



# Christianity in its Global Context, 1970–2020

## Society, Religion, and Mission

June 2013

Center for the Study of  
Global Christianity  
GORDON CONWELL  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY





# About the Center for the Study of Global Christianity

This report was produced by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, located at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, USA. The Center collates and analyzes data on church membership and activities collected by thousands of Christian denominations around the world. Combining this with other relevant demographic data, the Center provides a reliable profile of global Christianity and world religions available to various constituents for research and strategic planning. The Center serves students, researchers, scholars, journalists, and missionaries who want to explore a specific area within global Christianity or a world religion.

The full report can be found online at [www.globalchristianity.org/globalcontext](http://www.globalchristianity.org/globalcontext).

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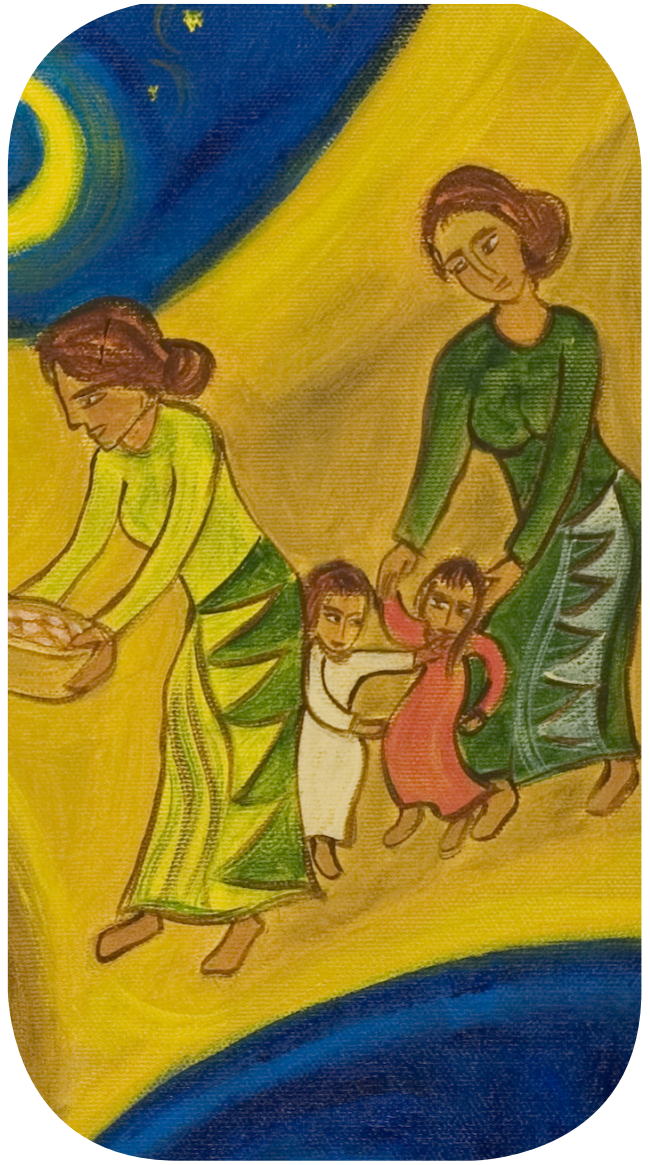
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## Part I: Executive summary

## About the study

Christians around the world today find themselves in contexts that are very different from those of 40 years ago. Since 1970, many societies have experienced dramatic social upheavals and severe environmental catastrophes, yet the period from 1970 to 2010 was also a time of great technological advancement and increased connections between people around the world. Such changes challenge Christians to think differently about the people among whom they live and work, the ways in which they interact with them, and the potential for future cooperation.

*Christianity in its Global Context, 1970–2020: Society, Religion, and Mission*, a report produced in 2013 by researchers at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts, offers a timely overview of the changing demographics of Christianity and Christians' activities over the past 40 years while looking forward to the next ten. If current trends continue, what will be the state of the world in 2020? Who will be the neighbors of Christians, and what issues will they be facing together? Here we summarize the key findings from the full report, which is available for PDF download at [www.globalchristianity.org/globalcontext](http://www.globalchristianity.org/globalcontext).

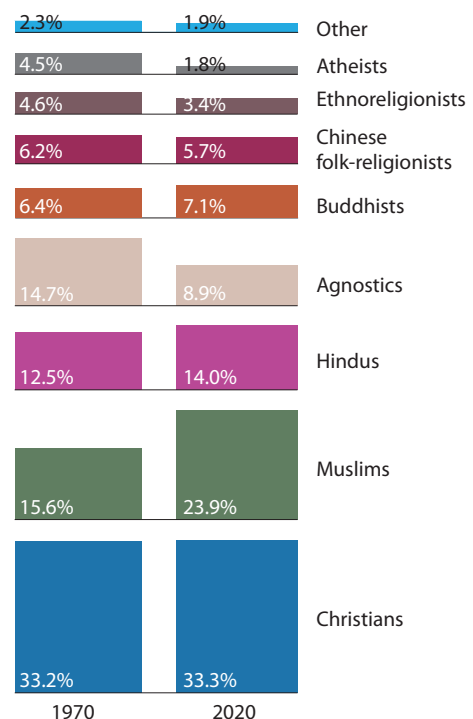
*Christianity in its Global Context* presents global data on the demographics of world religions, providing evidence for the continued resurgence of religion into the twenty-first century. It covers global Christianity, including Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism, and offers projections for where growth of all major Christian traditions is most likely to occur in the future. The bulk of the report details the Christian, religious, and social contexts of each of the 21 United Nations (UN) regions and what changes have occurred or will likely occur from 1970 to 2020, with discussions of key social issues that are putting pressure on residents in each region, particularly those currently being addressed by the UN Millennium Development Goals. The sections on social issues do not include every issue facing a particular region, but instead choose one of particular importance to highlight. The "Mission and Society" section of the report details the status of the worldwide missionary movement, including personal contact between Christians and other religionists around the globe, the status of unreached people groups, and the religious demographics of international migrants.

## Key findings

### A religious world

For the period 1970–2020, several global trends related to religious affiliation are apparent. In 1970, nearly 82% of the world's population was religious. By 2010 this had grown to around 88%, with a projected increase to almost 90% by 2020. Religious adherence is growing largely due to the continuing resurgence of religion in China. In addition, in 1970 Christianity and Islam represented 48.8% of the global population; by 2020 they will likely represent 57.2%. The global North is becoming more religiously diverse, with more countries becoming home to a greater number of the world's religions. However, religious diversity is decreasing in many countries in the global South with the growth of mainly one religion, most commonly Christianity or Islam.

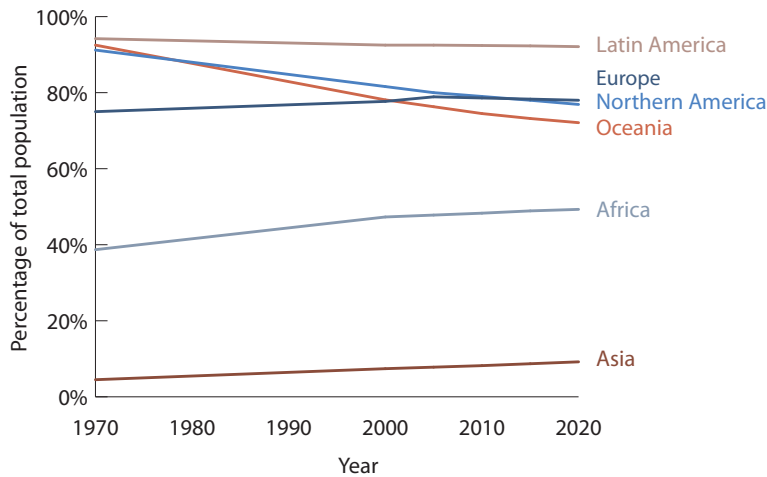
### Religious adherents, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Shift of Christianity to the South

Christians by continent, 1970–2020



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The twentieth century experienced the great shift of Christianity to the global South, a trend that will continue into the future. In 1970, 41.3% of all Christians were from Africa, Asia, or Latin America. By 2020, this figure is expected to be 64.7%. Between 1970 and 2020, each of the six major Christian traditions is expected to grow more rapidly than the general population in the global South. Simultaneously, Christianity is declining as a percentage of the population in the global North at a dramatic rate. Birth rates in many European countries in particular are below replacement level, and populations are aging. The significance of the global shift was recently demonstrated in the election of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, as Pope Francis, the first Latin American head of the Roman Catholic Church.

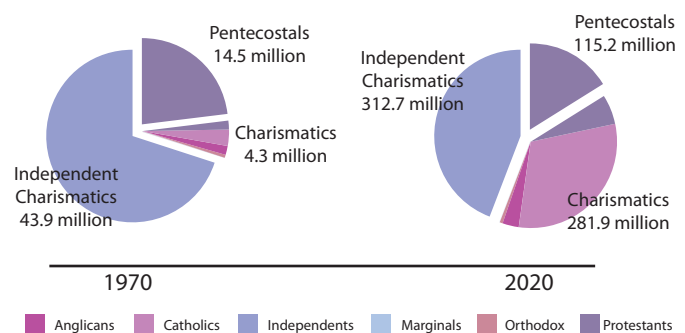
## Regional changes in Christianity

Christianity is expected to grow as a proportion of Africa's population, from 143 million in 1970 (38.7% of the continent's population), to 630 million by 2020 (49.3%, see table on page 7). In Asia, Christianity is growing more than twice as fast as the general population, mostly through conversions, though it is still a minority religion there (only 8.2% in 2010). In Europe, Latin America, and Northern America Christianity is declining as a percentage of the population. Latin American Christians, however, represent an increasing share of the global Christian population, up from 22.0% in 1970 to 23.5% by 2020, and Evangelical and Renewalist Christianity is growing rapidly there. In Europe, individuals are increasingly leaving the faith, mainly to agnosticism and atheism, and many European countries have rapidly aging populations and birth rates below replacement level. A new trend in Northern America is the rise of the unaffiliated (those who would check "none of the above" on a survey about religion), both religious and non-religious. The internal makeup of Christianity in Oceania is expected to change due to secularization, missionary efforts, and immigration, with increasing Orthodox, Marginal, and Independent communities.

## Growing Renewalist movements

Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are best conceptualized as part of a single, interconnected set of movements (together called "Renewalists") of three distinct types (Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Independent Charismatics). Renewalists numbered 62.7 million in 1970 and are expected to grow to 709.8 million by 2020. In 1970, Renewalists were 5.1% of all Christians, but by 2010 they had grown to 25.8% (averaging 4.1% growth per year between 1970 and 2010). Looking forward to 2020, it is expected that Renewalist movements will grow almost twice as fast as global Christian-

Renewalists by type and tradition, 1970 & 2020



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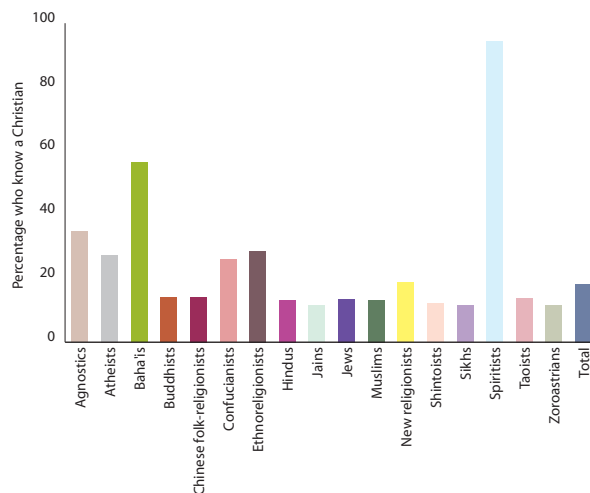


ity as a whole, to represent 27.8% of all Christians. Renewalists grew the fastest in Asia and Latin America over the 40-year period and will grow most rapidly in Asia and Africa over the 10-year period. The growth of Renewalist Christianity in these three areas has been astounding: from 18.8 million in 1970 to 226.2 million by 2020 in Africa, from 12.8 million to 203.1 million in Latin America, and from 9.3 million to 165.6 million in Asia.

## Personal contact with Christians

The data on personal contact have their origins in a simple concept: proximity. The countries in which there is least personal contact between religionists are overwhelmingly Muslim-majority countries. On a regional basis, only 10% of individuals in Western Asia and 11% in Northern Africa are thought to have personal contact with a Christian. Atheists and agnostics have more contact with Christians than do most other religionists. In one sense this is not surprising, given that many non-religionists, at least in the global North and Latin America, are former Christians. More surprising, however, is that agnostics have less contact with Christians than do atheists. Globally, Muslims have less contact with Christians than do Jews; in some individual regions Muslim contact is much higher than average, while for Jews this is not the case. High levels of contact by atheists and agnostics mask low levels of contact among religious populations in many parts of the world. In Northern America, for example, 80% of other religionists have personal contact with a Christian. Removing atheists and agnostics from the calculation reduces the figure to only 40%. The decline is even greater in Northern Europe, from 82% to 21%. However, more religious people know a Christian in Western Africa (24%) than is true for any region in Europe.

Religionists who know a Christian, 2010



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Christianity in its Global Context, June 2013

## Mission and social justice

In a twenty-first-century context, an increasing number of Christians are recognizing the need for mission and social justice to go hand-in-hand. As a result, this report presents findings concerning both, including missionaries sent and received, peoples in migration, slum dwellers, and global poverty. Countries of the global South are sending increasing numbers of international missionaries, and countries of the global North are receiving increasing numbers of missionaries. Among key social issues, the poorest children have made the slowest progress in terms of improved nutrition, and hunger remains a global challenge. Between 2006 and 2009, 850 million people around the world still lived in hunger, 15.5% of the world's population. Even though extreme poverty has decreased, progress has been slow in reducing child malnutrition. In 2010, nearly one in five children globally was underweight, including one third of children in Southern Asia. Each of the major Christian traditions has over time developed strong theological foundations for social action and is actively engaged today. Current efforts tend to dovetail with those initiated by the United Nations and individual governments.

*Christianity in its Global Context, 1970–2020: Society, Religion, and Mission* illustrates that fundamental shifts in the demographics of global Christianity and religion are continuing into the twenty-first century. The percentage of Christians from the global South is still increasing, but the personal contact gap between Christians and non-Christians continues to be very wide. Christians are also struggling, along with the entire development community, to address critical social and economic issues. A central problem appears to be uneven resource distribution in a multitude of areas. Christian resources are poorly deployed and not reaching those who could benefit most from them, in terms of both mission and social action. Yet, Christian involvement in spiritual and social transformation has never been greater, and it remains to be seen how effective Christians in both the North and the South will be in carrying out global, integral mission.

## Brief definitions

### Global North/South

In this report, “global North” and “global South” are defined in geopolitical terms according to the United Nations. The global North includes Europe and Northern America, while the global South includes Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania.

### Who is a Christian?

The *World Christian Database* defines “Christians” as “followers of Jesus Christ of all kinds; all traditions and confessions; and all degrees of commitment.” Christians are enumerated in two primary ways: first, from the point of view of the state, society at large, or the general public, such as in government censuses or public opinion polls; and second, from the perspective of the churches, where denominations report membership figures (usually including children).

### Christianity by continent and region, 1970–2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Africa	368,148,000	142,609,000	38.7	1,278,199,000	630,644,000	49.3	3.02
Eastern Africa	111,412,000	55,009,000	49.4	431,818,000	289,235,000	67.0	3.38
Middle Africa	40,750,000	30,113,000	73.9	161,689,000	134,618,000	83.3	3.04
Northern Africa	83,158,000	6,723,000	8.1	231,126,000	10,815,000	4.7	0.96
Southern Africa	25,454,000	19,286,000	75.8	61,187,000	50,361,000	82.3	1.94
Western Africa	107,374,000	31,478,000	29.3	392,379,000	145,614,000	37.1	3.11
Asia	2,134,992,000	95,398,000	4.5	4,565,522,000	420,390,000	9.2	3.01
Eastern Asia	984,073,000	11,449,000	1.2	1,622,681,000	170,953,000	10.5	5.56
South-central Asia	778,833,000	27,222,000	3.5	2,009,512,000	81,374,000	4.1	2.21
South-eastern Asia	285,161,000	50,371,000	17.7	655,941,000	153,217,000	23.4	2.25
Western Asia	86,925,000	6,356,000	7.3	277,388,000	14,847,000	5.4	1.71
Europe	655,881,000	491,756,000	75.0	744,179,000	580,305,000	78.0	0.33
Eastern Europe	276,229,000	158,050,000	57.2	289,166,000	248,098,000	85.8	0.91
Northern Europe	87,351,000	75,752,000	86.7	104,525,000	76,221,000	72.9	0.01
Southern Europe	126,766,000	111,133,000	87.7	158,477,000	129,391,000	81.7	0.30
Western Europe	165,535,000	146,822,000	88.7	192,010,000	126,595,000	65.9	-0.30
Latin America	286,378,000	269,856,000	94.2	652,181,000	600,553,000	92.1	1.61
Caribbean	25,327,000	19,816,000	78.2	44,321,000	37,529,000	84.7	1.29
Central America	69,590,000	67,945,000	97.6	176,389,000	168,540,000	95.6	1.83
South America	191,462,000	182,096,000	95.1	431,471,000	394,484,000	91.4	1.56
Northern America	231,285,000	210,952,000	91.2	374,394,000	288,005,000	76.9	0.62
Oceania	19,506,000	18,037,000	92.5	42,057,000	30,818,000	73.3	1.08
Australia/New Zealand	15,548,000	14,520,000	93.4	30,065,000	19,735,000	65.6	0.62
Melanesia	3,306,000	2,885,000	87.3	10,661,000	9,822,000	92.1	2.48
Micronesia	242,000	231,000	95.5	603,000	561,000	93.1	1.79
Polynesia	409,000	401,000	98.1	728,000	699,000	96.1	1.12
<b>Globe</b>	<b>3,696,189,000</b>	<b>1,228,609,000</b>	<b>33.2</b>	<b>7,656,531,000</b>	<b>2,550,714,000</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>1.47</b>

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Six major Christian traditions

The *World Christian Database* divides global Christianity into six major traditions: Anglicans, Independents, Marginals, Orthodox, Protestants, and Roman Catholics. Marginals include individuals who hold most mainstream Christian doctrines but with significant theological differences from most other people who identify themselves as Christians (such as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Independent movements are those that are separate from historical denominationalist Christianity (the other five traditions), and exist predominantly in Africa and Asia. For more detailed methodological notes, see part V of this report.

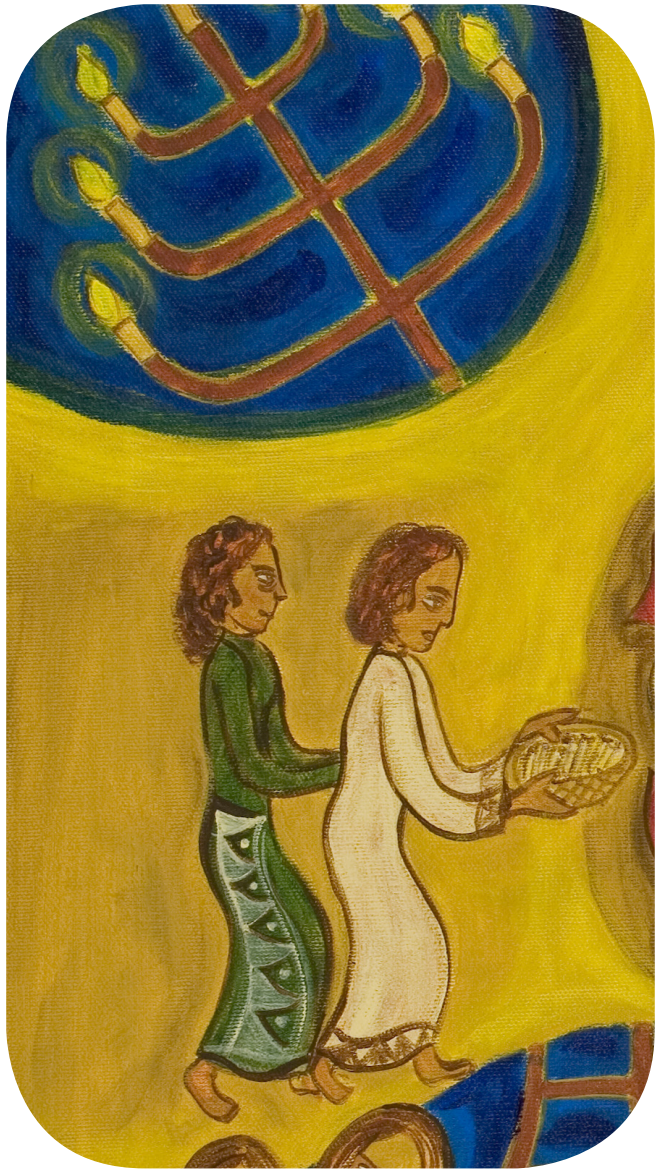
## Religionists

In this report, "religionist" refers to both religious and nonreligious people (agnostics and atheists), except in discussions of personal contact, where "religionists" means the entire population other than Christians. Inherent in data on personal contact is the assumption that all Christians know a Christian, so percentage figures do not include Christians. In addition, "religious" people are defined as people who are adherents of any religion, not including atheists or agnostics.

## Renewalists

Pentecostals are defined here as those who are associated with denominations that identify themselves in explicitly Pentecostal terms, or with other denominations that as a whole are phenomenologically Pentecostal in teaching and practice. Charismatic movements consist of Pentecostal individuals within the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions, designating renewal within an existing tradition. Independent Charismatics are found in churches that have emerged from established Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations and are no longer affiliated with their "home" denomination. Each Renewal movement emphasizes particular gifts of the Spirit to varying degrees, including speaking in tongues and signs and wonders.





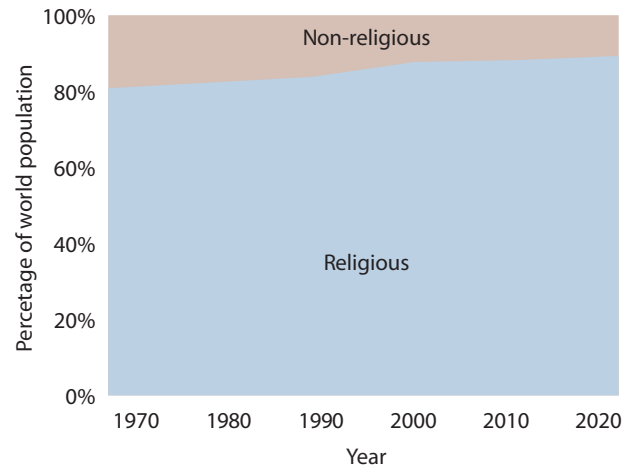
## Part II: Global data

## World religions

Increases and decreases in adherents of the world's religions can be tracked by three sets of empirical population data: (1) births and deaths; (2) converts to and converts from; and (3) immigrants and emigrants. Births, converts to, and immigrants track increases, while deaths, converts from, and emigrants track decreases. Taking into consideration each of these factors for all of the world's major religions allows for a more comprehensive picture of religious change on both the global and local levels. (Migration is considered in more depth in Part IV of this report.)

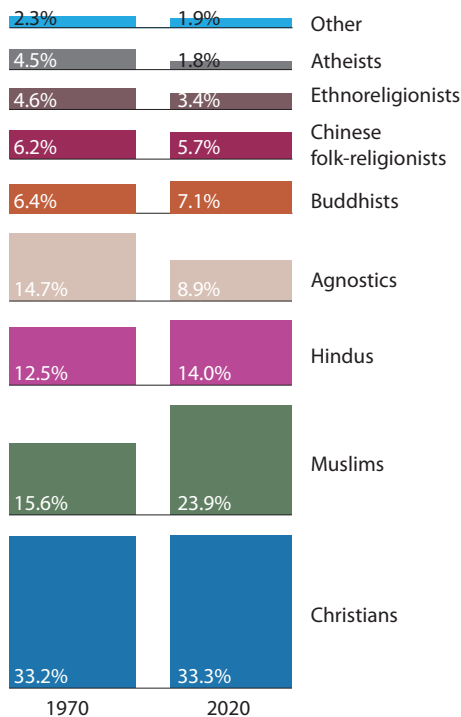
The world in 2010 was more religious than in 1970, and this trend will continue to 2020 and perhaps beyond. The year 1970 was the symbolic height of the world's agnostic and atheist populations, which at that time together claimed 19.2% of the total population (see figure at right). While secularization had been slowly in progress around the world, especially in Europe, the numbers of agnostics and atheists increased greatly under Communism in Eastern Europe and China. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, large numbers of the non-religious returned to religion. One of the most profound examples is Albania, the first officially atheistic state, which in 2010 was 62.7% Muslim and 31.6% Christian. Russia also experienced a resurgence of religion, rising from 38.4% Christian in 1970 to 71.2% in 2010, with a projected increase to 81.2% by 2020 (these gains are being made primarily by the Russian Orthodox Church).

