In either case, the thought is staggering.

– R. Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983)

# Philosophy of Religion

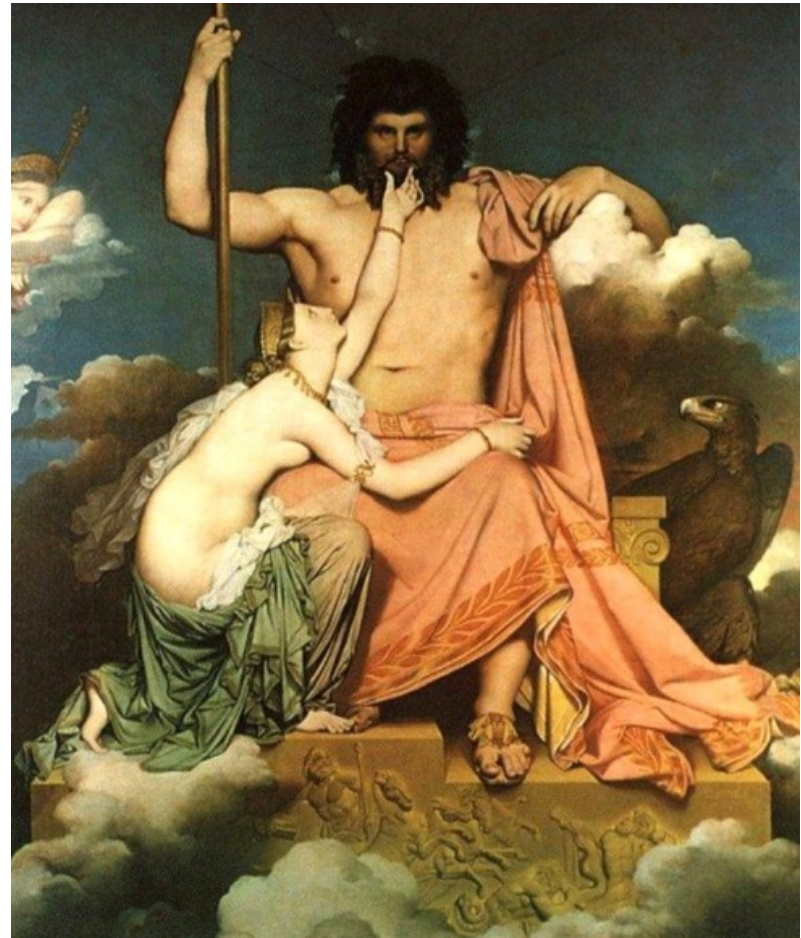
What does  
'God' mean?

# Images of God



# Zeus

Zeus, the youngest son of Cronus and Rhea, rules supreme on Mount Olympus among the pantheon of gods residing there.



Ingres (1780-1867), "Zeus and Thetis" (Musee Granet, Aix-en-Provence)

# The World's Religions

Estimates of the total numbers of adherents to the major world religions are rough at best. Few religions other than Christianity attempt to keep statistical records, and even here the methods of counting differ. Below are estimates for the top ten organized religions of the world.

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Christianity</b>	<b>1.9 billion</b>	<b>33.0%</b>
<b>Islam</b>	<b>1.1 billion</b>	<b>20.0</b>
<b>Hinduism</b>	<b>781 million</b>	<b>13.0</b>
<b>Buddhism</b>	<b>324 million</b>	<b>6.0</b>
<b>Sikhism</b>	<b>19 million</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Judaism</b>	<b>14 million</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>Baha'ism</b>	<b>6.1 million</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Confucianism</b>	<b>5.3 million</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Jainism</b>	<b>4.9 million</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Shintoism</b>	<b>2.8 million</b>	<b>0.0</b>

[Source: *Encyclopedia Britannica*]

# Discuss in Your Groups

Describe God:

List God's three most important traits.

[facilitators: start and stop the discussion, and keep it on track]

[monitors: make sure everyone's ideas are heard]

[recorders: **go to the board** and write down your group answer]

# Four Views of God in the U.S.

## (1) The Authoritative God (31%)

Involved in human history; powerful; punishes those who disobey; clear division between the righteous and the rest.

## (2) The Benevolent God (24%)

A force for good who cares for and comforts all people.

## (3) The Critical God (16%)

Watches this world, and settles accounts in the afterlife.

