

Religion of humanity

- Comte's "Theory of Religion of Humanity" though can be considered as one of his contributions to the realm of sociological thought, it has only an insignificant place in the study of sociology or sociological thought.
- Comte after successfully establishing the intellectual supremacy of positivism in his earlier works, devoted his later writings to moral and religious considerations rather than to scientific and sociological inquiries.

- It is surprising to note that Comte, a great champion of science and positivism, could transform himself into an advocate of a new religion, a religion of humanity. Comte during his younger days used to say that a scientist requires the thirst for knowledge and not the divine grace.
- He was an atheist. He turned out to be a champion of a religion because of several upsets that he had to undergo in his personal life:
- His own wife deserted him; his lady love Clotilde de Vaux died; he had no friends worth calling in that name, to share his thoughts; the lonely life that he was leading became unbearable; he stopped reading the works of others, he alienated himself from other intellectuals of the day.
- These biographical accidents did play an important role in this transformation in his thinking.
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Some Salient Features of The Religion of Humanity

- **1. A religion without God**
- Comte's Religion of Humanity is based upon morality and religion, and not upon a belief in a divine force. Comte was opposed to theological type of religion.
- According to Comte God lives in the ignorance of man. The object of worship should be mankind and not God. Hence the main slogan of the Comtean Religion was "We should have a religion but not God."

- **2. Sociologist-Priests Constitutes the Moral Guides:**
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- Comte believed that Sociologist-priests would be the moral guides and the controllers of the community. They use their "superior knowledge to recall men to their duties and obligations."
- They would be the directors of education and the supreme judges of the abilities of each member of society. He claimed that himself to be high priest of the new religion.
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- **3. Love and Affection is the Central Point:**
- Comte made "love" and "affection" as the central point of life. The positive order that he claimed in his religion was;
- Love as its principles,
- Order as its basis, and
- Programme me as its aim.

- **4. Comte - Not in Favour of Traditional Christianity:**
- Comte's contact with Christianity gave him the belief that it is chiefly ecclesiastical. According to Bogardus, Comte did not see the Christianity as a social keynote, hence he attended to create a purely social religion.

Criticism

- Comte's Religion of Humanity is widely criticized.
- Christian scholars say it is nothing more than a mixture of science and Catholic Religion.
- Some have commented that it is not at all a religion, but primarily a code of morality.
- J. S. Mill rightly remarked that Comtean ideas of religion instead of protecting his mental health made him lead an isolated life and develop strange thoughts.
- Some criticized it as highly "egoistic religion".