Global religious adherence, 1970–2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

Religious adherents, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

Projections to 2020 indicate a sustained decrease of the global share of the non-religious. This is due primarily to the resurgence of Buddhism, Christianity, and other religions in China, and Christianity in Eastern Europe. If this trend continues, agnostics and atheists will be a smaller portion of the world's population in 2020 than they were in 2010. Although the number of atheists and agnostics continues to rise in the Western world, the current growth of a variety of religions in China in particular (where the vast majority of the non-religious live today) suggests continued future demographic growth of religion. From the point of view of 1970–2010, there has been a global religious resurgence, and it seems likely to continue into the future.

Two religions, Christianity and Islam, dominate religious demographics and seem poised to continue that dominance in the future. In 1970 these two religions represented 48.8% of the global population, and by 2020 they will likely represent 57.2%. While both Christianity and Islam are flourishing in sub-Saharan Africa, present data suggest that neither faith is likely to expand as rapidly in this region in the years ahead as it did in the twentieth century (except possibly through natural population growth) as the pool of converts, primarily from ethnoreligions, becomes proportionally smaller. However, though Muslim birth rates have fallen significantly in Muslim-majority countries since 1990, Muslims generally report much higher birth rates than non-Muslims. Due to

high fertility rates in the past, a large number of Muslim youth are now entering their child-bearing years, causing the demographic momentum to continue into the future. Birth rates among Christians are diverse, given falling rates among Europeans and relatively high rates among Africans.

The table below allows for comparisons of projected religious growth rates from 2010–20. The fastest-growing religions over the 10-year period are likely to be the Baha'i faith (1.7% per annum), Islam (1.6%), Sikhism (1.4%), Jainism (1.3%), Christianity (1.2%), and Hinduism (1.2%). Each of these is growing faster than the world's population (1.1%). Only Zoroastrians are projected to experience net losses in their numbers of adherents over the same period. Zoroastrianism is not typically a proselytizing religion, and thus it has little opportunity to receive converts. Birth rates among Zoroastrians are also particularly low.

South-central Asia is an area of particular interest looking forward to 2020. Significantly, this region includes the countries forecast to have very large populations globally of both Muslims and Hindus in 2020 (Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India). The addition of millions more Hindus and Muslims is likely to compound social, economic, and religious pressures in a region already simmering from longstanding inter-communal tensions. A new generation of peacemakers at local, national, and regional levels will be challenged to bridge the divide between these religious communities.

Foundational to the reality of a changing religious landscape are the increases and decreases in religious diversity in the world's countries and regions. An increase in religious diversity also will be particularly apparent in the global North, where secularization and immigration will continue to transform the religious landscape. In the global South, however, many countries will continue to see growth mainly in one religion, most likely Christianity or Islam, thus decreasing overall diversity.

### Major world religions, 1970–2020

Religion	1970		2010		2020		Rate* 1970–2020	Rate* 2010–20
	Adherents	%	Adherents	%	Adherents	%		
Christians	1,228,609,000	33.2	2,262,586,000	32.8	2,550,714,000	33.3	1.47	1.21
Muslims	577,228,000	15.6	1,552,330,000	22.5	1,827,063,000	23.9	2.33	1.64
Hindus	463,216,000	12.5	948,950,000	13.8	1,069,971,000	14.0	1.69	1.21
Agnostics	542,632,000	14.7	676,535,000	9.8	677,676,000	8.9	0.45	0.02
Buddhists	235,094,000	6.4	494,894,000	7.2	540,204,000	7.1	1.68	0.88
Chinese folk-religionists	227,822,000	6.2	434,576,000	6.3	435,458,000	5.7	1.30	0.02
Ethnoreligionists	169,276,000	4.6	242,516,000	3.5	262,010,000	3.4	0.88	0.78
Atheists	165,506,000	4.5	136,582,000	2.0	136,685,000	1.8	-0.38	0.01
New religionists	39,382,000	1.1	63,005,000	0.9	64,463,000	0.8	0.99	0.23
Sikhs	10,678,000	0.3	24,056,000	0.4	27,508,000	0.4	1.91	1.35
Spiritists	4,658,000	0.1	13,703,000	0.2	14,845,000	0.2	2.35	0.80
Jews	15,009,000	0.4	13,954,000	0.2	14,763,000	0.2	-0.03	0.56
Daoists	1,734,000	0.1	8,429,000	0.1	9,068,000	0.1	3.36	0.73
Baha'is	2,657,000	0.1	7,305,000	0.1	8,610,000	0.1	2.38	1.66
Confucianists	5,759,000	0.2	8,131,000	0.1	8,382,000	0.1	0.75	0.30
Jains	2,629,000	0.1	5,378,000	0.1	6,131,000	0.1	1.71	1.32
Shintoists	4,175,000	0.1	2,761,000	0.0	2,787,000	0.0	-0.81	0.09
Zoroastrians	125,000	0.0	197,000	0.0	192,000	0.0	0.87	-0.09
<b>Total population</b>	<b>3,696,189,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,895,889,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7,656,531,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>1.05</b>

\*Rate = average annual growth rate, percent per year indicated



## Global Christianity

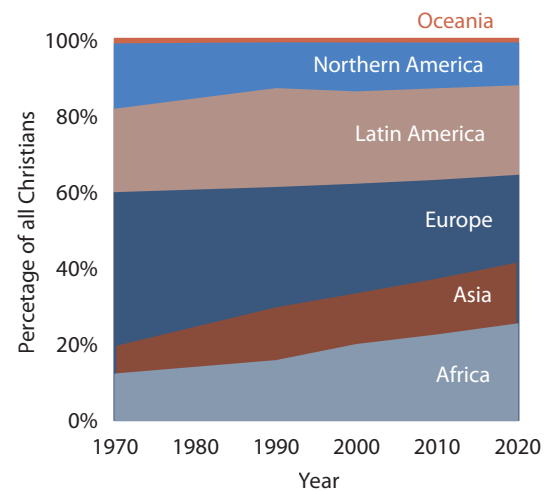
In 1910, over 80% of the world's Christians lived in the global North. By 1970 Christians could be found in all of the world's countries, but their distribution among countries and regions was still far from even. The global South was home to 76% of the world's total population in 1970 but only 43% of all Christians. By 2010 the figure for each had risen, but the gap between them had narrowed: 84% of all people, and 59% of all Christians, lived in the global South. Those percentages are expected to increase to 85% of all people and 66% of all Christians by 2020. The figures would be even higher if not for emigration from the South to the North.

### Continental perspective

Looking at the world by continents and regions gives a better picture of the changes that have taken place. In 1970 Europe was home to 40.0% of all Christians, almost as many as in the entire global South (see graph above). By 2010 Europe's share had fallen to 25.7% due to secularization there as well as growth by conversions and births in the global South. In addition, the line graph below illustrates the changing concentrations of Christians in each of the continents, with Africa and Asia rising and Northern America, Europe, Latin America, and Oceania declining.

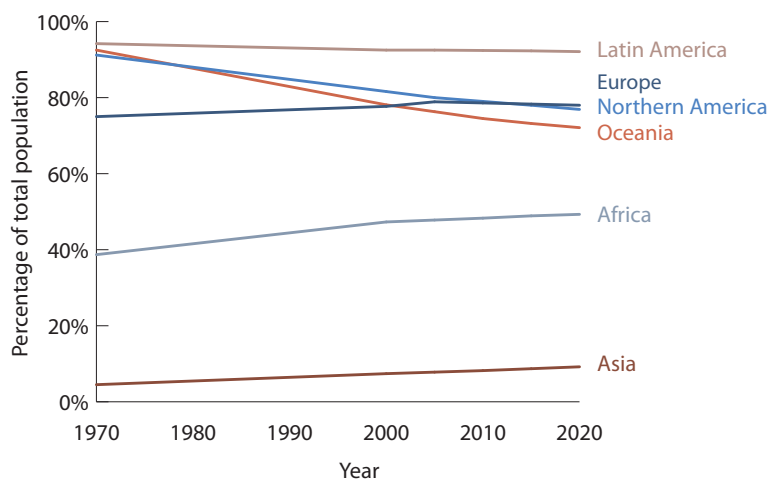
Although Europe still claimed the largest share of Christians of any continent, it was much closer to the shares of all Christians found in Latin America (24.1%, up from 22.0% in 1970) and in Africa (21.8%, nearly double its 11.6% share in 1970). Due to the continued growth of Christianity in Africa, the share of all Christians living on that continent is expected to rise to 24.7% by 2020, surpassing that of both Latin America (23.5%) and Europe (22.8%). Asia has also seen its share of all Christians nearly double, from 7.8% in 1970 to 15.2% in 2010 and a projected 16.6% in 2020. Northern America, meanwhile, has seen its share fall from 17.2% in 1970 to 12.0% in 2010 (and an expected 11.3% by 2020).

Christian distribution by continent, 1970–2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

Christian concentration by continent, 1970–2020



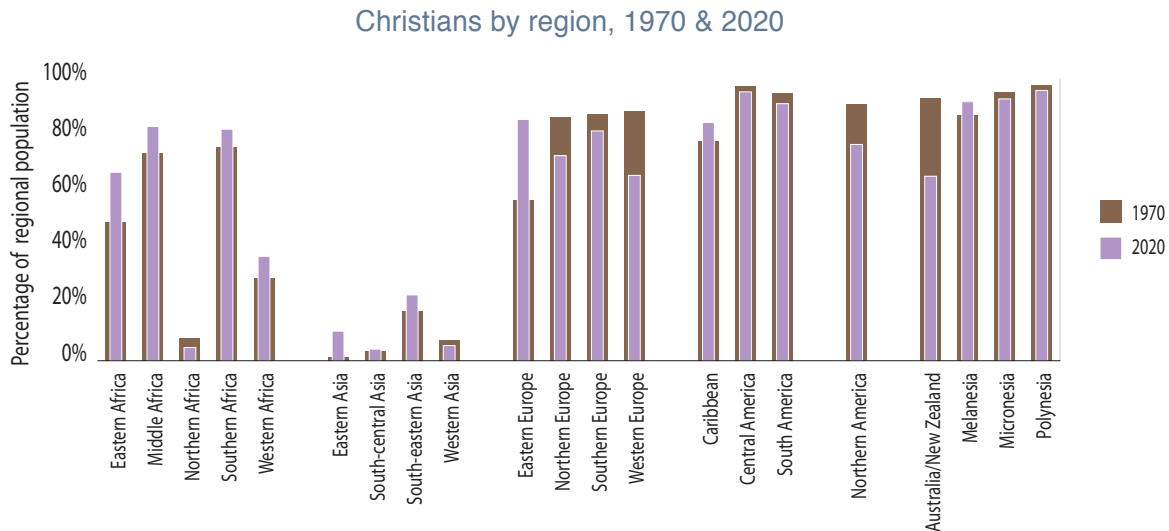
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### Regional perspective

When the figures are viewed at the regional level, a slightly different picture emerges (see table on page 7). In 1970 Northern America had more Christians (17.2% of the global total) than any other United Nations region, followed by South America (14.8%). The four regions of Europe, ranging from Eastern Europe's 12.9% down to Northern Europe's 6.2%, ranked next largest. By 2010, however, South America (16.0%) had surpassed Northern America (12.0%) as the region with the largest share of all Christians. The growth of Christianity in Eastern Africa meant that that region had a larger share of all Christians (9.8%, up from 4.5% in 1970) than any European region except Eastern Europe (11.0%). South-eastern Asia's

share (5.8%) now equaled that of Western Europe, while Eastern Asia's (5.6%) equaled Southern Europe's. In 2020, South America is expected to still have the largest share of Christians among regions, although it will have dropped slightly, to 15.5%. Eastern Africa, however, will surpass Northern America as home to the second-largest Christian population (both with approximately 11.3% of all Christians).

The graph belows illustrates that eleven of the world's 21 regions will have lower overall percentages of Christians in 2020 than in 1970. This is the case primarily in the global North and Oceania.



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## Country perspective

Looking at the data on the country level gives an even better picture of the increasing spread of Christians around the world. In 1970 the ten countries with the largest Christian populations were home to 53.5% of all Christians globally. Seven of those ten countries were in the global North (the exceptions were Brazil, Mexico, and the Philippines). By 2010 only four of the ten countries with the most Christians were in the North. The percentage of Christians in these ten countries (not the same countries as in 1970) had fallen to 48.3%, indicating that Christians were more widely distributed in 2010 than in 1970. By 2020 only two countries from the global North (the United States and Russia) will be in the “top ten”—whose share of all Christians will have risen to 48.8% because of growing Christian populations in China and India, the world's two most populous countries.

### Countries with the most Christians, 1970–2020

1970			2010			2020		
Country	Christians	%*	Country	Christians	%*	Country	Christians	%*
1 United States	190,323,000	90.9	United States	248,544,000	80.1	United States	263,344,000	78.1
2 Brazil	91,490,000	95.2	Brazil	177,337,000	91.0	Brazil	190,404,000	90.5
3 Germany	70,112,000	89.7	Russia	116,125,000	81.2	China	147,529,000	10.6
4 Mexico	50,458,000	97.3	Mexico	108,721,000	95.9	Mexico	120,260,000	95.5
5 Russia	50,000,000	38.4	China	106,485,000	7.9	Russia	118,286,000	83.9
6 United Kingdom	49,307,000	88.6	Philippines	84,742,000	90.9	Philippines	99,614,000	90.8
7 Italy	47,100,000	88.3	Nigeria	73,588,000	46.5	Nigeria	95,695,000	46.9
8 France	42,564,000	83.9	DR Congo	62,673,000	95.0	DR Congo	80,919,000	95.1
9 Philippines	33,254,000	93.8	Germany	57,705,000	70.1	India	67,356,000	4.9
10 Spain	33,792,000	97.7	India	57,271,000	4.7	Ethiopia	60,754,000	60.1

\*% = Percent of country population

Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

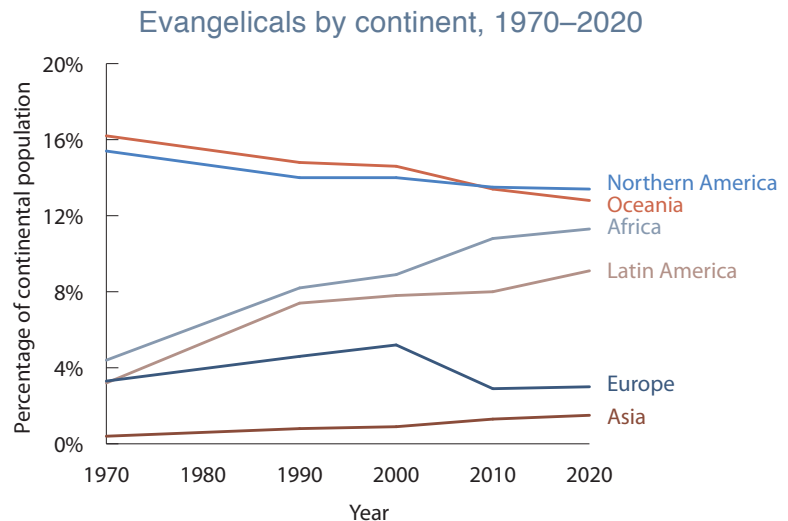
## Evangelicals

What exactly defines a Christian as an Evangelical, and how many are there in the world today? This analysis details two working definitions of the term found in the *World Christian Database* (WCD; Brill, 2007) and *Operation World* (OW; Biblica, 2010) and specifies how these definitions result in differing estimates. The WCD and OW are the only two sources that report on Evangelicalism as a *global* movement, taking into consideration regional research, in particular surveys and polls.

### World Christian Database

The *World Christian Database* (WCD) is an online resource based on the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Oxford University Press, 1982, 2001) and *World Christian Trends* (William Carey Library, 2001). Data for the WCD are constantly gathered, analyzed, and updated by full-time staff at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (South Hamilton, MA, USA).

The WCD currently uses a “structural” approach in defining Evangelicals: Evangelicalism is a movement, primarily within Protestantism, consisting of all affiliated church members self-identifying as Evangelicals. Christians are also considered Evangelicals when they are members of an Evangelical church, congregation, or denomination. Characteristics of Evangelicals include personalized religion (including being “born again”), dependence on the Bible as the word of God, and regular preaching and/or evangelism. This structural approach leads the WCD to claim that there are 706 Evangelical denominations worldwide with a total of around 300 million adherents in 2010.



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### Operation World

Since 1964 there have been seven editions of *Operation World* (OW), with the most recent edition released in October 2010. Begun by Patrick Johnstone and currently continued by Molly Wall, *Operation World* is an easy-to-read, accessible resource intended primarily for missionaries and missions-minded laypeople (that is to say, Evangelicals).

*Operation World*'s philosophy of defining and counting Evangelicals focuses on the theology of Evangelicalism in defining adherents, not so much the structure or experience of believers (as in the case of the WCD). Evangelicals are largely Protestant, Independent or Anglican, but some are Catholic or Orthodox. OW defines Evangelicals as affiliated church members who hold to four qualities: grounded belief in the crucified Christ, an experience of a personal conversion, theological foundation in the Bible as the word of God, and active missionary evangelism or preaching of the gospel.

Similar to the *World Christian Database*, the editors of OW calculate the number of Evangelicals by assessing denominations. The editors look at each denomination and determine what percentage of that group is similar in theology and practice to their definition of “Evangelical.” While many denominations would be considered 100% Evangelical by both the WCD and OW, numerous others do not meet the stricter self-definition criterion of the WCD. These would be assigned a higher Evangelical percentage by the editors of OW.

Using this method, OW states that there were about 550 million Evangelicals worldwide in 2010.



## Comparing the numbers

The difference between the *OW* and *WCD* definitions lies largely in that *OW* uses a theological measuring stick when enumerating Evangelicals. The *WCD* is rooted in similar denominational data but follows a structural definition. The *WCD* defines particular denominations as Evangelical, therefore considering all members on the rolls of those denominations' churches Evangelical Christians (these denominations typically have historical ties to the Reformation). *OW*'s theologically-based estimate of 550 million Evangelicals is significantly higher than the *WCD*'s structural estimate of 300 million.

These two authoritative sources illustrate that counting Evangelical Christians results in a range of estimates. It can be difficult to compare the estimates since they are generated from different definitions, methodologies, and categories. Evangelicalism is not a monochromatic phenomenon, despite many similarities in theology and experience. Nonetheless, it can likely be generally agreed that there were between 300 and 500 million Evangelicals in the world in 2010.

On the global level, Evangelicalism is expected to sustain substantial growth looking forward to 2020 (around 2% per annum). *Operation World* cites Evangelicalism as growing much faster between 1970 and 2020 (3.3%) than the *World Christian Database* (2.6%). However, over the ten-year period between 2010 and 2020, *OW* has the movement growing more slowly than the *WCD*, 1.8% compared to 2.0% per year. Both sources report Evangelicalism growing the fastest in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, with around 4% growth per year. Northern America is the continent with the highest Evangelical percentage of the total population in both 2010 and 2020. Despite the historic home of Evangelicalism being in Europe, that continent has far fewer Evangelicals than Africa, Asia, Northern America, and Latin America in terms of both hard numbers and percentage (and fewer in terms of percentage than Oceania) in 2010 and 2020.

### World Christian Database Evangelicals, 1970–2020

Region	1970		2010		2020		Rate** 1970–2020	Rate** 2010–20
	Evangelicals	%*	Evangelicals	%*	Evangelicals	%*		
Africa	16,363,000	4.4	110,526,000	10.8	144,814,000	11.3	4.46	2.74
Asia	9,145,000	0.4	54,787,000	1.3	67,247,000	1.5	4.07	2.07
Europe	21,420,000	3.3	21,404,000	2.9	22,140,000	3.0	0.07	0.34
Latin America	9,245,000	3.2	47,201,000	8.0	59,576,000	9.1	3.80	2.36
Northern America	35,716,000	15.4	46,664,000	13.5	50,324,000	13.4	0.69	0.76
Oceania	3,155,000	16.2	4,899,000	13.4	5,393,000	12.8	1.08	0.96
<b>Global total</b>	<b>95,044,000</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>285,481,000</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>349,494,000</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.04</b>

\*% = Percent of continental population

\*\*Rate = average annual growth rate, percent per year indicated

Source: Todd M. Johnson, ed., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed February 2013)  
Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Operation World Evangelicals, 1970–2020

Region	1970		2010		2020		Rate** 1970–2020	Rate** 2010–20
	Evangelicals	%*	Evangelicals	%*	Evangelicals	%*		
Africa	24,435,000	6.7	182,442,000	17.7	237,919,000	18.6	4.55	2.65
Asia	14,811,000	0.7	146,854,000	3.5	172,680,000	3.8	4.91	1.62
Europe	14,320,000	2.2	18,342,000	2.5	18,917,000	2.6	0.56	0.38
Latin America	13,259,000	4.6	97,482,000	16.6	115,238,000	17.8	4.32	1.67
Northern America	55,871,000	24.2	94,385,000	26.8	101,685,000	26.5	1.20	0.74
Oceania	3,555,000	18.1	6,382,000	17.8	7,243,000	18.0	1.42	1.27
<b>Global total</b>	<b>126,251,000</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>545,887,000</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>653,682,000</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>1.80</b>

\*% = Percent of continental population

\*\*Rate = average annual growth rate, percent per year indicated

Source: *Operation World* research office; correspondence with Molly Wall, April 2013  
Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

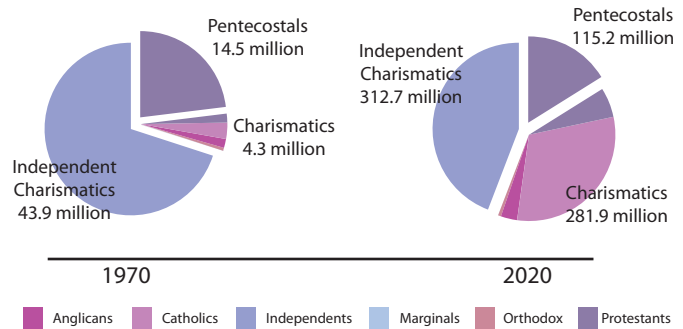
## Pentecostals

Pentecostals and Charismatics are best conceptualized as a single, interconnected set of movements (termed “Renewalists”). However, the movement can be considered in a series of three types.

### Pentecostals (Type 1)

Pentecostals are defined here as those who are associated with denominations that identify themselves in explicitly Pentecostal terms, or with other denominations that as a whole are phenomenologically Pentecostal in teaching and practice. Pentecostal denominations believe that all Christians should seek a post-conversion religious experience called “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” and that a Spirit-baptized believer may receive one or more of the supernatural gifts known in the early church, especially speaking in tongues.

Renewalists by type and tradition, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Pentecostals (Type 1), 1970–2020

	1970		2010		2020		Rate** 1970–2020	Rate** 2010–20
	Pentecostals	%*	Pentecostals	%*	Pentecostals	%*		
Pentecostals (Type 1)	14,475,000	23.1	91,825,000	15.7	115,200,000	16.2	4.7	2.0
Classical	13,537,000	21.6	89,133,000	15.3	112,000,000	15.8	4.8	2.0
Oneness	938,000	1.5	2,692,000	0.5	3,200,000	0.5	2.7	2.0

\*% = Percentage of continental population

\*\*Rate = average annual growth rate, percent per year indicated

Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Charismatics (Type 2)

Type 2 recognizes the existence of Pentecostal individuals within the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions. These are designated “Charismatic” and evaluated by country as Catholic Charismatics, Anglican Charismatics, and so on, designating renewal within an existing tradition. Charismatics usually describe themselves as having been “renewed in the Spirit,” a powerful supernatural event. They remain and form organized renewal groups within their older mainline non-Pentecostal denominations rather than leaving to join Pentecostal denominations. Like Pentecostals, they report some or all of the gifts of the Spirit, including signs and wonders, but with speaking in tongues regarded as optional.