## (4) The Distant God (24%)

Created the world, then left it alone; believers focus on spirituality.



Do You  
Believe  
in  
God?

# Can I *Know* that God Exists?

Knowledge =<sub>df</sub> justified true belief

# “I believe in God” =<sub>df.</sub> ??

(1) I believe that a being with properties X, Y, and Z exists.  
(belief as “an assent to a proposition”)

and/or

(2) I accept God’s view of what is good and bad, and what counts as “the good life” or “the best life” for me (or for humans in general).

(belief as “a way of life”)

and/or

(3) ...

God’s (likely) Properties:

- (1) all-knowing
- (2) all-powerful
- (3) all-loving
- (4) personal
- (5) creator
- (6) ...??

# Three Propositional Attitudes

## Theism

Belief in P

P = "God exists."

## Atheism

Disbelief in P

## Agnosticism

Withholding judgment about P

# Three Propositional Attitudes

## Theism

Belief in P

P = "God exists."

## Atheism

Disbelief in P

## Agnosticism

Withholding judgment about P

# Three Philosophical Attitudes

## Philosophical Theism

The view that P can be proven

## Philosophical Atheism

The view that P can be disproven

## Philosophical Agnosticism

The view that P can be neither proven nor disproven

# Are My Beliefs about God Justified?

What are the three strongest reasons for believing in God's existence?

What are the three strongest reasons for questioning God's existence?

[recorders: **go to the board** and write down your group answer]

# Doubting God's Existence

# Reasons to Doubt

- God of the Gaps
- Diversity of Belief
- Non-Religious  
Explanations for Religious  
Belief
- Problem of Evil

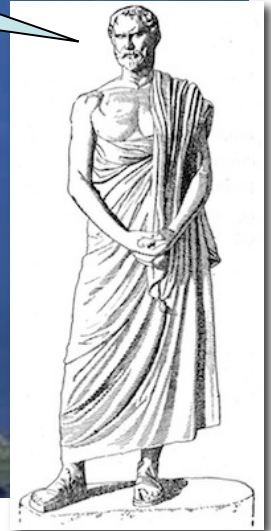




# God of the Gaps



It's the lovely goddess Iris!



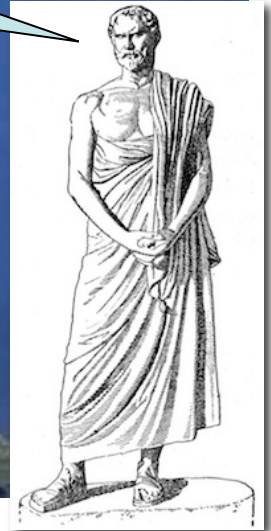
# God of the Gaps



It's the lovely goddess Iris!



It's God's promise to all Creation!

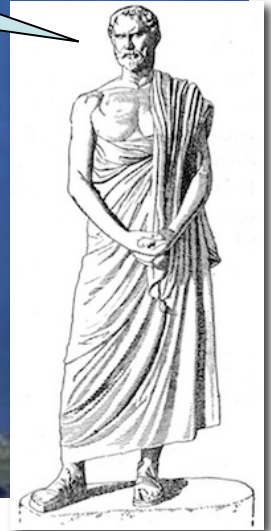
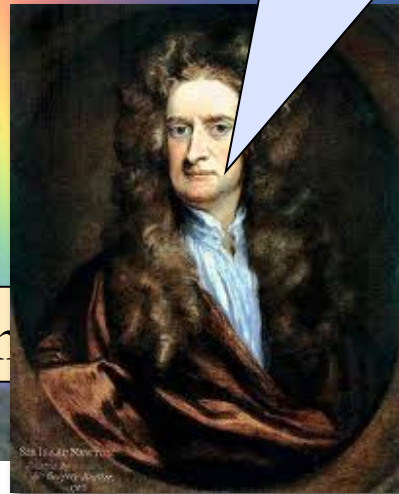


# God of the Gaps

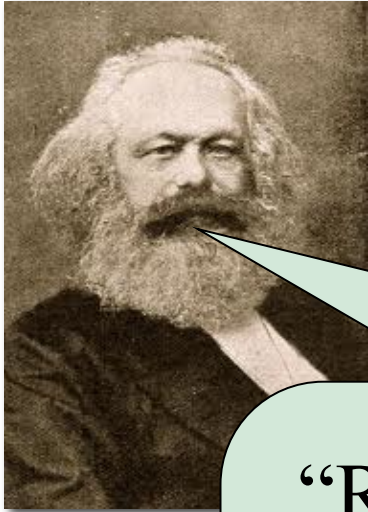
It's light refracted in small droplets of water, you nitwits! You can replicate this with a garden hose in your backyard; it's neither a god nor a sign from a god.

