

# The Global Religious Landscape 2010 & Forthcoming Projections to 2050

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## 84% Had a Religious Affiliation in 2010

Worldwide, more than eight-in-ten people identify with a religious group.

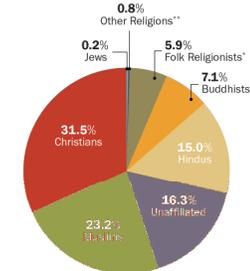
This study – based on analysis of more than 2,500 censuses, surveys and population registers – finds 2.2 billion Christians, 1.6 billion Muslims, nearly 500 million Buddhists and 14 million Jews around the world as of 2010. In addition, more than 400 million people practice various folk or traditional religions. An estimated 58 million people belong to other religions.

Roughly one-in-six people around the globe (1.1 billion) have no religious affiliation. This makes the unaffiliated the third-largest religious group worldwide, behind Christians and Muslims, and about equal in size to the world's Catholic population.

### Most People Are Part of a Religious Majority

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the world's people live in countries in which their religious group makes up a majority of the population. Only about a quarter (27%) live as religious minorities. (This figure does not include subgroups of the eight major groups in this study, such as Shia Muslims living in Sunni-majority countries or Catholics living in Protestant-majority countries.)

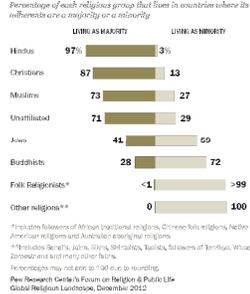
Size of Major Religious Groups, 2010  
Percentage of the global population



\*Includes followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian Aboriginal religions.

\*\*Includes Bahai's, Jains, Sikhs, Shintoists, Taoists, followers of Tenrikyo, Wiccans, Zoroastrians and many other faiths. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Majority or Minority  
Percentage of each religious group that lives in countries where its adherents are a majority or a minority



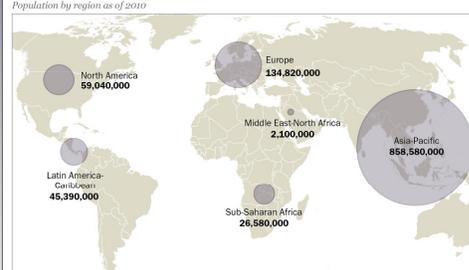
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## 16% Had No Religious Affiliation in 2010

Regional Distribution of the Unaffiliated  
Population by region as of 2010



Percentage of world unaffiliated population in each region as of 2010



Population estimates are rounded to the tenths thousands. Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

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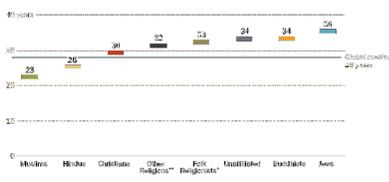
The 1.1 billion people with no religious affiliation in 2010 include atheists, agnostics and those who claim no religion in particular. However, many of the religiously unaffiliated have some religious beliefs. For example, belief in God or a higher power is shared by 7% of Chinese unaffiliated adults, 30% of French unaffiliated adults and 68% of unaffiliated U.S. adults. Some of the unaffiliated also engage in certain kinds of religious practices. For example, 7% of unaffiliated adults in France and 27% of those in the United States say they attend religious services at least once a year. And in China, 44% of unaffiliated adults say they have worshipped at a graveside or tomb in the past year.

There are six countries where the religiously unaffiliated make up a majority of the population: the Czech Republic (76% are religiously unaffiliated), North Korea (71%), Estonia (60%), Japan (57%), Hong Kong (56%) and China (52%). The number of religiously unaffiliated people in China alone is more than twice the total population of the United States.

More than six-in-ten (62%) of all religiously unaffiliated people live in one country, China. The largest unaffiliated populations outside China are in Japan (6% of all the unaffiliated), the United States (5%), Vietnam (2%) and Russia (2%).

## Median Age Varied Widely in 2010

Median Age of Religious Groups, 2010



Religious groups are ordered by median age from youngest to oldest.

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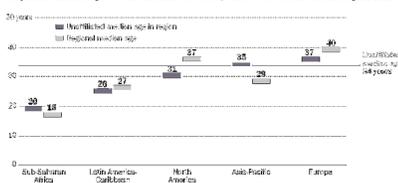
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Some religions have much younger populations, on average, than others. In part, the age differences reflect the geographic distribution of religious groups. Those with a larger share of adherents in fast-growing, developing countries tend to have younger populations. Those concentrated in China and in advanced industrial countries, where population growth is slower, tend to be older.

The median age of two major groups – Muslims (23 years) and Hindus (26) – is younger than the median age of the world's overall population (28). All the other groups are older than the global median.

Globally, the religiously unaffiliated have a median age of 34. The religiously unaffiliated are older than the general population in Asia and the Pacific and in sub-Saharan Africa. The religiously unaffiliated are younger than the general population in North America, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Regional Median Ages of the Unaffiliated Compared with Overall Median Ages, 2010



Median ages ordered by median age of unaffiliated from youngest to oldest.

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

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## Projecting Religious Groups to 2050

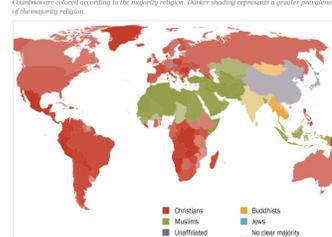
Many people have offered predictions about the future of religion. Our forthcoming report will present the first formal demographic projections using data on age, fertility, mortality, migration and religious switching for multiple religious groups around the world. These projections use data painstakingly collected, analyzed and standardized over six years.

In addition to making projections at the global level, our report projects religious change in all countries and territories with at least 100,000 people as of 2010. Our report divides the world into six major regions and looks at how each region's religious composition is likely to change from 2010 to 2050, assuming that current patterns in migration and other demographic trends continue.

Our projections incorporate patterns in religious switching in about 70 countries where surveys provide information on the number of people who say they no longer belong to the religious group in which they were raised. In the projection model, all directions of switching are possible, and they may be partially offsetting. In the U.S., for example, surveys find that some people who were raised with no religious affiliation have switched to become Christians, while some who grew up as Christians have switched to become unaffiliated.

While most population projections do not include migration in their models or, at best, include anticipated levels of net migration, we have developed an innovative technique for projecting both country-to-country flows as well as the religious composition of those flows. Future migration flows are based on our analysis of migration rates by region to and from 155 countries between 2000 and 2010.

Majority Religion, by Country  
Countries are colored according to the majority religion. Darker shading represents a greater prevalence of the majority religion.



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