### Charismatics (Type 2), 1970–2020

	1970		2010		2020		Rate** 1970–2020	Rate** 2010–20
	Charismatics	%*	Charismatics	%*	Charismatics	%*		
Charismatics (Type 2)	4,334,600	6.9	234,222,000	40.2	281,924,000	39.7	10.5	1.9
Anglican	967,000	1.5	18,648,000	3.2	22,000,000	3.1	7.7	1.7
Catholic	2,001,400	3.2	176,551,000	30.3	215,500,000	30.4	11.9	2.0
Protestant	1,027,000	1.6	34,824,000	6.0	40,000,000	5.6	9.2	1.4
Orthodox	339,000	0.5	4,179,000	0.7	4,400,000	0.6	6.5	0.5
Marginal	200	0.0	20,000	0.0	24,000	0.0	12.2	1.8

\*% = Percentage of continental population

\*\*Rate = average annual growth rate, percent per year indicated

Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Independent Charismatics (Type 3)

Thousands of schismatic or other independent Charismatic churches have emerged from established Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations; these independents now number more than either of the first two

types. They consist of Christians who, unrelated to or no longer affiliated with the Pentecostal or Charismatic denominations, exercise gifts of the Spirit (with much less emphasis on tongues) and emphasize signs and wonders. They do not identify themselves as either Pentecostals (Type 1) or Charismatics (Type 2).

### Independent Charismatics (Type 3), 1970–2020

	1970		2010		2020		Rate**	Rate**
	Independent Charismatics	%*	Independent Charismatics	%*	Independent Charismatics	%*	1970–2020	2010–20
Independent Charismatics (Type 3)	43,875,400	70.0	257,161,000	44.1	312,704,000	44.1	4.5	2.0
Apostolic	4,789,000	7.6	32,834,000	5.6	39,200,000	6.0	4.9	2.0
Charismatic	7,491,000	12.0	70,168,000	12.0	90,000,000	13.0	5.8	3.0
Deliverance	25,000	.00	515,000	0.1	670,000	0.0	7.9	3.0
Full Gospel	937,000	1.5	6,714,000	1.2	8,300,000	1.2	5.0	2.0
Hidden non-Christian believers in Christ	110,000	0.2	425,000	0.1	484,000	0.1	3.4	1.3
Individuals in non-Charismatic networks	7,836,400	12.5	40,693,000	7.0	51,800,000	7.3	4.2	2.4
Media	2,464,000	3.9	1,042,000	0.2	1,300,000	0.2	-2.1	2.0
Non-traditional, house, cell	537,000	0.9	6,020,000	1.0	7,400,000	1.0	6.2	2.0
Oneness	2,394,000	3.8	11,823,000	2.0	13,500,000	2.0	4.1	1.0
Pentecostal	16,154,000	25.8	75,515,000	12.9	87,150,000	12	3.9	1.0
Word of Faith	104,000	0.2	3,099,000	0.5	3,900,000	0.5	8.9	2.0
Zion	1,034,000	1.6	8,313,000	1.4	9,000,000	1.3	5.3	0.8

\*% = Percentage of continental population

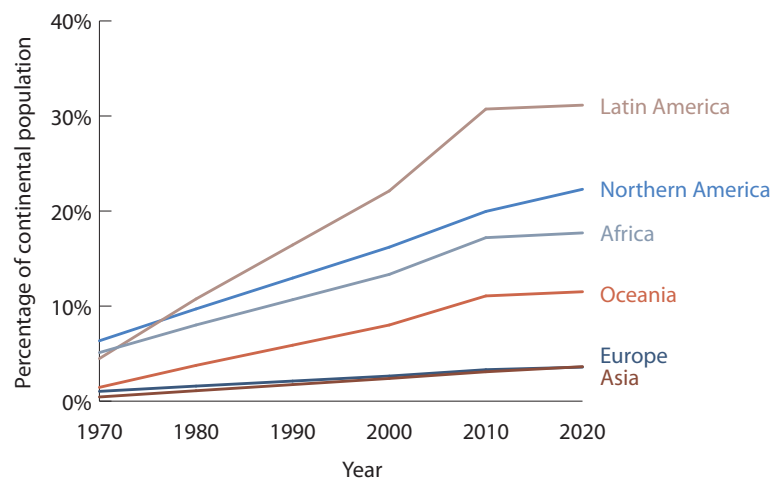
\*\*Rate = average annual growth rate, percent per year indicated

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### Global demographics

Over the period 1970–2010 Renewalist movements grew at nearly four times the growth rates of both Christianity and the world's population. Looking forward to 2020, they are expected to grow almost twice as fast as both. In 2010, Renewalists made up over one quarter of all Christians worldwide; this percentage will continue to increase in the future. In terms of the types of Renewalist movements, Charismatics were the fastest growing over the 40-year period (1970–2010), but Pentecostals will grow faster than the other two types over the 10-year period (2010–20). Renewalists are growing the fastest in Asia and Latin America over the 40-year period, and in Asia and Africa over the 10-year period. In 2020, Latin America will have the highest percentage of Renewalists, followed by Northern America and Africa.

### Renewalists by continent, 1970–2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

In 1970 the three largest Renewalist populations were in the United States, Brazil, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. DR Congo contained a much higher concentration of Pentecostal Christians than any other country (23.8%) due to the growing presence of indigenous African movements with Pentecostal characteristics in the twentieth century. In 2020, the countries with the most Renewalists will likely be Brazil, the United States, China, and Nigeria.

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## Part III: Regional data

# Africa

## Christianity

In 1910, only 9% of Africa's population was Christian, and 80% of Christians lived in just four countries: Ethiopia, South Africa, Egypt, and Madagascar. By 1970 Africa's Christian percentage had risen to 38.7%, many of whom were converts from ethnoreligions in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2010 the Christian percentage was 48.3%, and by 2020 it is expected to reach 49.3%.



Roman Catholics form the largest bloc of Christians in Africa. Between 1970 and 2010 their numbers increased from 44.9 million (12.2% of the population) to 197.0 million (17.3%). In 2010 the Catholic share of church members (34.2%) was lower than in 1970 (38.3%). However, projections for 2020 show an increase to 35.2%. Independents have seen their share of the total population and church members decrease recently, although they are still higher in 2010 than in 1970. The Orthodox share of both has declined steadily since 1970, a trend that is predicted to continue.

Anglicans have seen the fastest growth over the 50-year period: from 7.7 million in 1970 (2.1% of the total population and 8.5% of church members) to 50.8 million in 2010 (5.0% and 13.5%, respectively) and 65.1 million in 2020 (5.1% and 13.5%). Marginal Christian groups are expected to experience the fastest growth for 2010–20.

Nigeria had the largest total populations of four out of the six major Christian traditions in 2010 (Anglicans, Independents, Marginals, and Protestants), up from one (Anglicans) in 1970. Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic Congo remain home to the largest populations of Orthodox and Roman Catholics, respectively.

The countries with the largest percentage of each tradition among the total population remain unchanged over 1970–2020 for four of the traditions (Nigeria for Anglicans and Protestants, Ethiopia for Orthodox, and DR Congo for Roman Catholics). Swaziland is home to the highest percentage of Independents for 2010–20 (versus DR Congo in 1970), whereas DR Congo is expected to replace Zambia as home to the highest percentage of Marginal Christians by 2020.

## Religion

Africa experienced the greatest religious change of any continent over the twentieth century. By 1970 Muslims (40.0%) had replaced ethnoreligionists (20.5%) as the largest group of religious adherents. Ironically, this occurred largely through ethnoreligionists becoming Christians (38.7% of Africa's population by 1970). This pattern—larger numbers of ethnoreligionists converting to Christianity than to Islam—has continued, so that by 2010 Africa was 48.3% Christian, 41.7% Muslim, and 8.7% ethnoreligionist. The Christian percentage is expected to increase slightly by 2020, while the Muslim and ethnoreligionist percentages are

### Christianity in Africa, 1970–2020

Region	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Africa	368,148,000	142,609,000	38.7	1,278,199,000	630,644,000	49.3	3.02
Eastern Africa	111,412,000	55,009,000	49.4	431,818,000	289,235,000	67.0	3.38
Middle Africa	40,750,000	30,113,000	73.9	161,689,000	134,618,000	83.3	3.04
Northern Africa	83,158,000	6,723,000	8.1	231,126,000	10,815,000	4.7	0.96
Southern Africa	25,454,000	19,286,000	75.8	61,187,000	50,361,000	82.3	1.94
Western Africa	107,374,000	31,478,000	29.3	392,379,000	145,614,000	37.1	3.11

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

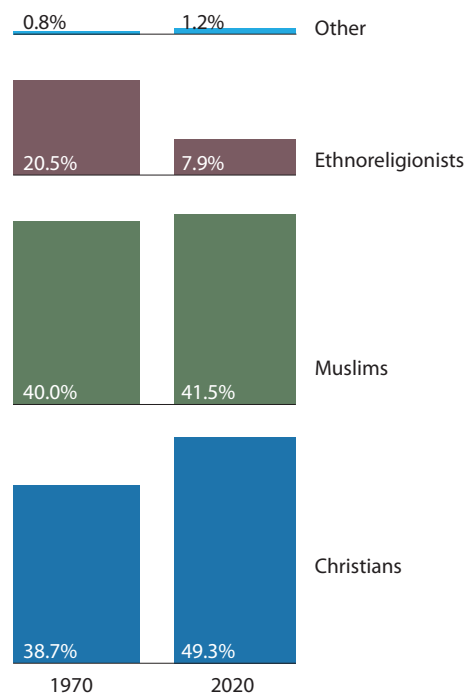
projected to decline slightly.

Sharp regional differences exist in the distribution of religionists in Africa. Eastern Africa was home to 44.7% of Africa's Christians in 2010, up from 38.6% in 1970. This will rise to 45.9% by 2020. Most of the rest lived in Middle and Southern Africa, with Northern Africa home to the fewest (2.1% of the continent's 2010 total). Meanwhile, Northern Africa had 43.7% of Africa's Muslims in 2010, with Western Africa home to another 36.4% (compared to 51.1% and 31.3%, respectively, in 1970 and 40.9% and 38.5% in 2020). Southern Africa has the smallest Muslim population of any region in 2010 (0.2% of Africa's total).

Ethnoreligionists in 2010 were found mostly in Eastern Africa (43.4% of Africa's total) and Western Africa (41.0%), compared to 43.9% and 39.1%, respectively, in 1970, and 44.8% and 40.2%, respectively, in 2020. No other religion claims more than 1% of the continent's population in 2010 (agnostics are closest, at 0.6%; 42.6% of agnostics live in Southern Africa). Hindus, Jews, and Buddhists are concentrated in Southern Africa as well, while most Chinese folk-religionists and Baha'is are in Eastern Africa. Atheists, on the other hand, are surprisingly evenly distributed.

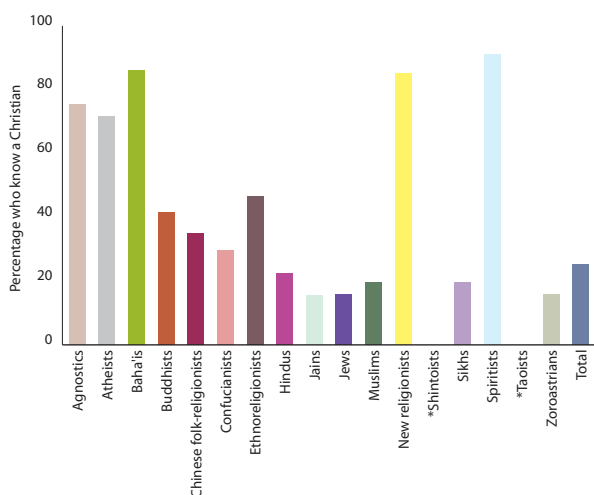
Despite the large proportion of the population in Africa that is Muslim, Muslims have little interaction with Christians compared to other religious adherents. Only 20% of Muslims in Africa personally knew a Christian in 2010, compared to 47% of ethnoreligionists. Many of the smaller religions on the continent, like Baha'is and Buddhists, have more interactions with Christians (86% and 42%, respectively).

### Religious affiliation in Africa, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Religionists in Africa who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Society

Africa is the world's least-developed continent. Although individual countries have made advances toward meeting the Millennium Development Goals—notably Egypt (one of the world's most successful), Burkina Faso, and Morocco—many more have had only limited progress. The continent as a whole has done best in combatting hunger and poverty. Addressing crises related to education, health care (maternal and child mortality; HIV/AIDS), and clean water has been less fruitful.

Religious differences tear at the social fabric of Africa as well. A Muslim-Christian “fault line” of sorts stretches across the continent, and ideological and physical clashes between the two religions seem likely to intensify in the near future.



## Eastern Africa

### Christianity

Eastern Africa experienced a profound transformation of its religious landscape over the twentieth century. By 1970, 49.4% of the region's population was Christian. The Christian proportion of the region's population increased to 65.9% by 2010, and it is projected to reach 67.0% in 2020. At that time Eastern Africa will be home to almost 45% of Africa's Christians (up from about 39% in 1970), including 45% of Protestants, 53% of Anglicans, and 84% of all Orthodox in Africa.



Christians will constitute a majority of the population in 14 of Eastern Africa's 20 countries in 2020 (and a near-majority in a fifteenth, Eritrea), rising from 11 in 1970. The countries in which Christians will constitute the largest share of the population in 2020 are projected to be Seychelles (92.3%, down from 98.3% in 1970), Burundi (93.3%, up from 73.4%), Rwanda (94.2%, up from 61.1%), and Zambia (88.2%, up from 67.0%). In contrast, three are projected to be less than 1% Christian in 2020—Somalia (<0.1%), Comoros (0.5%), and Mayotte (0.5%)—with Djibouti at 1.8%. Each of these has a Muslim majority.

Roman Catholics will continue to be the largest major tradition in the region, increasing from 17.1% of the total regional population in 1970 to 22.3% in 2010 and 23.2% in 2020. Protestants more than doubled their share of the total population between 1970 and 2000 (from 7.0% to 17.5%), replacing Orthodox (whose share rose only slightly, from 10.9% to 11.1%) as the region's second-largest major tradition. The gap is projected to widen further by 2020 (18.6% Protestant versus 10.1% Orthodox). Independents and Anglicans have seen their shares of the total population rise substantially as well (with projected 2020 popula-

### Christianity in Eastern Africa, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	Rate*
Eastern Africa	111,412,000	55,009,000	49.4	431,818,000	289,235,000	67.0	3.38
Burundi	3,513,000	2,579,000	73.4	10,057,000	9,383,000	93.3	2.62
Comoros	238,000	1,500	0.6	933,000	4,500	0.5	2.23
Djibouti	162,000	12,000	7.4	1,066,000	18,700	1.8	0.89
Eritrea	1,847,000	857,000	46.4	6,848,000	3,253,000	47.5	2.70
Ethiopia	28,959,000	15,049,000	52.0	101,046,000	60,754,000	60.1	2.83
Kenya	11,252,000	7,058,000	62.7	52,564,000	43,068,000	81.9	3.68
Madagascar	6,549,000	3,299,000	50.4	27,366,000	16,180,000	59.1	3.23
Malawi	4,531,000	2,665,000	58.8	20,677,000	16,800,000	81.3	3.75
Mauritius	827,000	297,000	35.9	1,361,000	458,000	33.6	0.87
Mayotte	36,800	360	1.0	271,000	1,300	0.5	2.63
Mozambique	9,453,000	2,611,000	27.6	29,177,000	15,566,000	53.4	3.63
Reunion	462,000	446,000	96.6	936,000	817,000	87.2	1.22
Rwanda	3,749,000	2,292,000	61.1	14,042,000	12,964,000	92.3	3.53
Seychelles	51,700	50,800	98.3	89,800	84,600	94.2	1.02
Somalia	3,601,000	4,900	0.1	12,237,000	4,200	0.0	-0.31
South Sudan	3,785,000	858,000	22.7	13,181,000	8,405,000	63.8	4.67
Tanzania	13,605,000	5,007,000	36.8	61,081,000	34,028,000	55.7	3.91
Uganda	9,446,000	6,429,000	68.1	45,424,000	38,310,000	84.3	3.63
Zambia	4,139,000	2,773,000	67.0	17,918,000	15,801,000	88.2	3.54
Zimbabwe	5,206,000	2,719,000	52.2	15,543,000	13,338,000	85.8	3.23

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020



tion shares of 7.5% and 8.0%, up from 3.4% and 2.8% respectively in 1970).

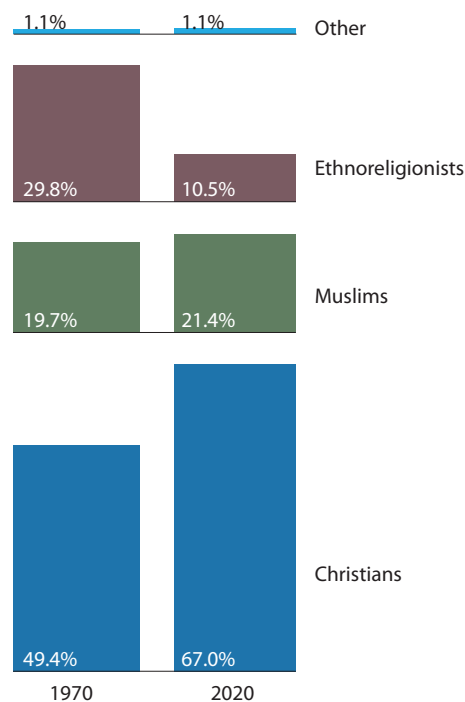
## Religion

The growth of Christianity in Eastern Africa has been mainly at the expense of ethnoreligions. The latter declined from 29.8% of the total population in 1970 to 11.6% in 2010 (placing it third, behind Islam), with a further decline to 10.5% expected by 2020. Although Muslims have experienced numerical growth over the period as well, it has been at a rate closer to that of the general population. As a result, Muslims' share of the total population has risen only slightly, from 19.7% in 1970 to 21.4% in both 2010 and 2020. Though adherents of other religions are increasing in number, their combined share of the region's total population (1.1%) is the same in 2020 as in 1970.

Each of the four countries with a Muslim majority in 2010 is at least 96% Muslim (Comoros, Djibouti, Mayotte, and Somalia). In seven other countries, Muslims constitute at least 10% of the population (including Eritrea, where Christians and Muslims are each about 50% of the total population).

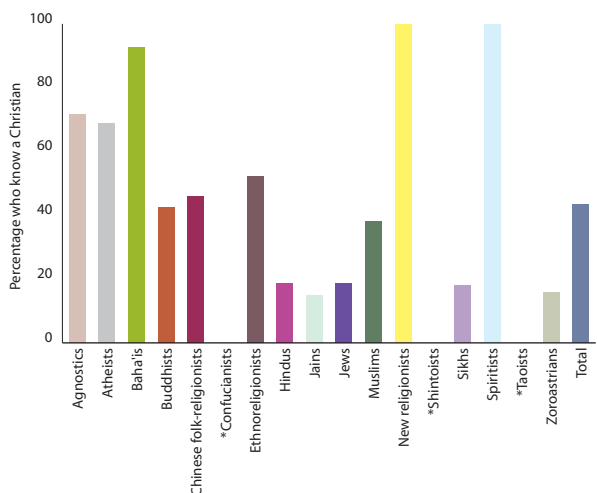
Ethnoreligionists exceeded 10% in only six countries in 2010, down from 12 in 1970. By 2020 they will exceed 10% in only five countries: Madagascar (38.2%), South Sudan (29.6%), Mozambique (28.1%), Zimbabwe (11.9%), and Tanzania (10.9%), although blending of traditional religious beliefs with Christianity is likely to continue. The only other religion having at least 10% adherence in any country is Hinduism in Mauritius (46.2% of the population in 1970, falling to 44.2% in 2010 and 43.6% by 2020). Compared to Africa as a whole, more religionists personally know a Christian in Eastern Africa (43%, compared to the continent's 25%).

## Religious affiliation in Eastern Africa, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Religionists in Eastern Africa who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Society

Despite being home to such large cities as Addis Ababa, Nairobi, and Dar es Salaam, Eastern Africa is the least-urbanized region on the continent. Urban dwellers were only 23.7% of the region's population in 2010, far below both the continent-wide average of 39.9% and Middle Africa (42.9%). In fact, globally, only Melanesia had a lower urban percentage (19.2%).

Countries in the region continue to experience difficulty in meeting many Millennium Development Goals, such as reducing maternal and child mortality, ensuring access to safe drinking water, and combatting malnutrition. How to provide for their growing populations without dependence on external assistance, especially if compounded by additional challenges brought on by urbanization, is likely to be an ongoing challenge for the region.

## Middle Africa

### Christianity

Middle Africa experienced a drastic alteration in its religious make-up during the twentieth century. In 1910 the region was 94.5% ethnoreligionist and only 1.1% Christian. By 1970, however, Christians made up 73.9% of the population, and ethnoreligionists had fallen to 16.9%. This pattern has continued to the present: Christians constituted 82.6% of the region's population in 2010, a figure that is expected to rise to 83.3% in 2020.



Christians formed a majority of the population in eight of the region's nine countries in 2010, ranging from 96.1% in Sao Tome & Principe to 58.1% in Cameroon; they were a minority only in Chad (34.8%). Other countries exceeding 90% Christian were DR Congo (95.0%) and Angola (93.3%). Christian percentages are expected to rise in most countries in the region between 2010 and 2020, with exceptions in Sao Tome & Principe (96.0%, down from 96.1%), Congo (to 89.5% from 89.8%), and Equatorial Guinea (to 88.5% from 88.7%).

Roman Catholics are by far the largest group of Christians in the region, representing 47.0% of the total population in 2010 and 47.5% in 2020, up from 38.3% in 1970. No tradition could claim such a large share of any other African region's total population in the period 1970–2020, although Independents in Southern Africa are approaching it (growing from 19.1% of the total population there in 1970 to 37.3% in 2010 and 37.6% by 2020). Catholics are also the largest Christian tradition in each country in Middle Africa, representing a majority or near majority of Christians. However, their share of church members in the region actually fell somewhat between 1970 and 2010, from 58.0% to 56.4% (rising slightly to 56.5% in 2020), as other Christian groups experienced even more rapid growth. For example, Protestants grew from 7.0% of the total population of Angola in 1970 to 26.7% in 2010 (28.5% in 2020).

### Religion

Muslims currently constitute the second-largest group of religious adherents in the region, growing from 8.6% of the total population in 1970 to 9.7% in 2010 and 9.8% in 2020. They represent a majority of the population in Chad (55.9% in 2010) and sizeable minorities in Cameroon (20.0%), Central African Republic (13.7%), and Equatorial Guinea (10.2%). Ethnoreligionists, meanwhile, declined from 16.9% of the region's population in 1970 to 6.7% in 2010 and are predicted to drop to 5.8% in 2020. Ethnoreligionists exceeded 10% of the population in only two countries in 2010, Cameroon (20.9%) and the Central African Republic

### Christianity in Middle Africa, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Middle Africa	40,750,000	30,113,000	73.9	161,689,000	134,618,000	83.3	3.04
Angola	5,926,000	4,698,000	79.3	24,780,000	23,174,000	93.5	3.24
Cameroon	6,842,000	3,152,000	46.1	24,117,000	14,377,000	59.6	3.08
Central African Republic	1,829,000	1,162,000	63.6	5,343,000	3,955,000	74.0	2.48
Chad	3,656,000	854,000	23.4	14,469,000	5,186,000	35.8	3.67
Congo	1,335,000	1,224,000	91.7	5,003,000	4,477,000	89.5	2.63
DR Congo	20,267,000	18,217,000	89.9	85,054,000	80,919,000	95.1	3.03
Equatorial Guinea	291,000	257,000	88.3	905,000	800,000	88.5	2.30
Gabon	530,000	477,000	90.1	1,818,000	1,538,000	84.6	2.37
Sao Tome & Principe	73,600	71,600	97.2	200,000	192,000	96.0	1.99

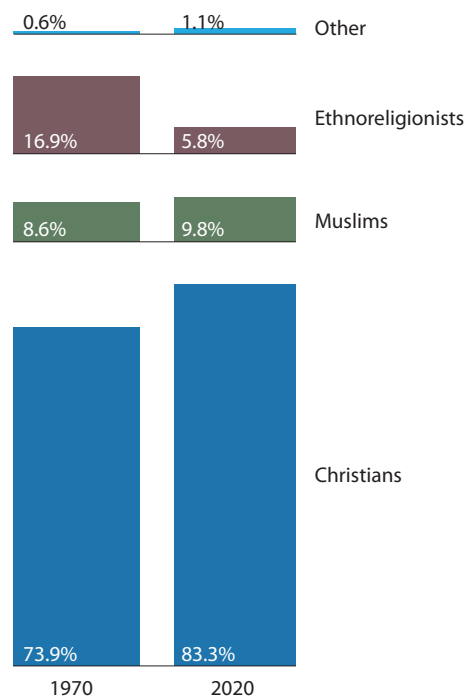
\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

(14.0%). These percentages are expected to continue declining in both countries by 2020 (to 19.1% and 11.2%, respectively), as well as in every other country in the region except Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome & Principe.