It's the lovely goddess Iris!

It's God's promise!



# Other Explanations for Religious Belief

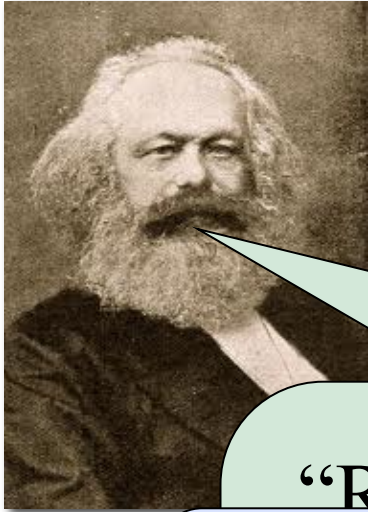


Karl Marx  
1818-1883

“Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions.

It is the *opium* of the people.”

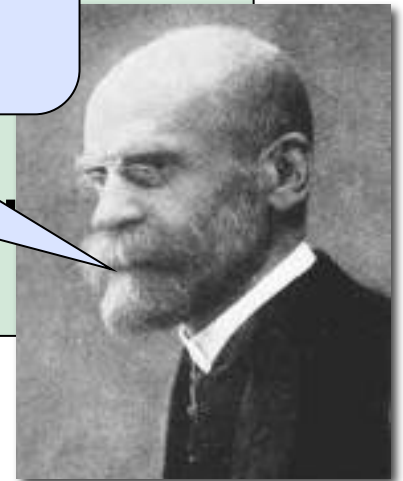
# Other Explanations for Religious Belief



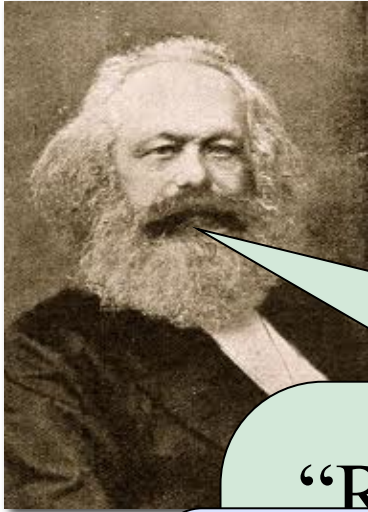
Karl Marx  
1818-1883

“Religion is the sigh of the oppressed world,  
Religion is a mechanism that helps stabilize the social order.  
conditions  
It is the *opium* of the people.”

Emile Durkheim  
1858-1917



# Other Explanations for Religious Belief



Karl Marx  
1818-1883

“Religion is an illusion and it derives its strength from the fact that it falls in with our instinctual desires.”

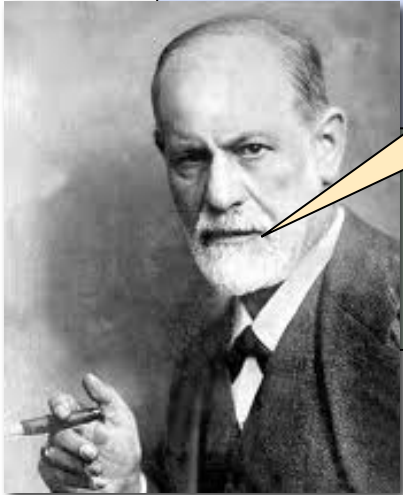
“Religion

Religion is a mechanism that

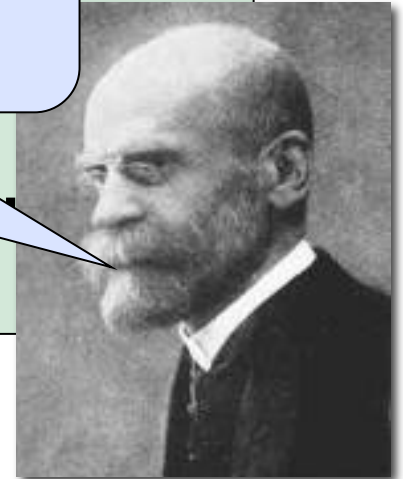
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It is the *opium* of the people.



Sigmund Freud  
1856-1939



Emile Durkheim  
1858-1917

# The Problem of Evil



# Plurality of Religions



I'm right!



# Plurality of Religions

No, I'm right!

I'm right!



# Plurality of Religions

No, I'm right!

I'm right!



I'm right!



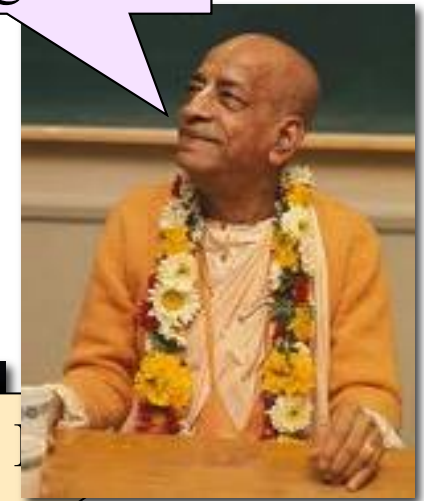
# Plurality of Religions

No, I'm right!

I'm right!



I'm right!



# Plurality of Religions



I'm right!

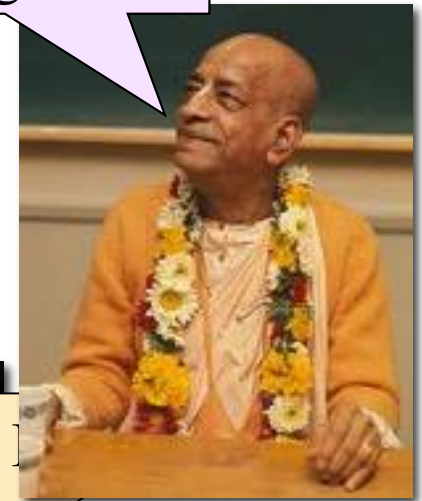
No, I'm right!



I'm right!



I'm right!



# Plurality of Religions



I'm right!

No, I'm right!



I'm right!



I'm right!



I'm right!



# Plurality of Religions



I'm right!

No, I'm right!



I'm right!



I'm right!



I'm right!



I'm right!



# Plurality of Religions



I'm right!

I'm right!

No, I'm



I'm right!



I'm right!



I'm right!



I'm right!



# Plurality of Religions

I'm right!

I'm right!

I'm right!

I'm right!

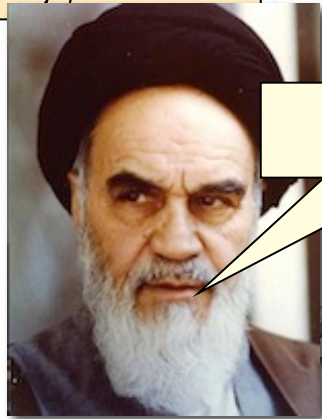
No, I'm

proud to be  
a Jehovah's  
Witness

I'm right!

I'm right!

I'm right!





# Plurality of Religions

I'm right!

I'm right!

I'm right!

I'm right!

I'm right!

I'm right!



# Plurality of Religions

I'm right!

I'm right!

I'm right!

We're right!

I'm right!

I'm right!



# Plurality of Religions

I'm right!

I'm right!

I'm right!

We're right!

I'm right!

I'm right!

So who is right?



# Religion Poll #1

**“Do you think Jesus Christ was God or the Son of God, or another religious leader like Mohammed or Buddha?”**

	God or Son of God	Religious Leader	Neither/ Other	Unsure	Don't believe Jesus ever lived
	%	%	%	%	%
ALL	82	6	2	7	3
Christians	91	3	1	4	1
Non-Christians	35	22	12	19	12

# Religion Poll #2

If your party nominated a generally well-qualified person for president who happened to be \_\_\_\_, would you vote for that person?

	Yes	No
Catholic	95	4
Black	94	5
Jewish	92	7
A woman	88	11
Hispanic	87	12
Mormon	72	24
Married for the third time	67	30
72 years of age	57	42
A homosexual	55	43
An atheist	45	53