Other notable populations of religionists in individual countries include Baha'is in Sao Tome & Principe (up from 0.1% of the total population in 1970 to 2.4% in 2010 and 2.3% in 2020); atheists in Equatorial Guinea (up from 1.0% in 1970 to 1.8% in both 2010 and 2020); and agnostics in Equatorial Guinea, Congo, Gabon, and Sao Tome & Principe. While agnostics' share of the population has held steady in Equatorial Guinea (3.4% in 1970 and 3.3% in 2020), it has increased noticeably in the other countries, especially DR Congo, where it is expected to rise to 3.4% in 2020 (from 0.5% in 1970 and 3.0% in 2010).

Middle Africa is less religiously diverse than other regions in Africa (in terms of the number of religions present). Interestingly, Middle Africa and Eastern Africa have the highest composite levels of personal contact with Christians (43% in each). Greater contact by atheists, agnostics, and ethnoreligionists in Middle Africa makes up for higher levels of contact among other religionists in Eastern Africa.

### Religious affiliation in Middle Africa, 1970 & 2020

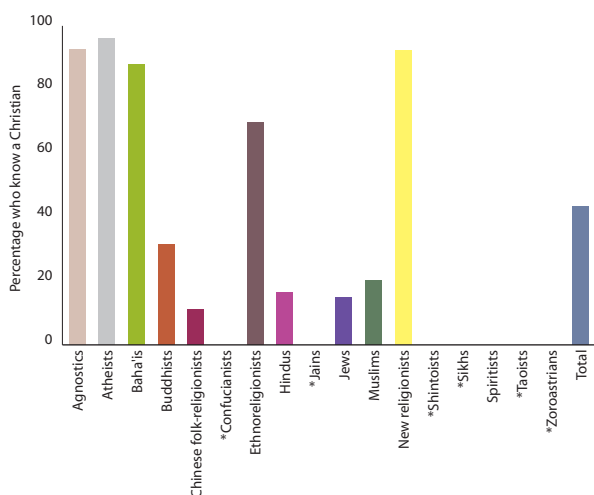


Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Society

Middle Africa is one of the most undeveloped/underdeveloped areas of the world. The United Nations Economic and Social Council classifies six of the region's nine countries as Least Developed Countries based on per capita income, human assets (which encompass many of the criteria assessed in the Millennium Development Goals), and economic vulnerability (which includes heightened susceptibility to natural disasters and changes in trade and exports, as well as sizes and remoteness of populations). Several countries in the region have been among the least successful in meeting the Millennium Development Goals; DR Congo in particular is tied for last place globally.

### Religionists in Middle Africa who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Northern Africa

### Christianity

Northern Africa is the only region in Africa to experience a decline in the percentage of Christians in the population over the period 1970–2020, continuing a trend that dates back to at least the beginning of the twentieth century. The Christian share of the regional population fell from 8.1% in 1970 to 5.2% in 2010 and is predicted to decline to 4.7% in 2020, despite an increase in the actual number of Christians over that period.



Egypt was home to 90% of the region's Christians in 1970. By 2010 that figure had declined to 80%, due mainly to the dramatic increase in the Christian population of Sudan (1.6 million, or 17.2% of the regional total, up from 318,000 and 4.7% in 1970). That figure would be higher if not for conflict-induced migration of Christians from Sudan to South Sudan and elsewhere.

Immigrants and/or expatriates constitute the majority of Christians in Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Western Sahara; they also form a sizeable minority of Christians in Sudan. Egypt has seen the Christian percentage of its population decline steadily, from 16.9% in 1970 to 10.1% in 2010 and a predicted 9.1% in 2020, despite an increase in absolute numbers. The situation is similar in Sudan. In Western Sahara both the number of Christians and the Christian percentage plunged between 1970 and 2010 (from over 31,000 to only 800 and from 41.2% to 0.2%) due to the departure of foreigners following Spanish decolonization. Algeria saw a similar drop, albeit on a much smaller scale. The Christian populations of both countries are showing growth for the period 2010–20; in Tunisia and in Morocco, however, the number of Christians is expected to decline between 2010 and 2020.

In 1970 Orthodox were by far the largest Christian tradition in the region. At almost 6 million adherents (7.1% of the total population and 88% of church members), they outnumbered all other Christian traditions combined. By 2020 their share will be only 72.3%, however, due largely to an increase by Roman Catholics to 12.9% of church members (up from 6.5% in 1970, but down from 13.4% in 2010). Protestants and Anglicans are seeing smaller gains over the period, with the Protestant share showing a continued increase. Roman Catholics are the largest tradition in every country except Algeria (Independents) and Egypt (Orthodox).

### Religion

Islam is the largest religion by far in every country in the region. Over the period 1970–2010 the Muslim population rose in each country, and their percentage share of the total population rose or held steady in

### Christianity in Northern Africa, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Northern Africa	83,158,000	6,723,000	8.1	231,126,000	10,815,000	4.7	0.96
Algeria	13,746,000	101,000	0.7	40,180,000	72,400	0.2	-0.66
Egypt	35,923,000	6,078,000	16.9	94,810,000	8,614,000	9.1	0.70
Libya	1,994,000	58,800	3.0	7,083,000	195,000	2.8	2.43
Morocco	15,310,000	109,000	0.7	35,078,000	30,300	0.1	-2.52
Sudan	10,981,000	318,000	2.9	41,739,000	1,880,000	4.5	3.61
Tunisia	5,127,000	27,300	0.5	11,518,000	22,700	0.2	-0.37
Western Sahara	76,700	31,600	41.2	718,000	900	0.1	-6.87

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020



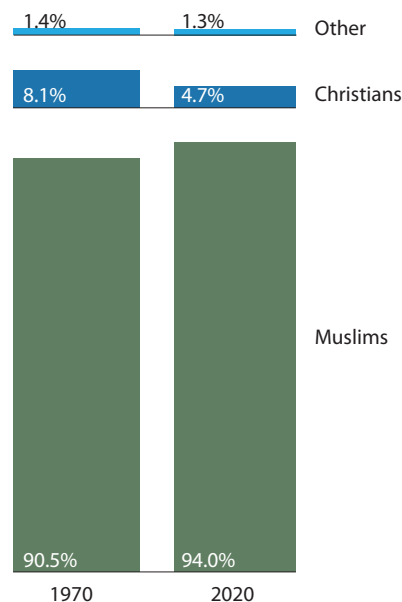
every country except Algeria and Libya. Other than Western Sahara, which experienced massive emigration by non-Muslims, Egypt had the highest Muslim gain in percentage share over the period, from 88.6% in 1970 to 90.7% in 2010. The largest change between 2010 and 2020 will be in Sudan, where the Muslim percentage is expected to increase from 90.7% to 91.7%. In Algeria the Muslim percentage is expected to decline further over the same period, from 98.5% to 98.3%.

Sudan has seen its ethnoreligionist numbers and percentages fluctuate over the period, from 800,000 (7.3% of the population) in 1970 to 925,000 (2.8%) in 2010. The number of adherents is predicted to pass 1.1 million by 2020, although the percentage share will remain 2.8% of the population in 2020.

No other religion claims more than 1% of the regional population during the period 1970–2020, although agnostics are expected to reach 0.7% in 2020 (up from 0.6% in 2010). Algeria (1.3% of the population) and Egypt (0.5%) were home to most of the region's agnostics in 2010; these percentages are forecast to rise to 1.5% and 0.6% respectively by 2020. No other religion claims more than 0.5% of the population in any country in the region.

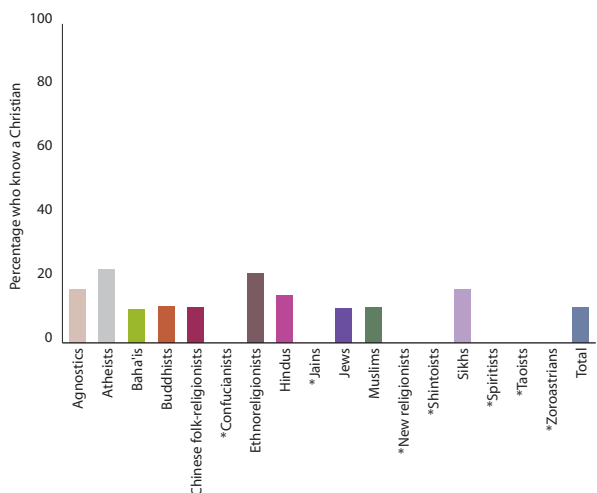
Not surprisingly, religious adherents in Northern Africa have significantly less interaction with Christians than in any other region in Africa, since the Christian population there is also the smallest. Of all religionists in the region, only 11% personally know a Christian.

### Religious affiliation in Northern Africa, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Religionists in Northern Africa who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none  
present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Society

Northern Africa has been the most successful region in Africa at meeting the Millennium Development Goals, although progress is uneven. Egypt, for example, has one of the best records of any country in the world. Tunisia and Morocco also rank fairly highly, while Libya is among the countries making the least progress.

The full effects of the 2010 Arab Spring uprisings on the social welfare of the population remain to be seen. Of special concern to Christians is how they and other minority religionists will be treated under the Islamist governments that have gained power in many countries.

## Southern Africa

### Christianity

Southern Africa is the smallest region in Africa in total population (57.8 million in 2010, less than half of next-ranked Middle Africa's 126.7 million), and in number of countries (five). Its demographics are dominated by South Africa, home to between 85–90% of both the total and Christian populations over the period 1970–2020.



Southern Africa began the twentieth century with the highest Christian percentage of any African region. In 1910 the figure was at 37.0%, mostly by virtue of South Africa's 40.7% Christian population. By 1970 the regional figure had increased to 75.8%, and only Botswana (36.7%) lacked a Christian majority (in Swaziland it had risen from 1.0% in 1910 to 67.3% in 1970, in Lesotho from 11.1% to 81.5%, and in Namibia from 8.8% to an incredible 90.9%). In each country in the region the Christian percentage was higher in 2010 than in 1970 (Botswana now has a Christian majority as well). The percentages are projected to rise through 2020 in every country except South Africa (where the percentage Christian will decline slightly, from 82.0% to 81.7% of the population).

The similar regional percentages for the period 1970–2020 mask significant differences among Christian traditions, however. Protestants are dominant in Namibia (growing from 51.5% of the total population in 1970 to 58.8% in 2010) and Roman Catholics in Lesotho (from 39.8% to 48.8%). Independents are largest in Botswana (up from 6.7% of the total population in 1970 to 42.4% in 2010), South Africa (from 20.5% to 39.2%), and Swaziland (from 19.4% to 47.3%). These percentage shares are expected to rise in each county except Namibia through 2020.

In 1970 Protestants represented 28.5% of the total regional population, shrinking to 21.2% in 2010 and 20.7% by 2020 despite an increase in number. Over the same period Independents have grown from 19.1% of the region's population in 1970 to 37.3% in 2010 (37.6% in 2020). Over half of all church members in Southern Africa are Independents (51.0% in 2010; 51.3% by 2020). Interestingly, Protestants and Independents in Southern Africa represented about equal shares of their traditions' continental totals in 1970 (27.3% and 26.0%, respectively). Despite the rapid growth of Protestants elsewhere in Africa, the percentage of Africa Protestants living in Southern Africa fell to 8.9% in 2010; it is projected to decline further by 2020, to 7.1%. The figure for Independents has fallen somewhat less rapidly: to 20.6% of all Independents in Africa in 2010 and 18.0% by 2020.

### Religion

In 1970, Southern Africa had four religions claiming adherents of at least 1% of the total population: Christians (75.8%), ethnoreligionists (20.2%), Hindus (1.7%), and Muslims (1.1%), the latter two mostly in South Africa. By 2010 agnostics had risen to 4.8% of the population, up from 0.6% in 1970 (projected 5.4% by

### Christianity in Southern Africa, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Southern Africa	25,454,000	19,286,000	75.8	61,187,000	50,361,000	82.3	1.94
Botswana	693,000	254,000	36.7	2,206,000	1,599,000	72.5	3.75
Lesotho	1,033,000	842,000	81.5	2,395,000	2,204,000	92.0	1.94
Namibia	780,000	709,000	90.9	2,672,000	2,444,000	91.5	2.51
South Africa	22,502,000	17,181,000	76.4	52,573,000	42,926,000	81.7	1.85
Swaziland	446,000	300,000	67.3	1,341,000	1,188,000	88.6	2.79

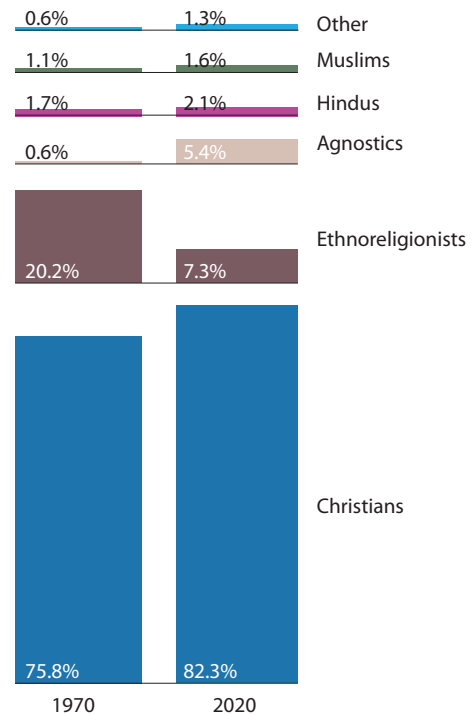
\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

2020), overtaking Hindus as the third-largest group of adherents in the region. Like Hindus and Muslims (both in 1970 and currently), agnostics are found mostly in South Africa, although the number of agnostics also exceeded 1.0% of the total population in Namibia and in Swaziland in 2010. Meanwhile, regional percentages for Hindus (2.1% of the total population in 2010 and 2020) and Muslims (1.5% in 2010 and 1.6% in 2020) continue to rise.

Conversely, ethnoreligionists have seen their share of the regional population fall, from 20.2% in 1970 to 7.9% in 2010 and 7.3% by 2012. The drop has been most dramatic in Botswana (from 62.8% of the total population in 1970 to 29.8% in 2010 and 25.9% in 2020) and Swaziland (from 31.1% to 9.9% to 9.0%). The only other group of religious adherents exceeding 1% of a country's population in the period 1970–2020 is the Baha'i. Although they constituted 1.6% of Swaziland's population in 1970, their share had fallen to 0.5% by 2010, with an actual decrease in numbers. The population has since increased but is still expected to be only 0.5% of the national total in 2020. The Baha'i share of the population, however, is expected to reach 0.9% in both Botswana and Lesotho by 2020, up from 0.5% and 0.8% in 1970, respectively.

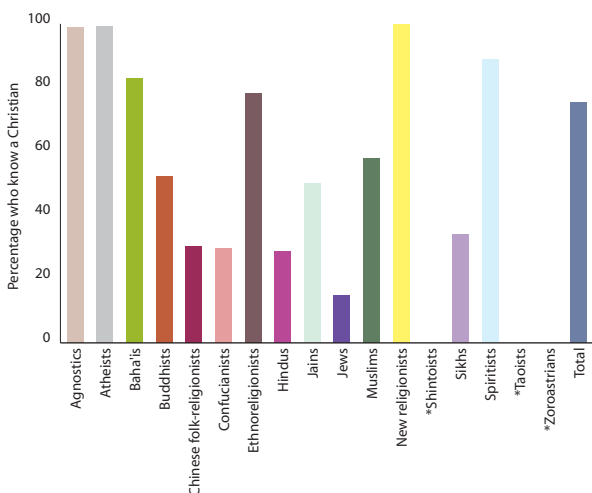
Southern Africa is one of Africa's most religiously diverse regions, home to almost all of the 18 major world religions. Of these, nearly all atheists, agnostics, Baha'i, Spiritists, and New religionists personally know a Christian, but these populations are comparatively small. Significantly more ethnoreligionists (the second-largest religion) have personal contact with Christians (78%) compared to Hindus (29%), the third-largest religion.

### Religious affiliation in Southern Africa, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Religionists in Southern Africa who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none  
present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Society

While there has been progress in meeting some of the Millennium Development Goals, the region still faces difficulties. Among the largest is the continued prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the population. HIV rates among the adult population aged 15–49 are over 10% in every country in the region, with Swaziland having the highest rate in the world (over 25%), followed by Botswana and Lesotho. Although the incidence of HIV infection appears to be declining, the ongoing social and economic effects (such as orphaned children and lost productivity) continue to present major challenges to the countries in the region.

## Western Africa

### Christianity

Christianity grew steadily in Western Africa for the first half of the twentieth century. The region was 29.3% Christian in 1970, up from 1.7% in 1910. Since 1970, however, growth has been more rapid. Christians expanded to 36.5% of the regional population in 2010 and are expected to reach 37.1% by 2020. The average annual growth rate of 2.7% for 2010–20 is predicted to exceed the total population growth rate for 2010–20 (2.6%).



Western Africa straddles the “dividing line” separating the Muslim-majority north of the continent from the Christian-majority south. This divide is apparent in the Christian percentages in the various countries. Six countries, mostly in the north of the region, are less than 10% Christian as of 2010. In the south, Ghana was 64.0% Christian in 2010, and by 2020 Togo is expected to exceed 50% as well, at 55.3% Christian. Benin (47.8%), Nigeria (46.9%), and Liberia (43.6%) will have large Christian populations in 2020.

The island nations of Cape Verde and Saint Helena have seen their Christian percentages shrink steadily since 1970, although they were still at 95.1% and 98.5% in 2010, respectively. These figures—as well as those for Sierra Leone (13.3% in 2010) and Mauritania (0.3% in 2010)—are forecast to decline further by 2020. Eleven of the 17 countries in the region, however, are predicted to have a continuing increase in the Christian share of the population between 1970 and 2020.

All Christian traditions are predicted to grow faster than the general population at the regional level for the period 1970–2020. Roman Catholics were the largest Christian tradition in the region in 1970, representing 7.1% of the total population. By 2000, Independents (12.1%, up from 4.5% in 1970) had surpassed Roman Catholics (11.0%). In 2010, Protestants (12.9%, up from 5.2% in 1970) had overtaken both Independents

### Christianity in Western Africa, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Western Africa	107,374,000	31,478,000	29.3	392,379,000	145,614,000	37.1	3.11
Benin	2,850,000	515,000	18.1	11,523,000	5,505,000	47.8	4.85
Burkina Faso	5,807,000	523,000	9.0	22,150,000	5,472,000	24.7	4.81
Cape Verde	274,000	273,000	99.5	544,000	517,000	95.0	1.29
Cote d'Ivoire	5,416,000	1,348,000	24.9	24,503,000	9,031,000	36.9	3.88
Gambia	459,000	14,500	3.2	2,242,000	101,000	4.5	3.95
Ghana	8,682,000	4,429,000	51.0	30,325,000	19,817,000	65.4	3.04
Guinea	4,154,000	55,400	1.3	12,765,000	485,000	3.8	4.44
Guinea-Bissau	603,000	66,800	11.1	1,863,000	257,000	13.8	2.73
Liberia	1,440,000	415,000	28.9	5,166,000	2,251,000	43.6	3.44
Mali	6,034,000	85,200	1.4	20,537,000	781,000	3.8	4.53
Mauritania	1,134,000	6,200	0.6	4,298,000	9,900	0.2	0.95
Niger	4,373,000	16,900	0.4	22,071,000	76,700	0.4	3.07
Nigeria	57,357,000	22,694,000	39.6	203,869,000	95,695,000	46.9	2.92
Saint Helena	4,900	4,900	99.4	4,000	3,800	95.4	-0.49
Senegal	4,096,000	230,000	5.6	15,998,000	904,000	5.7	2.78
Sierra Leone	2,593,000	218,000	8.4	7,178,000	901,000	12.6	2.88
Togo	2,097,000	584,000	27.9	7,343,000	3,808,000	51.9	3.82

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020



and Roman Catholics (11.9% each). For the period 2010–20, however, only Marginals, Protestants, and Roman Catholics are predicted to grow more rapidly than the general population. Protestants (13.5%) and Catholics (12.4%) are thus forecast to increase their share of the total population, while Independents' share will continue to shrink (to 11.6% in 2020).

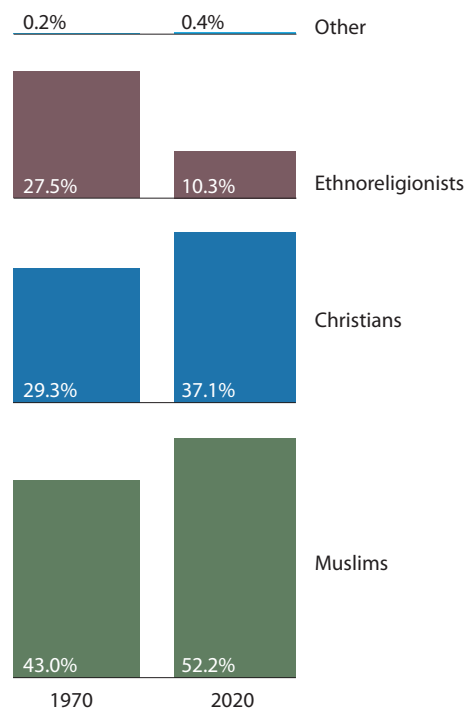
## Religion

By 1970 both Muslims (43.0% of the population) and Christians had passed ethnoreligionists' share of the population (27.5% in 1970). These trends have continued through 2010 (Muslims 51.0%, ethnoreligionists 12.1%), with similar projections for 2020 (Muslims 52.2%, ethnoreligionists 10.3%). Muslims constitute a majority of the population in eight countries in 2010 (and also 2020), and in 2020 they will form a significant minority in Guinea-Bissau (47.2%), Nigeria (46.3%, similar to the Christian share), and Cote d'Ivoire (40.6%). The Muslim share of the population is expected either to rise or to hold steady in every country in the region between 2010 and 2020. In 2010, more ethnoreligionists (33%) than Muslims (21%) in Western Africa personally knew a Christian.

Although ethnoreligionists have declined dramatically as a percentage of the total population in most countries of the region, they continue to constitute a sizeable segment in several countries, including Guinea-Bissau (42.0% in 2010, dropping to 37.6% in 2020), Liberia (41.6%, to 38.3%), and Togo (33.9%, to 24.9%). On the other hand, the ethnoreligionist share of the population actually has been rising in Cape Verde, from 0.1% in 1970 to 1.1% in 2010 and 2020.

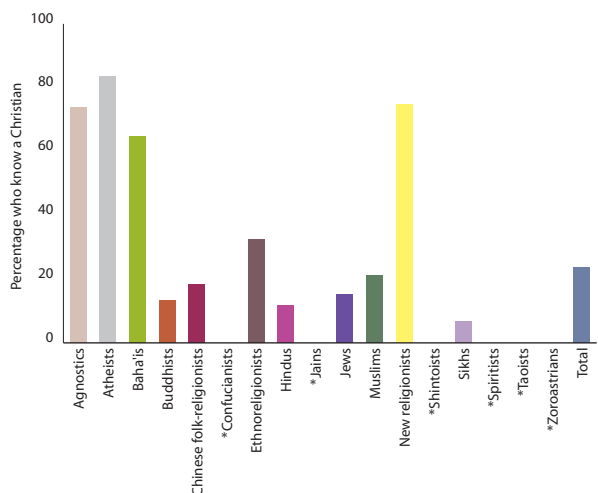
No other religion claims more than 1% of the regional population, although adherents exceed the 1% level in several individual countries. Agnostics constitute 3.3% of the population in Saint Helena, rising to 3.6% by 2020. Baha'is will reach 0.9% in two countries by 2020, Gambia and Saint Helena.

## Religious affiliation in Western Africa, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Religionists in Western Africa who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Society

Progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals has been uneven across the region. Maternal and child mortality are areas of special concern in almost every country, as is HIV/AIDS. Also of concern is the recent surge in violent activity by ethnic and religious groups in several countries in the region, including Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria. The violence is particularly prevalent in Nigeria, where the Christian and Muslim populations are of approximately equal size. Attacks have been made on both Muslim and non-Muslim civilians and are often met by retaliation.

# Asia

## Christianity

Despite having its origins in Western Asia, Christianity has spread more successfully to other parts of the globe. As a result, Asia today is the least-Christian major area in the world by percentage. However, Christianity made significant gains in the twentieth century, rising from 4.5% of the total population in 1970 to 8.2% in 2010, with a projected increase to 9.2% by 2020. Over the ten-year period 2010–20, Christianity is expected to grow faster than any other religion, averaging 2.1% growth per annum (compared to 0.9% for the general population). Many of these gains are by conversion, though some countries, such as Afghanistan, have experienced fluctuations with the entrance and exit of large expatriate populations.



Christians have increased as a proportion of the population in every region in Asia except Western Asia. In 1970 Western Asia was 7.3% Christian, but this dropped to 6.1% in 2010 and will likely continue declining, to 5.4% by 2020. Many historic Christian communities in Western Asia—notably those in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq—have been emigrating due to conflict and violence. Eastern Asia, in contrast, experienced the greatest growth of any region in Asia. Christian percentages rose from 1.2% of the population in 1970 to 8.1% in 2010, with projected growth to 10.5% by 2020. Much of this growth has been in China—from 0.1% of the population in 1970 to 7.3% (106 million Christians) in 2010.

Looking forward to 2020, Eastern Asia will continue to experience the fastest Christian growth (averaging 3.0% per annum 2010–20), more than twice as fast as the general population growth of 1.2%. In South-central and South-eastern Asia the Christian population is poised to grow at a similar pace to the general population. In Western Asia, Christianity will average 0.5% annual growth between 2010 and 2020, far less than the general population's 1.8%.

Roman Catholics were the largest major tradition in 2010 (3.3% of Asia's population). Though growing, Roman Catholics will be outpaced by Independents by 2020 (3.5% versus 3.7%). Much of the growth of Independents is through the “house church” movement in China and other indigenous Christian initiatives throughout the continent, such as hidden Hindu and Muslim believers in Christ. Independent Christians average the fastest growth over the period 1970–2020 (4.8% per annum) as well as 2010–20 (2.6% p.a.).

## Religion

Christianity has been the sixth-largest religious group in Asia since 1970, after Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, agnosticism, and Chinese folk-religion. Asia is the historic home to all of these except agnosticism, as well as the Baha'i faith, Sikhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, and numerous new religions and ethnoreligions. As a result, Asia is the world's most religiously diverse continent, and it will continue to be so well into the future. In 2010 Asia was home to 99.2% of the world's Hindus, 98.4% of

### Christianity in Asia, 1970 to 2020

Region	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Asia	2,134,992,000	95,398,000	4.5	4,565,522,000	420,390,000	9.2	3.01
Eastern Asia	984,073,000	11,449,000	1.2	1,622,681,000	170,953,000	10.5	5.56
South-central Asia	778,833,000	27,222,000	3.5	2,009,512,000	81,374,000	4.1	2.21
South-eastern Asia	285,161,000	50,371,000	17.7	655,941,000	153,217,000	23.4	2.25
Western Asia	86,925,000	6,356,000	7.3	277,388,000	14,847,000	5.4	1.71

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

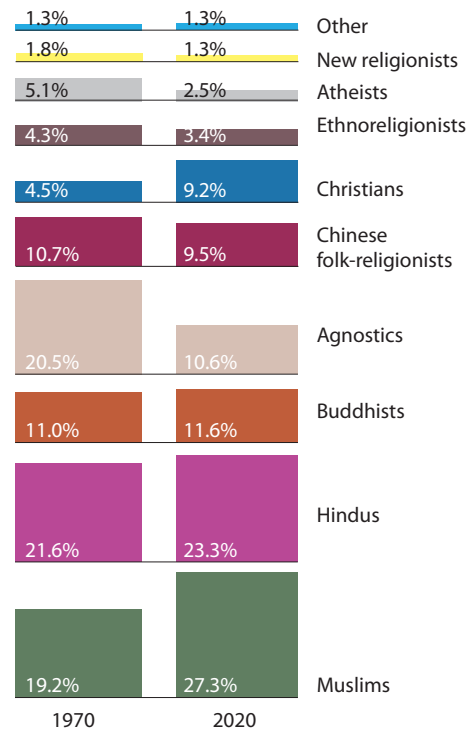
Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

Buddhists, 75.5% of agnostics, and 69.4% of Muslims (as well as 15.2% of the world's Christians). Both Buddhists and agnostics will see their shares of Asia's population shrink between 2010 and 2020, however. Agnostics, as well as atheists, are projected to have negative rates of change over the period, indicating a resurgence of interest in religion.

An increase in migration has significantly altered the religious landscape of numerous countries in Asia. Adherents of many minority religions (such as Confucianists in Myanmar and Thailand and Muslims in Japan) have experienced enormous growth, from virtually zero presence in 1970 to numbering in the hundreds of thousands in 2010 (largely due to migration). Looking forward to 2020, it is likely that high rates of migration will continue both within Asia and from Asia to the rest of the world, with significant implications for religious adherence and practice.

Because Christians are a minority in most countries in Asia, relatively few adherents of other religions there personally know a Christian. Only 13% of religionists in Asia personally know a Christian. This includes 14% of Buddhists, 13% of Hindus, and 10% of Muslims. These percentages are the lowest in the world of any continent, and Asia's regions report the lowest percentages globally (such as Western Asia at 10% of religionists who personally know a Christian).

### Religious affiliation in Asia, 1970 & 2020

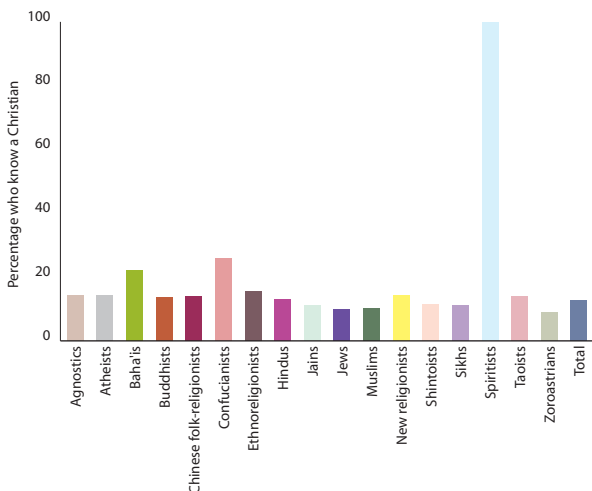


Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
Christianity in its Global Context, June 2013

## Society

Asia suffers greatly from a number of social issues, in particular moderate to high poverty and high proportions of slum-dwellers in urban areas. Urbanization was quite rapid in many Asian countries through the twentieth century, often resulting in wide gaps between social classes, putting strain on societies both economically and socially. Women's rights are also a major issue in Asia, as many traditional religious societies prevent women from gaining education (both primary and higher) and entering the workforce. South-central and Western Asia have low representation of women in national parliaments, and women's share of paid employment is low in each of these regions as well. Both of these are aspects of Millennium Development Goal #3, promoting gender equality and empowering women.

### Religionists in Asia who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
Christianity in its Global Context, June 2013

## Eastern Asia

### Christianity

The demographics of Eastern Asia are dominated by China, home to over 80% of the region's total population 1970–2020 (and over 80% of its Christian population 2010–20).



In 1970 Eastern Asia's 11.4 million Christians constituted 1.2% of the region's population, making Christianity the eighth-largest religion. By 2010 the number of Christians had increased to 127.8 million (8.1% of the population), ranking Christianity fourth. Over the period 2010–20, Christians are expected to have the highest growth rate (3.0% per year) and to increase to 171.1 million (10.5% of the region's population).

Among Christian traditions, Independents experienced the most rapid growth regionally, averaging 7.7% per year between 1970 and 2010. Over that period they grew from 0.3% of the region's population to 5.6% and now outnumber Christians from all other traditions combined. Growth is expected to continue through 2020, averaging 3.0% annually, to almost 119 million (7.3% of the region's population). Protestants and Catholics also experienced significant growth 1970–2010, from 0.4% to 2.3% and from 0.2% to 1.4% of the region's population, respectively. Their numbers will continue to increase through 2020 but will remain well below those of Independents regionally.

Japan is one of the few countries in the world in which Marginal Christians are the largest Christian tradition. South Korea, however, has the largest population of Marginal Christians in the region, as well as the most Anglicans. Perhaps surprisingly, Japan is home to the largest population of, as well as a majority of, Orthodox in the region. Interestingly, in every country except Hong Kong and Macau, the largest Christian tradition was different in 2000 than in 1970. By 2010 Hong Kong had seen this change as well.

The number of Christians increased in every country except Japan over the period 1970–2010; this pattern is expected to continue through 2020. The Christian share of the population, however, shows a sustained increase only in China (from 0.1% in 1970 to 7.9% in 2010 and 10.6% in 2020), South Korea (from 18.3% to 33.4% to 36.1%), and Mongolia (0.3% to 1.7% to 2.0%). Japan (3.0% to 2.1% to 2.1%) and Macau (13.2% to 7.2% to 6.2%) show significant declines in the Christian shares of their populations.

### Christianity in Eastern Asia, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Eastern Asia	984,073,000	11,449,000	1.2	1,622,681,000	170,953,000	10.5	5.56
China	814,623,000	853,000	0.1	1,387,060,000	147,529,000	10.6	10.86
Hong Kong	3,958,000	632,000	16.0	7,803,000	1,069,000	13.7	1.06
Japan	103,710,000	3,100,000	3.0	124,804,000	2,585,000	2.1	-0.36
Macau	251,000	33,100	13.2	654,000	40,600	6.2	0.41
Mongolia	1,282,000	3,500	0.3	3,186,000	63,200	2.0	5.96
North Korea	14,247,000	142,000	1.0	25,355,000	204,000	0.8	0.72
South Korea	31,443,000	5,753,000	18.3	49,810,000	17,982,000	36.1	2.31
Taiwan	14,559,000	933,000	6.4	24,009,000	1,481,000	6.2	0.93

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

## Religion

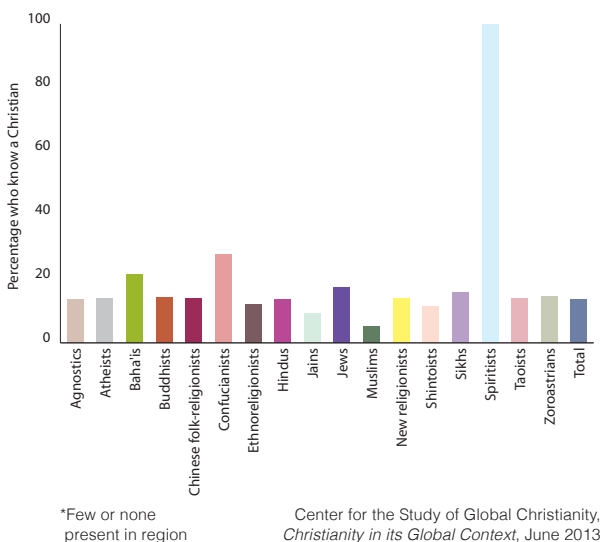
Eastern Asia has experienced much religious change since 1970. Due to the demographic weight of China, regionally a majority of the population was either agnostic (42.4%) or atheist (10.1%) in 1970. Over the period 1970–2010 both groups grew by only 0.1% annually, however, so that by 2010 they constituted only 29.7% and 6.7%, respectively, of the regional population. Buddhists, meanwhile, increased from 13.0% to 19.0%, and Chinese folk-religionists increased their share from 22.4% to 26.8%. The Buddhist and Christian populations are expected to continue to increase through 2020, while agnostic, atheist, and Chinese folk-religionist populations are expected to decline slightly.

Dramatic change has taken place in Mongolia, where Buddhists grew from 27,000 to 1.5 million (and from 2.1% to 54.2% of the total population) between 1970 and 2010. Over the same period, ethnoreligionists saw their share drop from 36.2% to 18.6%. Agnostics and atheists lost both actual adherents and population share (from 38.5% to 17.2% and 20.9% to 2.8%, respectively). These trends will likely continue through 2020.

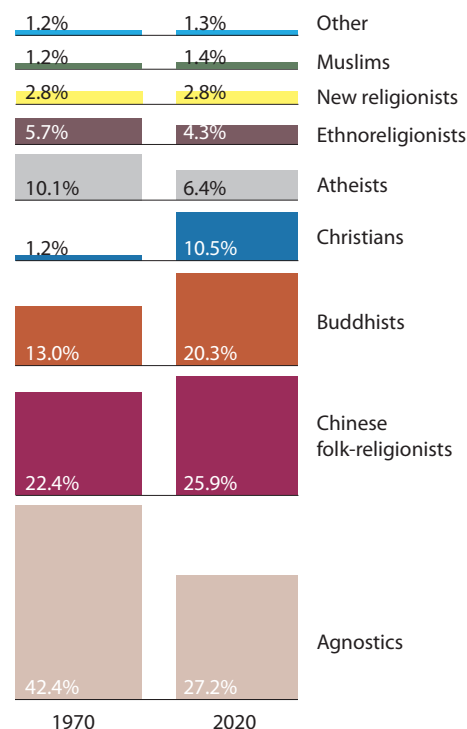
In South Korea, ethnoreligions lost both adherents and population share (from 38.5% of the population in 1970 to 14.7% in 2010). Meanwhile, Christians (from 18.3% in 1970 to 33.4%, the largest religious group in 2010) and Buddhists (16.9% to 24.8%) saw sizeable growth. All of the largest religions in South Korea except Christianity are expected to decline in percentage share of the population through 2020, however.

Over all, 14% of religionists in Eastern Asia personally know a Christian. Just over 20% of Confucianists and Baha'is personally know a Christian, the highest percentages of the region's religious communities.

### Religionists in Eastern Asia who know a Christian, 2010



### Religious affiliation in Eastern Asia, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Society

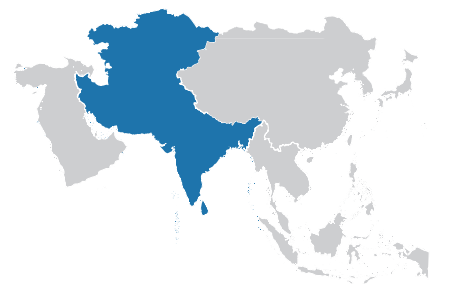
Increasing economic development has resulted in women having fewer children. As a result, fewer young people will be available to support the elderly, who are living longer than ever before. Most countries in the region lack social safety nets for older citizens, potentially creating conflict between youth who want to enjoy their prosperity and older citizens who expect the young to provide for them. Japan, which has the world's highest average age, is already experiencing a population decline and questioning how, or even whether, immigration can reverse it.



## South-central Asia

### Christianity

South-central Asia is home to over a quarter of the world's population but only 4% of the world's Christians. Between 1970 and 2010 Christianity grew at a steady rate (2.3% per annum), and moderately faster than the population of the region as a whole (2.1% p.a.). This has resulted in an increase of the overall Christian percentage from 3.5% in 1970 to 4% in 2010. Christian growth rates are anticipated to accelerate slightly for 2010–20, resulting in an overall regional Christian representation of 4.1%.



The overall numeric increase in Christianity across the region is driven primarily by changes in India, where nearly 85% of all Christians in the region live. This masks more erratic patterns of Christian change in individual countries. Sri Lanka, for example, experienced a dramatic drop in its Christian percentage between 1910 and 2010 but has been steadily increasing since 1970. Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Maldives, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan experienced significant Christian growth over the past 100 years, but all are projected to see a decline in their Christian percentages between 2010 and 2020.

In 1910 Roman Catholics accounted for over 50% of all church members in South-central Asia, but the growth of Protestantism in the first half of the twentieth century has contributed to the diversification of the region's Christian population. Between 1970 and 2010, Independents also made significant gains, increasing from 14% of church members to almost 27%. This rapid growth of Independent Christians is widespread, affecting every country of South-central Asia except Kyrgyzstan. In India, Independent growth has resulted largely from increases in hidden Hindu believers in Christ.

### Religion

South-central Asia is the historical home to many of the world's major religions, including Hinduism, Sikhism, the Baha'i faith, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism. Though Hindus account for over 50% of the regional

### Christianity in South-central Asia, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
South-central Asia	778,833,000	27,222,000	3.5	2,009,512,000	81,374,000	4.1	2.21
Afghanistan	11,965,000	8,000	0.1	42,141,000	10,000	0.0	0.45
Bangladesh	66,881,000	237,000	0.4	167,256,000	873,000	0.5	2.64
Bhutan	302,000	950	0.3	829,000	9,000	1.1	4.60
India	553,874,000	20,598,000	3.7	1,386,909,000	67,356,000	4.9	2.40
Iran	28,662,000	268,000	0.9	81,045,000	302,000	0.4	0.24
Kazakhstan	13,110,000	2,450,000	18.7	17,680,000	4,522,000	25.6	1.23
Kyrgyzstan	2,964,000	338,000	11.4	6,012,000	374,000	6.2	0.21
Maldives	116,000	220	0.2	356,000	1,500	0.4	3.86
Nepal	11,918,000	7,400	0.1	35,164,000	1,324,000	3.8	10.93
Pakistan	59,383,000	1,156,000	2.0	205,364,000	4,052,000	2.0	2.54
Sri Lanka	12,555,000	1,088,000	8.7	22,344,000	2,048,000	9.2	1.27
Tajikistan	2,942,000	82,500	2.8	7,961,000	96,800	1.2	0.32
Turkmenistan	2,188,000	117,000	5.3	5,675,000	69,000	1.2	-1.05
Uzbekistan	11,973,000	872,000	7.3	30,776,000	337,000	1.1	-1.88

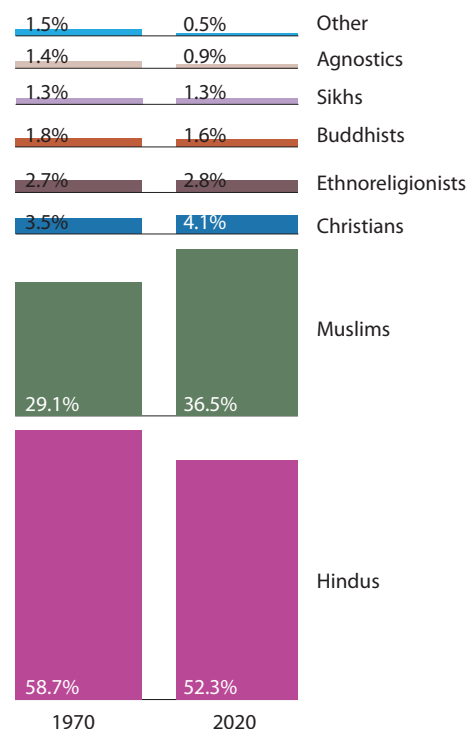
\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

population, 10 of the 14 countries in the region are majority-Muslim. Nearly 40% of the world's Muslims live in South-central Asia, and their share of the population has been increasing in every country within the region. Between 1970 and 2010 the Muslim share of the population increased by at least 30 percentage points in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, reflecting the resurgence of religious affiliation following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Though Hinduism continues to grow rapidly in much of the Western world, 98% of Hindus still live in South-central Asia. Of these, 95% live in India alone, but their percentage of the overall population is in steady decline, dropping from 78% in 1970 to 71% by 2020. Hindu nationalism has increased since the 1980s, signified by the emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party in India.

Christianity constitutes only a small portion of the religious context in South-central Asia. As a result, only about 12% of adherents of other religions in the region personally know a Christian. This number drops to under 10% for Muslims, many of whom live in countries with significantly smaller Christian percentages compared to the regional total. Fewer Baha'is in South-central Asia have personal interaction with Christians than in any other region in Asia (14%); likewise for Hindus (13%) and Jews (9%).

### Religious affiliation in South-central Asia, 1970 & 2020

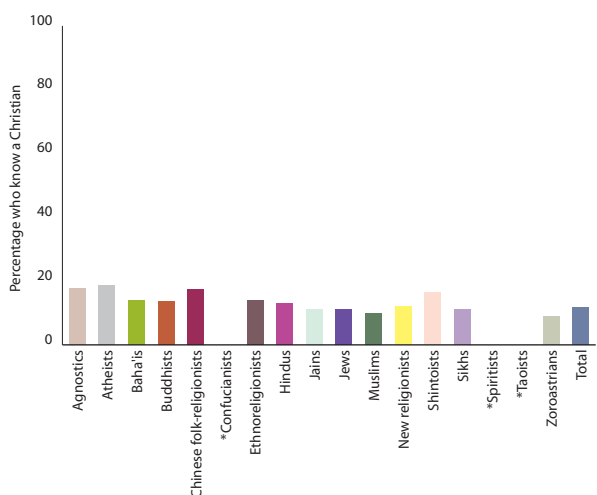


Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Society

Despite the high level of religious diversity in South-central Asia, the region is the most restrictive in the world in terms of religious freedom. Religious freedom worldwide is generally restricted either by governmental or societal forces, and most countries in South-central Asia exhibit both types at fairly high levels. In India, a resurgence of Hindu nationalism has resulted in increased social pressure on Muslims, in addition to new laws encouraging Dalit Christians and Muslims to identify as Hindus on the census. Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and the Maldives have persistently high levels of governmental restrictions on religion, whereas religious freedom in India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan is more affected by social restrictions. Religious violence and conflict are higher in South-central Asia than in any other region of the world.

### Religionists in South-central Asia who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none  
present in region

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## South-eastern Asia

### Christianity

South-eastern Asia was home to 52.8% of Asia's Christians in 1970, although the population was only 17.7% Christian. The growth of Christianity elsewhere in Asia, however, means that in 2010 only 38.2% of Asia's Christians lived in South-eastern Asia. This is predicted to decline to 36.5% by 2020. Meanwhile, the Christian share of the region's population has been rising. In 2010 Christians constituted 22.1%, with growth to 23.4% expected by 2020.



In 1970 the majority (66.0%) of South-eastern Asia's Christians lived in the Philippines, which was 93.8% Christian (the only majority-Christian country in Asia at the time). As of 2010 the Philippines was 90.8% Christian and home to 64.7% of the region's Christians, with similar figures anticipated for 2020. The large Roman Catholic population there means that most of the region's Christians are Catholic. The percentage of the region's Christians living in Indonesia—home to the second-largest Christian population in the region (around 22% for the period 1970–2020)—has declined slightly. The percentage of the Indonesian population that is Christian has increased from 9.5% in 1970 to 12.1% in 2010, rising to 12.5% by 2020.

The numbers of adherents of each major Christian tradition have increased over the period 1970–2010, as have the proportions of the regional population for most of them. In contrast to the situation in many other regions, however, the relative proportions among the six major Christian traditions have remained remarkably stable since 1970. Interestingly, almost two thirds of Anglicans in Asia (63.0% in 2010, up from 49.6% in 1970) are found in South-eastern Asia, even though they constituted only 0.1% of the region's total population and about 0.4% of its church members over the period.

### Religion

South-eastern Asia is one of the world's most religiously diverse regions. Nine religions claimed adherence by at least 1% of the population in 2010 (up from eight in 1970). Muslims are the largest single group of religious adherents: 35.2% of the population in 1970 and 36.8% in 2010 (36.5% by 2020). They constitute a majority in three countries (Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia) and a sizeable minority in Singapore (15% of the population in 2010, down from 18% in 1970).

### Christianity in South-eastern Asia, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
South-eastern Asia	285,161,000	50,371,000	17.7	655,941,000	153,217,000	23.4	2.25
Brunei	125,000	7,300	5.8	465,000	65,600	14.1	4.49
Cambodia	6,938,000	33,300	0.5	15,893,000	576,000	3.6	5.87
Indonesia	118,362,000	11,233,000	9.5	262,569,000	32,791,000	12.5	2.17
Laos	2,691,000	48,300	1.8	7,045,000	229,000	3.3	3.16
Malaysia	10,909,000	571,000	5.2	32,986,000	3,072,000	9.3	3.42
Myanmar	26,164,000	1,350,000	5.2	51,688,000	4,466,000	8.6	2.42
Philippines	35,451,000	33,254,000	93.8	109,742,000	99,614,000	90.8	2.22
Singapore	2,074,000	162,000	7.8	5,597,000	1,215,000	21.7	4.12
Thailand	36,915,000	240,000	0.7	72,091,000	946,000	1.3	2.78
Timor-Leste	604,000	210,000	34.8	1,510,000	1,317,000	87.2	3.74
Viet Nam	44,928,000	3,264,000	7.3	96,355,000	8,924,000	9.3	2.03

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

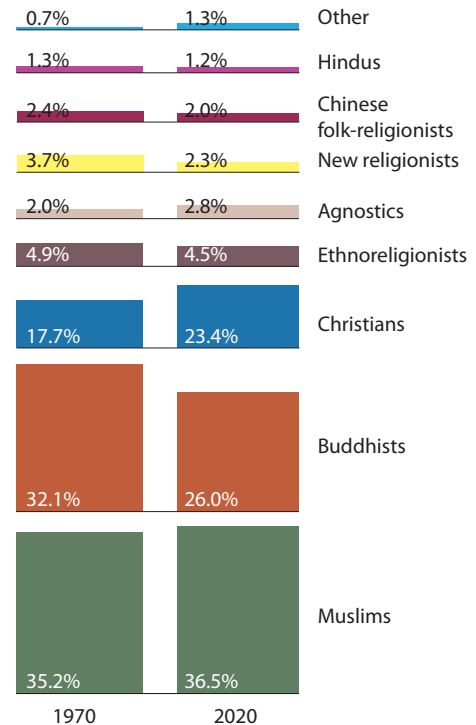
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Buddhists are the second-largest group regionally. Their share declined from 32.1% in 1970 to 26.8% in 2010 (26.0% by 2020), however, as both the Muslim and Christian populations grew faster. Buddhists form the largest group of religious adherents in five of the region's 11 countries. Their share of the total has held relatively stable in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, but in Viet Nam it has dropped from 63.3% in 1970 to 49.2% for 2010–20.

Ethnoreligionists, less than 5% of the regional population between 1970 and 2020, constitute a substantial minority in Laos: 42.8% in 2010 (rivaling Buddhists' 52.2%), up from 38.0% in 1970. They also form 10.4% of the population in Viet Nam (up from 4.4% in 1970), 10.1% in Timor-Leste (down substantially from the 63.5% majority of 1970), 10.1% in Brunei (down from 15.1%), and 9.5% in Myanmar (down from 11.5%). Chinese folk-religionists make up only about 2% of the region's population over the period, but they are the largest group in Singapore (39.1% in 2010, down from 54.2% in 1970). Malaysia also has a significant minority of Chinese folk-religionists (18.4%, down from 24.6%). Other sizeable groups include both agnostics (12.7% in 2010) and New religionists (11.1%) in Viet Nam.

In addition to South-eastern Asia's religious diversity, the region also reports some of the highest percentages for religious adherents who personally know a Christian. Overall for the region the figure is 15%, even higher than for Asia as a whole. Of the region's religious communities, a perhaps surprising 44% of Baha'is personally know a Christian (this is significantly more than in Western Asia, the historic home of the Baha'i).

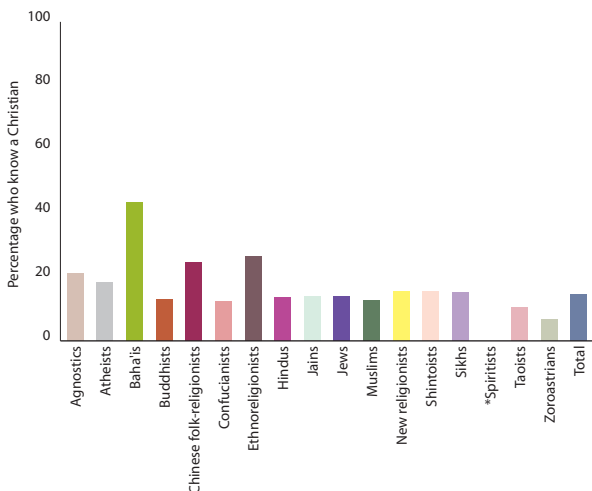
### Religious affiliation in South-eastern Asia, 1970 & 2020



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## Society

### Religionists in South-eastern Asia who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none  
present in region

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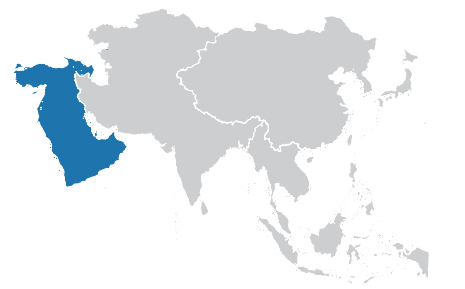
South-eastern Asia is one of the world's largest exporters of sex slaves to brothels around the world, particularly in Eastern Asia, Europe, and the United States. Human trafficking is incredibly difficult to monitor and the full scale of the problem is difficult to comprehend. After drug dealing, human trafficking is tied with arms dealing as the second-largest criminal industry in the world. Women and girls in South-eastern Asia are particularly vulnerable due to high rates of poverty, leading to desperation. Many cities in the region, such as Bangkok, Thailand, and Phnom Penh, Cambodia, are top destinations for sex tourists targeting children as young as 10 years old.



## Western Asia

### Christianity

Christianity declined from 7.3% of Western Asia's total population in 1970 to 6.1% in 2010, with a further decline to 5.4% projected by 2020. This net change has been due largely to the emigration of Christians as a result of religious violence in the region. Lebanon, Turkey and, more recently, Iraq and Syria have been at the center of some of these tensions, with the former two having fewer Christians now than in 1970 despite overall population growth. However, nine of the region's 18 countries saw an increase in Christian percentage between 1970 and 2010, and it is anticipated that eight will see an increase between 2010 and 2020 (with another two holding steady).



Much of this growth has come as a result of immigration, partially by those displaced from other countries in the region, but primarily through the influx of migrant workers to the service industries of the region's wealthy nations. Many of these workers are Christians, coming from countries such as the Philippines and working in Western Asia for two or three years at a time. Another source of growth was a result of the end of Communism in the former Soviet Union. Armenia and Georgia, both of which historically were majority Christian nations, saw large increases in the numbers of people identifying as Christian between 1970 and 2000.

Some of the world's oldest Christian communities are preserved in Western Asia, though in many countries the repeated displacement of Christians over time has left only small pockets of these ancient Orthodox Christians. Nevertheless, Orthodox Christianity is still the largest major tradition in the region, with almost nine million adherents; two thirds of Orthodox Christians in Western Asia reside in Armenia or Georgia. Roman Catholics retain a strong presence in Lebanon despite emigration, while in Saudi Arabia and the

### Christianity in Western Asia, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Western Asia	86,925,000	6,356,000	7.3	277,388,000	14,847,000	5.4	1.71
Armenia	2,518,000	858,000	34.1	3,146,000	2,981,000	94.8	2.52
Azerbaijan	5,172,000	263,000	5.1	10,231,000	349,000	3.4	0.57
Bahrain	212,000	8,200	3.9	1,508,000	119,000	7.9	5.49
Cyprus	614,000	469,000	76.5	1,218,000	876,000	71.9	1.26
Georgia	4,707,000	1,650,000	35.0	4,080,000	3,502,000	85.8	1.52
Iraq	10,022,000	369,000	3.7	42,684,000	492,000	1.2	0.58
Israel	2,850,000	79,000	2.8	8,666,000	184,000	2.1	1.70
Jordan	1,667,000	83,400	5.0	7,366,000	166,000	2.3	1.38
Kuwait	753,000	38,600	5.1	3,394,000	310,000	9.2	4.26
Lebanon	2,464,000	1,536,000	62.3	4,516,000	1,511,000	33.5	-0.03
Oman	732,000	3,800	0.5	3,290,000	151,000	4.6	7.62
Palestine	1,125,000	53,200	4.7	5,317,000	65,000	1.2	0.40
Qatar	108,000	4,800	4.5	2,199,000	209,000	9.5	7.81
Saudi Arabia	5,772,000	18,300	0.3	33,535,000	1,542,000	4.6	9.27
Syria	6,368,000	617,000	9.7	24,079,000	977,000	4.1	0.92
Turkey	35,464,000	290,000	0.8	80,753,000	178,000	0.2	-0.97
United Arab Emirates	232,000	13,600	5.9	9,174,000	1,182,000	12.9	9.34
Yemen	6,145,000	1,700	0.0	32,232,000	52,300	0.2	7.09

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

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United Arab Emirates their numbers have increased substantially since 1970 due to the influx of Roman Catholic migrant workers. Largely as a result of this phenomenon, the percentage of the region's church members who are Roman Catholic increased from 27% in 1970 to 38% in 2010.

## Religion

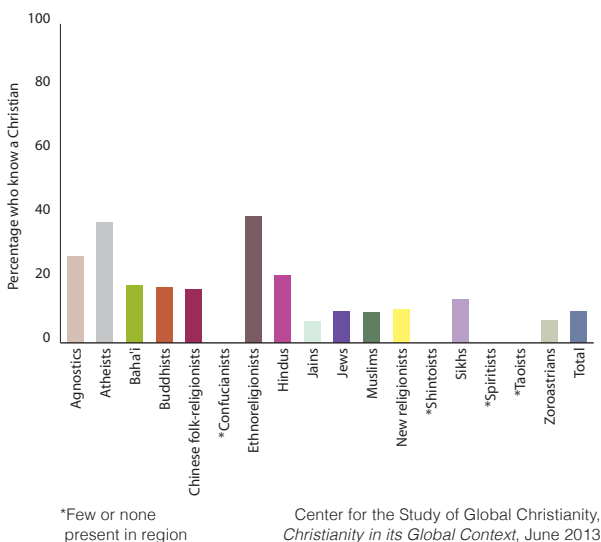
All three Abrahamic faiths trace their origins to Western Asia, and demographically they continue to dominate the region. Islam, with by far the most adherents, has grown at a rapid rate despite its large size, increasing from 82.7% of the population in 1970 to an estimated 89.5% by 2020. This is because the Muslim populations in 12 of the region's 18 countries have grown more rapidly than the region's population as a whole, accounting for two thirds of the increase. Turkey has the largest Muslim and total populations in the region and accounts for another quarter of the increase, despite lagging Muslim population growth rates there.

Today Western Asia is home to the world's largest Jewish population (in Israel). In 1970 almost 97% of the region's Jews lived in Israel. Today that figure is about 91%, with another 8% living in Palestine due to the construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

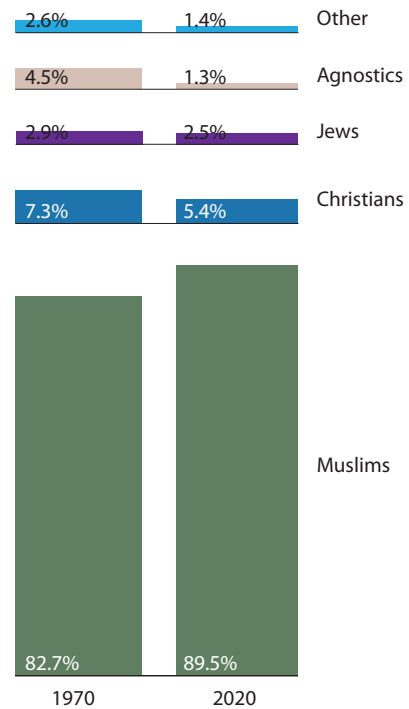
The presence of these settlements, an ongoing source of both religious and social tension in the heavily Muslim region, is just one element of a larger conflict over the right of the State of Israel to exist. Fifteen percent of Jews in Western Asia personally knew a Christian in 2010.

Hindus now constitute significant shares of the population in several countries due to immigration of workers from India, including 6.6% in the United Arab Emirates, 6.5% in Bahrain, and 5.3% in Oman. Immigration has raised the number Buddhists as well, although to a lesser degree (for example, 2.2% of the population in Qatar and 2.0% in the UAE). Communism's collapse has meant fewer atheists and agnostics in the former Soviet republics, but secularization has increased their numbers in Cyprus and the countries of the Levant.

## Religionists in Western Asia who know a Christian, 2010



## Religious affiliation in Western Asia, 1970 & 2020



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## Society

Factionalism—political, economic, ethnic, tribal, inter- and intra-religious—characterizes life in many of the countries of the region. One manifestation of this has been violence in the form of war (intra- and international), terrorism, persecution, and armed uprisings. Millions of people have fled their homes, and even the region, to escape harm, at times threatening to destabilize the countries in which they seek refuge. This factionalism also works against solving social problems such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education and health care that plague many people in the population.

# Europe

## Christianity

The 100-year period from 1910 to 2010 was marked by significant changes in European Christianity, and the 50-year period from 1970 to 2020 will likely prove to be similar. In 1970, Christians constituted 75.0% of Europe's population, a significant drop from their 94.5% share in 1910. By 2010 Christians claimed 78.6% of the population (a rise attributed to the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe), but this percentage is projected to decline to 78.0% by 2020.



Although Roman Catholicism remains the largest major Christian tradition in Europe, its share of the population has been declining since 1970, and this decline is expected to continue into the future. In 2012, the Roman Catholic Church inaugurated the Year of Faith and the New Evangelization, renewal initiatives geared toward both nominal Catholics and those who have officially disaffiliated from the Church, in order to reinvigorate their faith and interest in Roman Catholicism. Given current growth rates, however, Roman Catholics—who represented 39.0% of Europe's population in 1970—will likely represent only 37.2% in 2020.

Anglicans' and Protestants' population shares are also on the decline. Protestants experienced the greatest overall percentage decline over both the 50- and 10-year periods, dropping from 12.5% in 1970, to 9.2% in 2010, to a likely 8.9% by 2020. The reasons for decline across these traditions are multifaceted; they include the pervasiveness of secularism, the continuing effects of deinstitutionalization of the Church in numerous European countries, and the rising trend of individual disaffiliation with Christianity.

Independent and Orthodox churches, however, are on the rise. The trend of Orthodox renewal is continuing, particularly in Eastern Europe, after the collapse of Communism and the Soviet Union in the 1990s. Independent churches are growing due to migration from the global South; in particular, congregations of African Pentecostals and Charismatics have appeared in Southern Europe.

There is a consistent pattern of change within European Christianity. In continental Europe and in each of its regions except Eastern Europe, Christianity is declining largely through defectors leaving the faith (mainly to agnosticism and atheism) and deaths (in many European countries the population is aging rapidly), while its gains come through births (those born into Christian families) and immigration. The future of Christianity in Europe will likely be impacted by Christian immigrants, largely from the global South. Included in this trend is the concept of "reverse mission," where younger churches in the global South are sending missionaries to Europe.

## Religion

Europe has become more religiously diverse over the past several decades, and it is likely this trend will continue to 2020 and beyond. Between 1970 and 2020, the fastest-growing religions in Europe are Con-

### Christianity in Europe, 1970 to 2020

Region	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Europe	655,881,000	491,756,000	75.0	744,179,000	580,305,000	78.0	0.33
Eastern Europe	276,229,000	158,050,000	57.2	289,166,000	248,098,000	85.8	0.91
Northern Europe	87,351,000	75,752,000	86.7	104,525,000	76,221,000	72.9	0.01
Southern Europe	126,766,000	111,133,000	87.7	158,477,000	129,391,000	81.7	0.30
Western Europe	165,535,000	146,822,000	88.7	192,010,000	126,595,000	65.9	-0.30

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

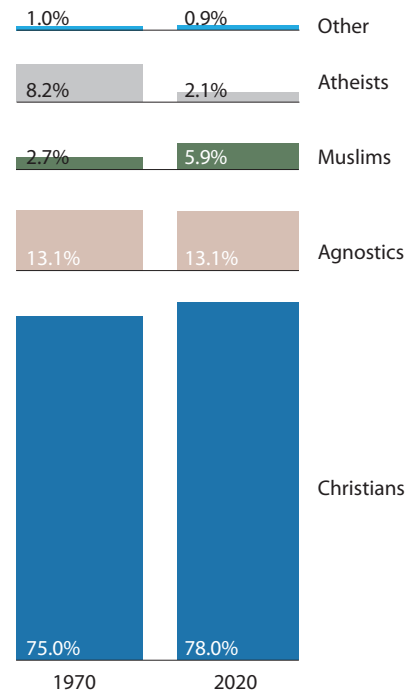
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fucianism (5.8% per annum), Zoroastrianism (5.5% per annum), Chinese folk-religion (4.2% per annum), Hinduism (3.4% per annum), Jainism (3.4% per annum), and Spiritism (2.9% per annum). However, these high growth rates are due to increases in rather small populations and are thus unsustainable. Baha'is (averaging 1.5% per annum) and Sikhs (averaging 1.3% per annum) are predicted to grow most rapidly over the period 2010–20. Muslims are projected to increase from 5.6% of the population in 2010 to 5.9% in 2020, growth that can be attributed to immigration and higher-than-European-average birth rates. Between 1970 and 2020, Jews are declining at a rate of 2.1% per annum, a rate exceeded only by that of atheists. It is projected that the Jewish population in Europe will represent only 0.2% of the population by 2020. This is due largely to aging Jewish populations and continuing emigration to Israel.

Although secularism was pervasive in Europe over the past century, agnostics' and atheists' shares of the European population declined from 21.3% (combined) in 1970 to 14.7% in 2010, although this is expected to rise to 15.2% by 2020. The decrease in agnostics and atheists from 1970 was due largely to religious resurgence in Eastern Europe. As a result, large numbers of agnostics and atheists in Europe have interaction with Christians (over 90% of each in every region, except agnostics in Eastern Europe, personally knew a Christian in 2010).

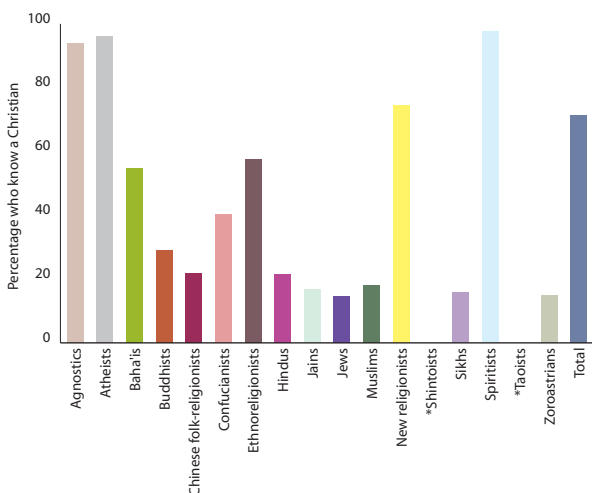
In 2010, on average, 23% of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in Europe personally knew a Christian. It is projected that these communities will continue to grow at a much faster pace than Christians between 2010 and 2020, which likely will create more opportunities for interactions between these faith communities.

### Religious affiliation in Europe, 1970 & 2020



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### Religionists in Europe who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

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### Society

Although outside the scope of the UN Millennium Development Goals, Europe faces its own unique set of social issues. One in particular is community cohesion, particularly relevant to the increasing religious diversity in many of the major cities across the continent. Many historically Christian countries have struggled with how to properly respond to and support adherents of other world religions and how to provide them with opportunities for cultural, economic, and social integration.



## Eastern Europe

### Christianity

Christianity in Eastern Europe has undergone profound changes since 1970. Under Communist rule, religion was driven underground in a campaign to eliminate it entirely from society. The Orthodox Church in Russia suffered severely, with at least 200,000 priests, monks, and nuns executed. As a result, at the height of Communism in 1970, the region was only 57.2% Christian, the lowest percentage of any region in the global North for that time period. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, droves of agnostics and atheists came into the churches. By 2010, the region claimed 84.0% Christian adherence, similar to the situation in 1910 (89.6% Christian). Looking toward 2020, Christian gains are likely to be more modest, with a 0.02% average annual growth rate between 2010 and 2020.



Orthodoxy is the largest major tradition in Eastern Europe, and its trajectory of change over the 40-year period is indicative of its persecution and subsequent revival. Evidence of this revival includes the passage of laws favoring the established Orthodox churches (in Russia, for example) and the significant political influence the Orthodox churches exert (such as in Bulgaria). Thus, while Orthodox were only 33.6% of Eastern Europe's population in 1970, by 2010 this had nearly doubled to 60.7%.

Despite the resurgence of the Orthodox in Eastern Europe, Marginal Christians have the fastest growth rate of any major Christian tradition between 1970 and 2020, averaging 4.3% annually. Significant gains have been made via missionary efforts of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, especially in Russia and Ukraine. The temple in Kiev, Ukraine, that opened in 2010 is the first Latter-day Saints temple in the former Soviet Union. For the period 2010–20, Marginal Christians are poised to grow more quickly than any other major Christian tradition, at 1.2% per annum.

### Religion

The twentieth-century decline of Christianity in Eastern Europe resulted in a sharp rise in the non-religious population. In 1970, 37.2% of the region was atheist or agnostic. However, with the end of Communist rule and the breakup of the Soviet Union, the non-religious percentages plummeted as Christianity gained momentum again. In 2010 Eastern Europe was 9.6% non-religious, and this percentage is expected to decline even more, to 7.8% by 2020. The non-religious will likely experience the most drastic decline of any tradition by 2020 (agnostics averaging -4.7% per annum and atheists -5.1% per annum).

### Christianity in Eastern Europe, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Eastern Europe	276,229,000	158,050,000	57.2	289,166,000	248,098,000	85.8	0.91
Belarus	9,040,000	5,418,000	59.9	9,282,000	7,155,000	77.1	0.56
Bulgaria	8,490,000	5,668,000	66.8	7,001,000	5,816,000	83.1	0.05
Czech Republic	9,789,000	7,917,000	80.9	10,741,000	5,686,000	52.9	-0.66
Hungary	10,315,000	8,762,000	84.9	9,825,000	8,638,000	87.9	-0.03
Moldova	3,595,000	1,665,000	46.3	3,358,000	3,234,000	96.3	1.34
Poland	32,529,000	29,498,000	90.7	38,375,000	36,802,000	95.9	0.44
Romania	20,253,000	16,841,000	83.2	20,970,000	20,698,000	98.7	0.41
Russia	130,392,000	50,000,000	38.4	141,022,000	118,286,000	83.9	1.74
Slovakia	4,509,000	3,880,000	86.1	5,545,000	4,851,000	87.5	0.45
Ukraine	47,317,000	28,400,000	60.0	43,047,000	36,930,000	85.8	0.53

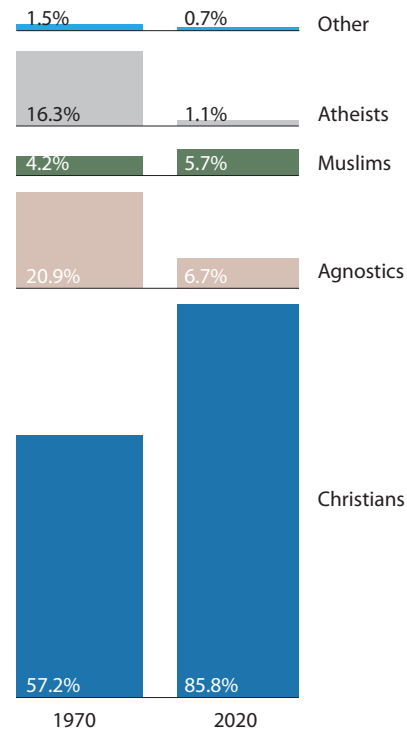
\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

With the independence and opening of many Eastern Bloc countries, there has been great opportunity for immigrants from the global South, mainly professionals, to settle. This has caused increases in the populations of smaller world religions. Between 1970 and 2020, several religions will have annual growth rates of well over 10%: Hindus, Chinese folk-religionists, Sikhs, and Spiritists. Despite such growth, these religions will still be quite small in 2020 (49,000 Hindus; 11,600 Chinese folk-religionists; 10,400 Sikhs; and 7,300 Spiritists).

Changes to Eastern Europe's Jewish population have significantly affected the region's religious make-up. In 1970, 3.0 million Jews lived in Eastern Europe (1.1%), mostly Russian Jews. However, in just 40 years the population was nearly depleted, representing only 0.2% of the region's population in 2010. The major reason for decline is mass emigration to Israel, with over 1.2 million Jews leaving countries of the former Soviet Union for Israel since its founding in 1948. The height of immigration was in 1990 and 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union; over 300,000 Jews left the former Soviet Union for Israel in these two years alone.

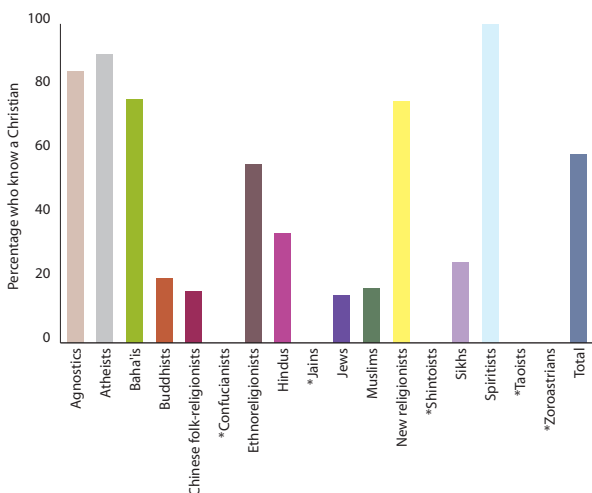
Given the history of Judaism in Eastern Europe, it is perhaps surprising that in 2010, only 15% of Jews personally knew a Christian. This percentage is lower than for many other, newer religious communities in the region, such as Buddhists (20%), Sikhs (25%), and Muslims (17%).

### Religious affiliation in Eastern Europe, 1970 & 2020



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### Religionists in Eastern Europe who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none  
present in region

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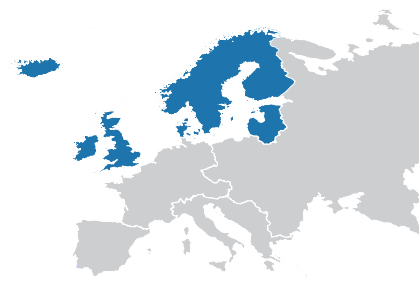
### Society

In 2010 the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) released a report stating that the HIV epidemic in Eastern Europe and Central Asia was escalating at an alarming pace, largely due to a rise in drug use and high-risk sexual behavior, particularly among adolescents. Russia has one of the world's highest levels of injectable drug use, resulting in a drastic spread of HIV. In 2002 there were only 100,000 HIV-positive individuals in Russia, but by 2012 there were over one million. Existing health and social services in Eastern Europe are generally unequipped to help young people at risk in this area.

## Northern Europe

### Christianity

Christianity in Northern Europe has been on a steady trajectory of decline, dropping from 98.1% of the population in 1910 to 86.7% in 1970. The trend continued to 2010, when Christianity stood at 74.8% of Northern Europe's population, and is expected to continue, though at a slower rate, looking toward 2020 (72.9%). While Christianity is expected to maintain a 0.3% average annual growth rate between 2010 and 2020, this is smaller than for any other religion except Judaism and is also lower than the rate of growth for the region's population as a whole (0.5%).



Only two countries in Northern Europe are poised to become more Christian (by percentage) in 2020 than they were in 1970: Lithuania (70.5% in 1970; 90.6% in 2020) and Latvia (51.0% in 1970; 71.7% in 2020). Christianity is growing in these countries largely due to the revival of Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy, respectively, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Independent churches are experiencing significant growth regionally, with average annual rates of 2.5% between 1970 and 2020 and 1.6% between 2010 and 2020. One of the most significant trends in Northern Europe has been, and will continue to be, immigration. Many of these immigrants are Christians, often bringing a more dynamic form of the faith into a region with low church attendance. Some of the largest churches in the region are African churches.

Northern Europe is the historic home of Anglicanism, which until 1970 remained the largest Christian tradition in the region. By 1970 Anglicanism had been replaced by Protestantism as the largest Christian tradition, with Protestants representing 35.0% of all Christians and Anglicans 33.5%. This trend had reversed again by 2010, with Anglicans holding 26.5% and Protestants 25.9%, and it is likely that Anglicans will continue to hold this slight margin in 2020.

### Christianity in Northern Europe, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Northern Europe	87,351,000	75,752,000	86.7	104,525,000	76,221,000	72.9	0.01
Channel Islands	121,000	115,000	95.0	156,000	131,000	83.9	0.26
Denmark	4,929,000	4,764,000	96.6	5,736,000	4,579,000	79.8	-0.08
Estonia	1,365,000	618,000	45.3	1,329,000	600,000	45.1	-0.06
Faeroe Islands	38,500	38,500	99.9	50,900	49,800	97.9	0.52
Finland	4,606,000	4,439,000	96.4	5,526,000	4,392,000	79.5	-0.02
Iceland	204,000	200,000	98.0	358,000	335,000	93.6	1.04
Ireland	2,963,000	2,947,000	99.5	4,968,000	4,556,000	91.7	0.88
Isle of Man	56,700	52,900	93.3	86,100	71,200	82.8	0.60
Latvia	2,366,000	1,207,000	51.0	2,169,000	1,555,000	71.7	0.51
Lithuania	3,137,000	2,212,000	70.5	3,190,000	2,889,000	90.6	0.54
Norway	3,877,000	3,829,000	98.8	5,230,000	4,560,000	87.2	0.35
Sweden	8,043,000	6,022,000	74.9	9,924,000	6,022,000	60.7	0.00
United Kingdom	55,645,000	49,307,000	88.6	65,802,000	46,481,000	70.6	-0.12

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

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## Religion

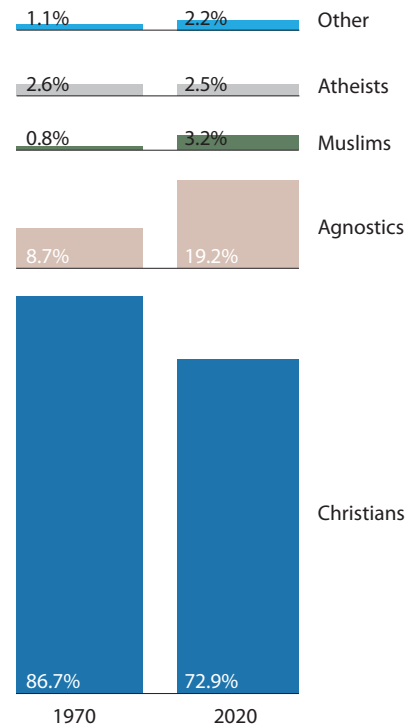
The most significant change in Northern Europe's religious landscape has been the rise of the non-religious—in particular, agnostics. Agnosticism in the region grew from 8.7% in 1970 to 17.7% in 2010, with a projected figure of 19.2% for 2020. The largest increases are projected to be in Estonia (from 30.0% in 1970 to 50.6% in 2020), Finland (2.5% to 17.7%), the United Kingdom (7.9% to 21.3%), and Denmark (2.0% to 12.4%). Lithuania and Latvia are the only two countries to have declined in agnosticism over the 50- and 10-year periods (falling from 19.3% in 1970 to 8.3% in 2020 in Lithuania, and from 31.1% to 23.0% in Latvia).

Muslims in Northern Europe grew from 0.8% of the population in 1970 to 2.9% in 2010 and are projected to increase to 3.2% in 2020, largely due to continued immigration and higher-than-average birth rates. The largest Muslim growth is occurring in Denmark (from 0.2% of the population in 1970 to 5.4% in 2020), Sweden (<0.1% to 4.4%), Norway (0.1% to 3.4%), and the United Kingdom (1.1% to 3.5%). In Northern Europe, 16% of Muslims personally knew a Christian in 2010, the lowest percentage for any of Europe's regions.

Small religions in Northern Europe are making significant gains between 1970 and 2020, largely due to immigration. Confucianists, Zoroastrians, and ethnoreligionists each will average annual growth of more than 12% regionally over the 50-year period, but all are likely to average less than 1% per annum between 2010 and 2020. These populations are still relatively small: fewer than 37,000 ethnoreligionists and than 7,000 each for Confucianists and Zoroastrians.

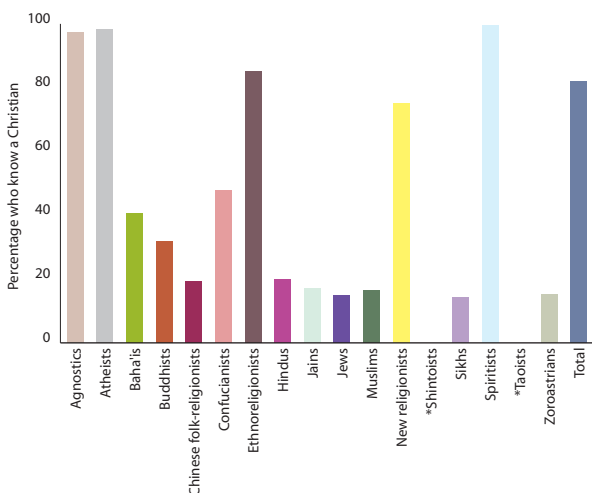
Hindus are expected to have significant growth over the 50-year period, with 783,000 adherents by 2020 (though still only 0.8% of the population). Sikhs are expected to more than double their population, reaching 480,000 by 2020. Both Sikhs and Hindus already outnumber Jews in the region, and Buddhists are likely to as well not long after 2020.

### Religious affiliation in Northern Europe, 1970 & 2020



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### Religionists in Northern Europe who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

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## Society

Over all, birth rates in Northern Europe have been decreasing since 1970. However, a significant issue is teen pregnancy, especially in the United Kingdom. The British Office for National Statistics reported in 2012 that the country has one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy in the developed world: 34,633 in 2010 out of a total population of 62 million. Nearly three out of every 100 girls aged 15 to 19 give birth every year, despite relatively high rates of contraceptive use.

## Southern Europe

### Christianity

Christianity in Southern Europe has been on a trajectory of decline since 1970. From representing 87.7% of the population then, it dropped to 82.4% in 2010 and is poised to fall to 81.7% by 2020. As in other regions in Europe, Christianity is not keeping pace with general population growth, both regionally and in most countries. The twentieth century was a tumultuous time for religion in Albania in particular. In 1970 the country was officially atheistic and had a Christian population of less than 200,000 (8.1% of the population). By 2010, however, Christianity had made significant gains (to 31.6% of the population), and this is expected to continue (to 32.4% in 2020).



On a regional basis Roman Catholicism is the dominant form of Christianity, although church affiliation is in decline. The church's influence on state affairs is waning throughout the region, due to falling numbers of clergy and a persistent decline of interest and in affiliation with church institutions. Roman Catholics represented 78.1% of the regional population in 1970 but are likely to drop to 73.8% by 2020.

Independent churches in Southern Europe are on the rise, largely due to immigration from Africa, and represent the fastest growth of any Christian tradition over the 50-year period (averaging 4.6% per annum). The growth of African Pentecostal churches in the region has been tremendous, with at least 1,000 congregations in Italy alone. Majority-Roman Catholic countries historically have struggled with the integration of these different kinds of Christians.

### Christianity in Southern Europe, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Southern Europe	126,766,000	111,133,000	87.7	158,477,000	129,391,000	81.7	0.30
Albania	2,136,000	173,000	8.1	3,294,000	1,067,000	32.4	3.71
Andorra	24,400	24,200	99.1	98,400	89,700	91.1	2.66
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3,564,000	1,650,000	46.3	3,647,000	1,742,000	47.8	0.11
Croatia	4,169,000	3,960,000	95.0	4,311,000	4,120,000	95.6	0.08
Gibraltar	24,700	22,600	91.5	29,400	25,800	87.9	0.27
Greece	8,793,000	8,643,000	98.3	11,569,000	10,502,000	90.8	0.39
Holy See	650	650	100.0	460	460	100.0	-0.69
Italy	53,325,000	47,100,000	88.3	61,290,000	48,840,000	79.7	0.07
Kosovo	1,213,000	133,000	10.9	2,096,000	123,000	5.9	-0.15
Macedonia	1,568,000	1,282,000	81.8	2,073,000	1,324,000	63.9	0.06
Malta	304,000	302,000	99.4	428,000	418,000	97.6	0.65
Montenegro	519,000	262,000	50.6	636,000	504,000	79.3	1.32
Portugal	8,684,000	8,375,000	96.4	10,623,000	9,535,000	89.8	0.26
San Marino	19,100	18,300	96.0	33,100	30,200	91.3	1.01
Serbia	6,960,000	4,621,000	66.4	7,622,000	6,882,000	90.3	0.80
Slovenia	1,670,000	1,550,000	92.8	2,066,000	1,782,000	86.3	0.28
Spain	33,792,000	33,015,000	97.7	48,661,000	42,404,000	87.1	0.50

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

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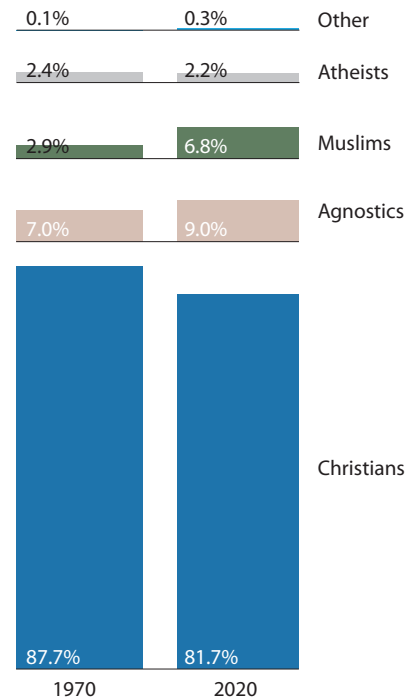
## Religion

Declines among Christians between 1970 and 2020 are countered by modest gains by agnostics and Muslims: agnostics are on track to increase from 7.0% of the population in 1970 to 9.0% in 2020, and Muslims from 2.9% to 6.8%. While Muslims in the region were historically found mainly in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo, nearly every Southern European country now has a Muslim community due to immigration. Muslims are likely to represent 32.8% of the population in Macedonia (680,000) in 2020 (up from 178,000—or 11.3%—in 1970), 17.3% in Montenegro (110,000), 4.3% in Greece (495,000), 2.9% in Spain (1.4 million), and 2.6% in Italy (1.6 million).

Agnostics and atheists have seen both their numbers and their percentages of the population increase in the “Western” countries of the region (such as Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain) over the period 1970–2020 while declining in Albania and most countries of the former Yugoslavia (Slovenia being the exception). Despite gains, adherents of smaller religions such as Hindus, Chinese folk-religionists, Jews, and Sikhs still account for a combined share of the regional population of less than 1%. Sikhs will have the largest growth rate between 2010 and 2020, averaging 2.3% per annum, largely due to immigration.

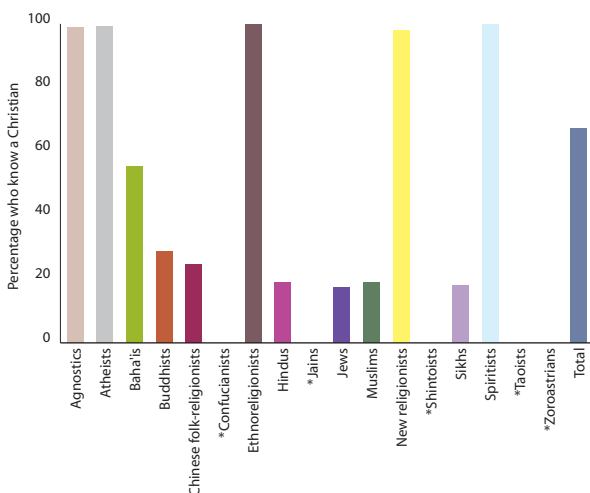
In Southern Europe in 2010, on average, 22% of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists personally knew a Christian. This is the lowest percentage of personal contact for these religions in all of Europe.

### Religious affiliation in Southern Europe, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Religionists in Southern Europe who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

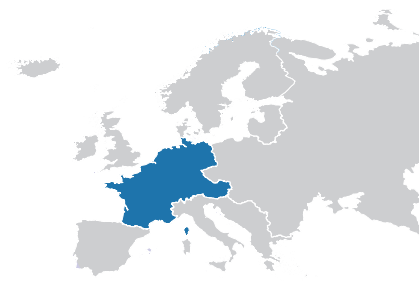
## Society

Southern Europe is currently experiencing one of the worst economic climates in the Western world. Greece in particular has faced major financial troubles, so severely in debt due to out-of-control spending that it was bailed out twice by the European Union in 2010. Austerity measures were put in place with drastic spending cuts, tax increases, and labor market and pension reforms, with devastating effects. The Greek public has struggled to find, maintain, and actually get paid for work, with an unemployment rate of more than 25%. Unemployment has exceeded 25% in Spain, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo (the latter above 40%) as well.

## Western Europe

### Christianity

Christianity in Western Europe has experienced the most drastic decline of any region of Europe, from 98.7% of the population in 1910 to 88.7% in 1970, 69.1% in 2010, and a projected 65.9% in 2020, the lowest percentage of any region in the global North. Adherence is expected to decrease over both the 50- and 10-year periods in most countries. Despite such decline, however, Christianity remains the largest religion in Western Europe.



Roman Catholicism is the largest Christian tradition in the region. In 1970, 58.2% of the region's population was Catholic. By 2010, however, that figure had dipped below half, to 48.8%, for the first time in the region's Christian history. This trajectory is expected to continue through 2020, with Roman Catholics declining to 47.3% of Western Europe's population, although they will continue to be the large majority of the region's Christians. These figures reflect a significant trend of disaffiliation with the Roman Catholic Church in Europe as a whole. In addition, Catholics constitute only a plurality of the national populations—although a majority of Christians—in the Netherlands and Switzerland, both of which historically have had significant Protestant communities. The Roman Catholic percentage is also dropping in both countries (almost as precipitously as the Protestants' in the Netherlands), although the total number of Catholics has increased in Switzerland.

Independents (0.8% in 1970 and 1.5% in 2010) and Orthodox (0.7% in 1970 and 1.3% in 2010) have each made small gains in the region. Independent growth is due mainly to immigration from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the arrival of different expressions of Christianity. Independents are poised to grow fastest among Christian traditions in most countries of the region between 1970 and 2020.

Germany is the only country in Western Europe in which Roman Catholics are not the largest Christian tradition. In 1970 this was by a large margin: the country was 44.1% Protestant and 35.8% Roman Catholic. However, this margin looks to shrink significantly by 2020, with Protestants claiming 30.1% and Roman Catholics claiming 29.0% of the population. Affiliation with both traditions has declined over the 50- and 10-year periods, with Protestants seeing the faster drop 1970–2020 and Roman Catholics declining slightly faster between 2010 and 2020.

### Christianity in Western Europe, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Western Europe	165,535,000	146,822,000	88.7	192,010,000	126,595,000	65.9	-0.30
Austria	7,466,000	7,238,000	97.0	8,515,000	6,111,000	71.8	-0.34
Belgium	9,625,000	8,914,000	92.6	11,001,000	7,539,000	68.5	-0.33
France	50,763,000	42,564,000	83.9	65,874,000	41,905,000	63.6	-0.03
Germany	78,169,000	70,112,000	89.7	80,988,000	54,159,000	66.9	-0.52
Liechtenstein	21,400	21,200	98.9	38,900	34,200	87.9	0.96
Luxembourg	339,000	323,000	95.3	577,000	444,000	76.9	0.64
Monaco	23,700	23,300	98.2	35,500	29,700	83.6	0.49
Netherlands	12,959,000	11,571,000	89.3	17,039,000	9,972,000	58.5	-0.30
Switzerland	6,169,000	6,056,000	98.2	7,942,000	6,402,000	80.6	0.11

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

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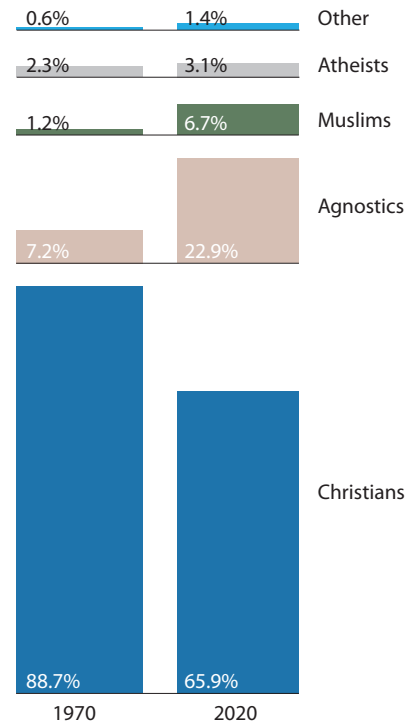
## Religion

Concurrent with the decline of Christianity—the only religion to have a negative rate of change over the 50-year period—are increases in other religions. Major world religions have made significant advances in the region, including Buddhism (averaging 6.2% growth per annum), Hinduism (5.3%), and Islam (3.8%), all largely due to immigration and higher-than-average birth rates. Islam is now the third-largest religion in the region, representing 6.1% of the total population in 2010. Despite the deleterious effects of World War II and the Holocaust, Judaism in the region appears to maintain steady representation throughout the 50-year period, consistently 0.4% of Western Europe's population. Buddhists had tremendous gains, from only 43,000 in 1970 to 876,000 by 2020 (though still only 0.5% of the region's population).

The increase in Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists also means increased opportunities for these religionists to personally know a Christian. It is estimated that in 2010, 19% of Muslims, 34% of Buddhists, and 25% of Hindus in Western Europe personally knew a Christian. The lower percentage for Muslims is interesting: there are far more Muslims in Western Europe than Hindus and Buddhists combined, yet they seemingly have less contact with Christians.

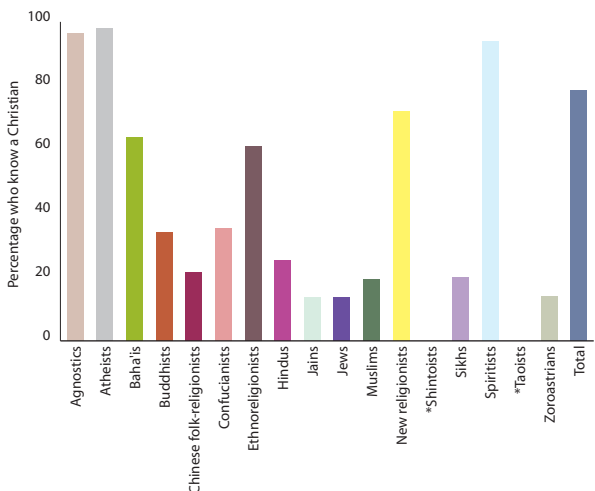
The influence of secularism, the deinstitutionalization of religion, and the continuing trend of disaffiliation with the church is perhaps strongest in Western Europe. The non-religious (agnostics and atheists) represented 23.5% of the population in 2010, and this percentage is expected to increase to 26.0% by 2020. Atheists and agnostics have some of the highest growth rates between 2010 and 2020.

## Religious affiliation in Western Europe, 1970 & 2020



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## Religionists in Western Europe who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
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## Society

Immigration has become the “new normal” for all countries in Western Europe. Increased immigration rates have put strains on numerous sectors of society, including employment, schooling, and housing. The general public of many host countries has shown indifference at best—and hostility at worst—to newcomers. These countries face serious issues of social cohesion as they become more multi-cultural and less culturally homogenous. One striking example is the ban on full-face veils in public places in France, a law enacted in April 2011 as an effort to curb “Islamic extremism” in the country.

## Latin America

### Christianity

Christians are declining as a percentage of Latin America's population, from 94.2% in 1970 to 92.1% by 2020, but Latin American Christians are increasing as a percentage of the global Christian population, from 22.0% in 1970 to 23.5% by 2020. Latin America has been predominantly Roman Catholic throughout the 50-year period, but their share is declining as well. Roman Catholics represented 87.7% of the total population in 1970, but only 79.7% by 2020. The largest populations of Catholics live in Mexico and Brazil, Latin America's two largest countries. Together these nations make up slightly more than half of the total population. Mexico was 90.7% Catholic in 1970, declined slightly to 88.5% in 2010, and is expected to decline further to 86.1% in 2020. Brazil was 88.6% Catholic in 1970 and is expected to be 74.6% Catholic in 2020.



While some of the decline of Roman Catholicism can be attributed to secularization, the majority of those who leave are joining Protestant or Pentecostal churches. For example, in Brazil—the country with the largest Christian population in Latin America—Protestants and Independents combined represented 12.9% of the population in 1970 but are expected to grow to 28.8% by 2020. Renewalists in Latin America have experienced astounding growth, from 12.8 million in 1970 to 181.3 million in 2010 and an expected 203.0 million by 2020. Pentecostals in particular are gaining an increased role in public life. Guatemala has recently had two Pentecostal presidents, and a Pentecostal political party has been founded in Nicaragua.

Evangelicals are also making gains in Latin America, growing from 9.2 million in 1970 to 47.2 million in 2010, with projected growth to 59.6 million by 2020. Brazil is home to the region's largest two Evangelical denominations, the Assemblies of God (23 million members) and the National Evangelization Crusade (2.3 million). The growth of both Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism has caused strain with the long-established Roman Catholic Church.

Marginal Christianity has growth significantly in Latin America, from only 0.3% of the population in 1970 to an expected 2.1% by 2020 (an average growth rate of 5.8% per year, the largest continent-wide growth rate for any major Christian tradition globally over the 50-year period). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has made great gains in some of the smaller island nations, such as Netherland Antilles, Aruba, and St. Kitts & Nevis. Jehovah's Witnesses averaged growth of more than 5% per year in Nicaragua and Honduras and number over 40,000 in each country in 2010.

### Religion

Latin America is the least-religiously-diverse continent in the world. Agnostics and Spiritists are the second- and third-largest religious traditions in the region and are the only (besides Christianity) that represent more than 1% of the region's population. Ethnoreligionists, a distant fourth, claimed 0.7% of the region's popula-

### Christianity in Latin America, 1970 to 2020

Region	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Latin America	286,378,000	269,856,000	94.2	652,181,000	600,553,000	92.1	1.61
Caribbean	25,327,000	19,816,000	78.2	44,321,000	37,529,000	84.7	1.29
Central America	69,590,000	67,945,000	97.6	176,389,000	168,540,000	95.6	1.83
South America	191,462,000	182,096,000	95.1	431,471,000	394,484,000	91.4	1.56

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

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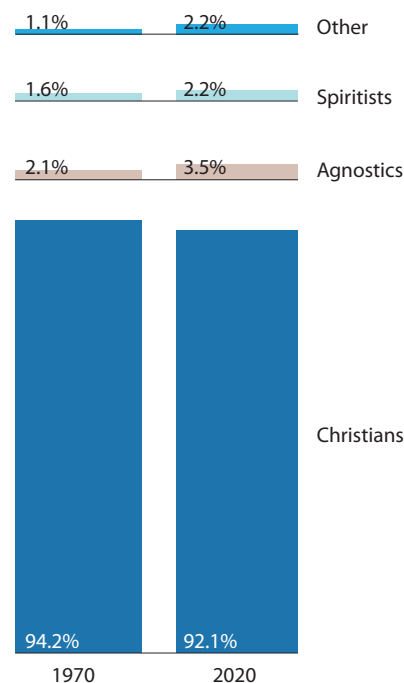
tion in 1970; this has fallen to 0.6% in 2010–20.

Agnostics represented 2.1% of Latin America's population in 1970 and 3.2% in 2010. Their annual growth rate will continue to be nearly double that of the general population between 2010 and 2020, giving agnostics 3.5% of the population by 2020. Nearly half of the region's agnostics live in the two most populous countries, Brazil and Mexico, which were 2.4% and 2.6% agnostic in 2010, respectively. In 1970, only Cuba and Uruguay were more than 5% agnostic (30.7% and 28.2%). However, both of these are exceptional cases. Uruguay has historically been one of the least-religious countries in Latin America, with the overwhelming majority of its population of European descent (who are generally less religious than indigenous Latin American ethnic groups). Cuba is still 59.2% Christian in 2010, but there is much mixing with traditional religions such as Santería, a combination of Yoruba religion, Roman Catholicism, and some indigenous religions.

The proportion of Spiritists in the region grew from 1.6% in 1970 to 2.3% in 2010 but is predicted to decrease slightly to 2.2% by 2020. The largest populations of Spiritists reside in Brazil (9.4 million in 2010) and Cuba (1.9 million).

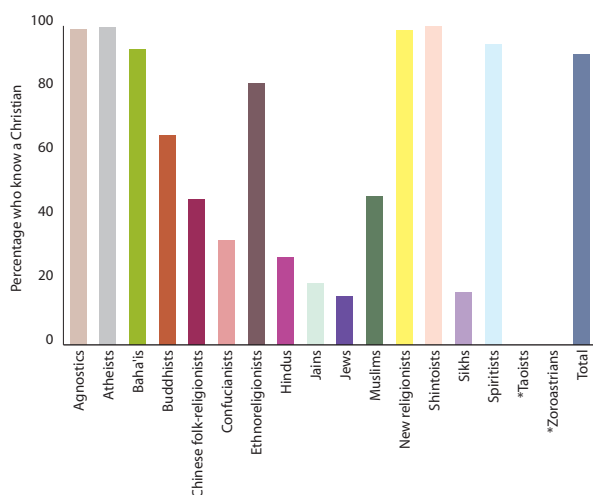
Spiritist communities around the world are quite small, making it somewhat easier for them to have contact with Christians. However, Spiritists in Latin America claim a larger proportion of the population, yet they still retain a considerable amount of personal interaction with Christians, with 94% personally knowing a Christian in 2010. Because of the small size of their communities in Latin America, only 47% of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in Latin America personally knew a Christian in 2010.

### Religious affiliation in Latin America, 1970 & 2020



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*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Religionists in Latin America who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

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## Society

Latin America (including the Caribbean) ranks comparatively well on the United Nation's eight Millennium Development Goals but still face challenges. Gains in labor productivity have been slow, contributing to the continued reality of working poverty. In addition, differences in undernutrition between rural and urban children are the largest in the world. In 2012, 8% of children living in rural areas were underweight in 2012, compared to only 4% in urban areas.



# The Caribbean

## Christianity

Christians throughout Latin America are primarily Roman Catholic, and the Caribbean is no exception. Catholicism has grown at a rate slightly above general population growth—averaging 1.2% per annum between 1970 and 2020—and including a projected 0.7% annually between 2010 and 2020, and has consistently represented just over 60% of the region's population. Approximately three quarters of Caribbean church members in 2010 were Roman Catholic, and this will continue to be the case in 2020.



Protestants are the largest Christian tradition in most English-speaking nations in the Caribbean. Most of the English-speaking Caribbean also maintains a significant Anglican presence (above 10%), although the Anglican Church's share of the population declined throughout the twentieth century as it ceased to be the state church in many nations.

Independents, the third-largest Christian tradition in the region, represented 4.2% of the population in 2010 and are growing at an even faster rate per annum than Protestants, averaging 2.6% per annum from 1970 to 2020.

## Christianity in the Caribbean, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Caribbean	25,327,000	19,816,000	78.2	44,321,000	37,529,000	84.7	1.29
Anguilla	6,400	6,200	96.1	17,500	15,800	90.3	1.91
Antigua & Barbuda	65,600	64,200	97.9	97,400	90,200	92.7	0.68
Aruba	59,100	57,200	96.9	111,000	106,000	95.4	1.24
Bahamas	169,000	164,000	97.1	383,000	355,000	92.7	1.56
Barbados	239,000	235,000	98.2	279,000	264,000	94.5	0.23
British Virgin Islands	9,800	8,900	91.0	25,400	21,300	84.0	1.76
Cayman Islands	9,500	8,600	91.0	60,500	48,300	79.8	3.50
Cuba	8,702,000	4,013,000	46.1	11,173,000	6,901,000	61.8	1.09
Dominica	71,100	70,000	98.4	67,900	63,900	94.1	-0.18
Dominican Republic	4,512,000	4,390,000	97.3	11,121,000	10,548,000	94.9	1.77
Grenada	94,400	93,500	99.0	108,000	104,000	96.3	0.21
Guadeloupe	320,000	312,000	97.3	479,000	458,000	95.7	0.78
Haiti	4,710,000	4,552,000	96.7	11,311,000	10,637,000	94.0	1.71
Jamaica	1,869,000	1,708,000	91.4	2,828,000	2,388,000	84.4	0.67
Martinique	326,000	321,000	98.4	414,000	398,000	96.2	0.43
Montserrat	11,600	11,300	97.6	6,400	5,800	91.3	-1.31
Netherlands Antilles	159,000	154,000	96.8	212,000	197,000	93.0	0.50
Puerto Rico	2,716,000	2,673,000	98.4	3,747,000	3,584,000	95.7	0.59
Saint Kitts & Nevis	44,900	44,400	99.0	58,500	55,200	94.4	0.44
Saint Lucia	104,000	102,000	98.4	190,000	182,000	95.8	1.16
Saint Vincent	90,500	87,700	96.9	110,000	97,300	88.5	0.21
Trinidad & Tobago	968,000	672,000	69.4	1,373,000	870,000	63.3	0.52
Turks & Caicos Is	5,600	5,600	99.5	42,600	39,000	91.6	3.97
United States Virgin Is	64,100	63,000	98.3	106,000	99,900	94.3	0.93

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

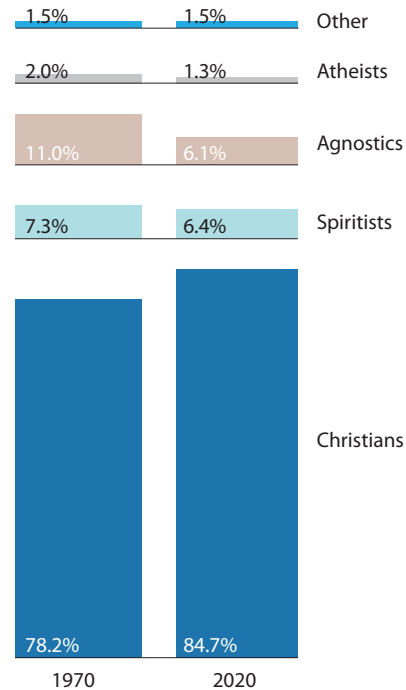
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In most Caribbean countries, Christianity's average annual growth over the 50-year period falls just short of keeping pace with general population growth. Only in Cuba has Christian growth surpassed population growth in the 50-year period (averaging 1.1% and 0.5% per annum, respectively). Cuba's relatively large population (one quarter of the regional total), however, weights the statistics in favor of Christian growth. Relatively slow growth in Cuba might alter this in the future.

## Religion

Spiritists are the second-largest religious group in the Caribbean. Spiritism grew rapidly over much of the twentieth century, increasing from 0.8% of the region's population in 1910 to 7.3% of the population in 1970. Voodoo in Haiti and a variety of Afro-Caribbean Spiritist groups throughout the region expanded dramatically in this period. However, Spiritism's growth is expected to slow to an average 0.9% per annum over the period 1970–2020 and 0.2% per annum over 2010–20, reducing its share of the population to 6.4% by 2020. Cuba's relatively large population again masks the overall trend in the region: the growth of Spiritism outstripped general population growth over the 50-year period—in most cases exceeding it by far—in every country except Cuba and Saint Vincent. In 2010, 72% of Spiritists personally knew a Christian, the lowest percentage for the religion among Latin America's three regions.

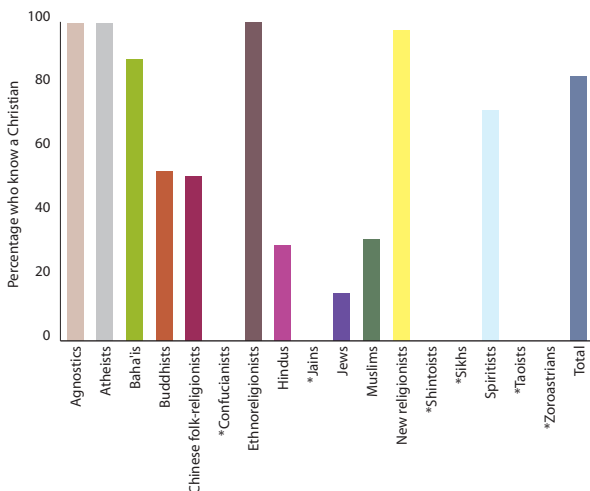
### Religious affiliation in the Caribbean, 1970 & 2020



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Agnostics and atheists were the third- and fourth-largest groups in the region in 2010. Both groups had strong growth rates between 1910 and 2010, but this will reverse itself looking forward to 2020. For example, agnostics and atheists have declined from 11.0% and 2.0% of the population, respectively, in 1970 to 6.7% and 1.6% in 2010 despite increasing in number over that period. Their actual numbers are expected to decline between 2010 and 2020, however (averaging -0.4% and -1.0% annual rates of change, respectively).

### Religionists in the Caribbean who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

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## Society

Natural disasters such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and regular hurricanes and floods are not uncommon in the Caribbean. These events affect the region environmentally (water contamination and habitat destruction), but also have a huge impact socially, causing death and raising unemployment and homelessness. They are also particularly devastating in the Caribbean due to the incredibly high rates of poverty in many communities.

## Central America

### Christianity

The story of religious change in Central America since 1970 has been the increasing diversification of Christian traditions. The region was 89.8% Roman Catholic in 1970 and is expected to be 83.9% Roman Catholic in 2020. Roman Catholics' average annual rate of growth (0.9%) is expected to remain below the rate of population growth in the region (1.2%) between 2010 and 2020. Mexico, whose geographic area and population vastly outweigh those of the rest of the region, has maintained the highest levels of Catholicism, decreasing only from 90.7% in 1970 to 88.5% in 2010.



The growth of Independent—and especially Pentecostal—churches throughout Central America since 1970 has been undeniably dramatic. These groups were founded largely in the early twentieth century through the influence of or distantly resonating with the Azusa Street Revival. They established themselves as separate entities and often fragmented further through the middle part of the century. Independent Christians represented 2.1% of the region's population in 1970 and 4.3% in 2010, and they are projected to reach 4.8% of the population by 2020.

Protestant churches have experienced even more dramatic growth than Independents, increasing steadily from 2.1% of the population in 1970 to a projected 7.3% in 2020. In 2010 Protestants represented more than 10 million Central Americans. Throughout the region, Protestant percentages are expected to exceed 10% of the population for the period 2010–20 in every country except Mexico.

Marginal Christians represented less than 1% of the region's population in 1970. Over the period 1970–2020 their rate of growth is forecast to be at least double that of the general population in every country in the region, although Marginals still represent only 2–3% of each country in 2010. Growth for the period 2010–20 is expected to remain at least double that of the general population in El Salvador and Nicaragua (and almost so in Mexico), while in Guatemala it will drop below the general population rate.

### Religion

Central America was 97.6% Christian in 1970 and is projected to remain 95.6% Christian in 2020. Agnostics represented the second-largest religious group in the region in 2010 at 3.8 million (2.4% of the population); they are also the second-largest group in every country except Belize, where they rank sixth. They show the highest regional growth rates for both 2000–10 and 2010–20 and are projected to represent 2.7%

### Christianity in Central America, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Central America	69,590,000	67,945,000	97.6	176,389,000	168,540,000	95.6	1.83
Belize	122,000	115,000	94.4	377,000	344,000	91.2	2.21
Costa Rica	1,820,000	1,787,000	98.2	5,272,000	5,016,000	95.2	2.09
El Salvador	3,736,000	3,717,000	99.5	6,610,000	6,335,000	95.9	1.07
Guatemala	5,448,000	5,413,000	99.4	18,382,000	17,888,000	97.3	2.42
Honduras	2,688,000	2,635,000	98.0	9,179,000	8,784,000	95.7	2.44
Mexico	51,868,000	50,458,000	97.3	125,928,000	120,260,000	95.5	1.75
Nicaragua	2,398,000	2,382,000	99.4	6,603,000	6,269,000	94.9	1.95
Panama	1,510,000	1,438,000	95.2	4,038,000	3,644,000	90.2	1.88

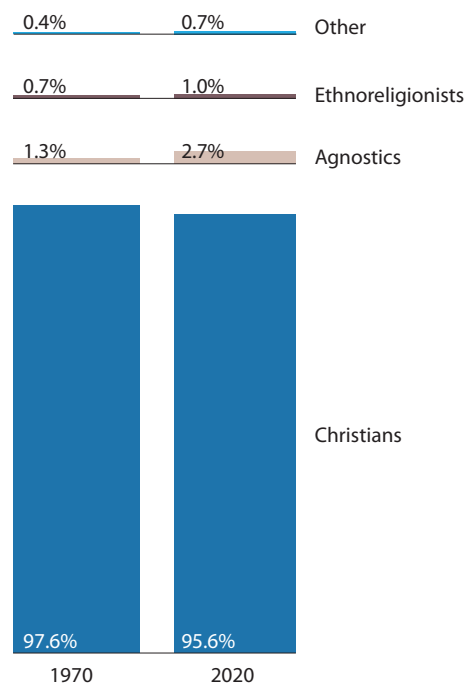
\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

of the population in 2020. Ethnoreligionists are the only other group that has more than both 1 million adherents and 1.0% of the regional population in 2010. They also exceed the 1% level in Mexico and Panama. On a country basis, Baha'is exceed the 1% level in Belize (where they rank second in size after Christians) and Panama in 2010. Other religions having at least 1% of the population include Hindus (Belize) and Spiritists (Belize and Nicaragua).

Growth rates for all religions other than Christianity are projected to exceed the general population growth rate in the region over 1970–2020. Hindus, atheists, New religionists, and Spiritists have the highest rates, although their most rapid percentage growth occurred early in the period. Sikhs grew less rapidly than the general population 2000–10, however, as did ethnoreligionists and Jews. That trend is projected to continue for the latter two over 2010–20 as well, with Jews losing population over the period.

Overall, 47% of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in Central America personally knew a Christian in 2010. Muslims in the region have more contact with Christians than in any other region in Latin America: 78%, compared to Latin America's combined 47%. Buddhists have more contact compared to the other regions (31%) as well, while Hindus have less (32%).

### Religious affiliation in Central America, 1970 & 2020

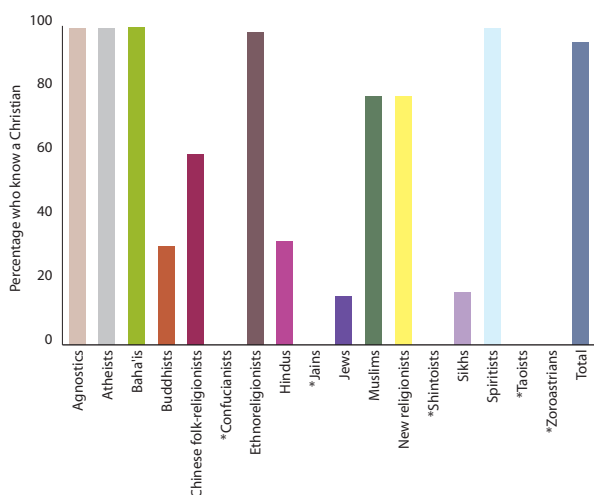


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## Society

The twentieth century, especially the latter part, saw internal war throughout most of Central America. Although these wars were not primarily motivated by religious interests, lay Christians and ecclesiastical leaders took sides in the conflicts.

### Religionists in Central America who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

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Perception of and adherence to Christian groups shifted with the popularity of political ideas. Many Protestants were perceived to align ideologically with Marxists and Communists, and as the United States, the Soviet Union, and Cuba fought puppet wars in Latin America, identification with such groups carried its own risks. Loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church became undeniably political. After the USSR unraveled, the spirit of Ché Guevara and other leftist revolutionaries continued to divide Christians of the region. These political interests also shaped Liberation Theology, which divided many hereditary/long-time Catholics from the leaders of their church.

## South America

### Christianity

The Christian percentage of South America's population dropped from 95.1% in 1970 to 91.9% in 2010 and is anticipated to drop again slightly by 2020, to 91.4%. Like Latin America generally, the vast majority of this region is Roman Catholic. Catholicism, however, is one of only two Christian traditions in the region (the other is Anglicanism) whose growth over the 50-year period (averaging 1.4% per annum) will not keep pace with general population growth (1.6%), and it is the only tradition that is not projected to keep pace with population growth between 2010 and 2020.



The relative decline of Catholicism has paralleled explosive Protestant, Independent, and Marginal growth. Brazil typifies these changes and, because nearly 50% of South America's population lives there, heavily weights the statistics presented here. Brazil was 88.6% Roman Catholic in 1970 and 77.1% Catholic in 2010. This share is projected to continue decreasing, to 74.6% in 2020. Protestants represent the second-largest Christian group in Brazil, increasing from 7.6% of the population in 1970 to 16.6% in 2010 and 17.6% (37 million people) in 2020. Independents have increased from 5.3% in 1970 to 10.4% in 2010 and 11.2% in 2020. Marginal groups, although representing a less-significant numerical share of Brazil's population, have increased from 0.3% in 1970 to 1.5% in 2010 and 1.7% in 2020.

This pattern of slight Catholic decline and strong Protestant, Independent, and Marginal growth is repeated throughout most of South America. Notable exceptions are the small nation of Guyana, where the majority of Christians are Protestant (26.8% of the total population in 2010, up from 13.3% in 1970), and Suriname, where all Christian groups are on the rise but especially Catholics, with a growth rate of 1.5% over the 50-year period and 1.3% from 2010-2020, compared to 0.9% and 0.8% growth in the general population. It is also worth pointing out that in Chile, Independents are expected to make up 25.1% of the population by 2020 (up from 14.7% in 1970 and 23.8% in 2010), a greater share by far than in any other country in the region and representing 4.7 million people by 2020. The only other countries where Independents' share rises out of the single digits are Brazil (11.2% by 2020) and Guyana (11.0% by 2020). The rise of Indepen-

### Christianity in South America, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	Rate*
South America	191,462,000	182,096,000	95.1	431,471,000	394,484,000	91.4	1.56
Argentina	23,983,000	22,947,000	95.7	43,856,000	39,476,000	90.0	1.09
Bolivia	4,217,000	3,990,000	94.6	11,591,000	10,733,000	92.6	2.00
Brazil	96,078,000	91,490,000	95.2	210,433,000	190,404,000	90.5	1.48
Chile	9,578,000	8,875,000	92.7	18,540,000	16,280,000	87.8	1.22
Colombia	21,330,000	20,810,000	97.6	52,185,000	49,465,000	94.8	1.75
Ecuador	5,972,000	5,832,000	97.7	16,355,000	15,852,000	96.9	2.02
Falkland Islands	2,000	1,900	93.0	3,100	2,500	80.8	0.60
French Guiana	48,600	44,400	91.4	295,000	249,000	84.4	3.51
Guyana	721,000	383,000	53.1	773,000	425,000	55.0	0.21
Paraguay	2,483,000	2,432,000	98.0	7,601,000	7,250,000	95.4	2.21
Peru	13,187,000	12,925,000	98.0	32,435,000	31,246,000	96.3	1.78
Suriname	372,000	184,000	49.6	569,000	291,000	51.2	0.92
Uruguay	2,809,000	1,904,000	67.8	3,495,000	2,149,000	61.5	0.24
Venezuela	10,681,000	10,277,000	96.2	33,340,000	30,660,000	92.0	2.21

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020



dents and Protestants throughout the region reflects a thriving Pentecostal movement.

## Religion

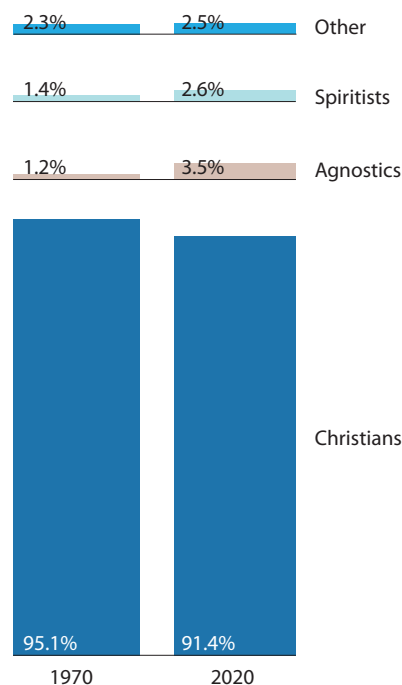
Agnosticism and Spiritism are the only groups other than Christianity representing more than 1% of the region's population in either 1970 or 2020. Agnostics constituted 3.1% of the region's population in 2010, up from 1.2% in 1970, and the growth rate of this group is expected to far outstrip general population growth between 2010–20, reaching 3.5% of the population by 2020. Spiritists represented 1.4% of South America's population in 1970 and represent 2.6% in 2010–20.

Ethnoreligionists presently claim more than 1.0% of the population in a number of countries, but the growth rate of this group in 2010–20 is not keeping pace with population growth in most countries (Brazil is the exception, where ethnoreligions' growth is expected to match population growth).

Suriname was 50.3% Christian in 2010. The balance of Suriname's small population is mostly Hindu (23.4% in 1970, 20.4% 2010–20) and Muslim (13.4%, 15.9%). In Guyana (54.8% Christian in 2010), Hindus make up 30.1% of the population, and Muslims make up 7.5%, and these numbers will hold fairly steady to 2020. Note that outside of Suriname and Guyana, Muslims are significantly represented only in Argentina (2.0% in 2010–20). Baha'is also represent 1.6% of the population of Guyana, making it one of only two countries where the Baha'i faith has statistical impact (the other being Bolivia). As elsewhere, ethnoreligionists, agnostics, and Spiritists make up significant minorities in both Suriname and Guyana.

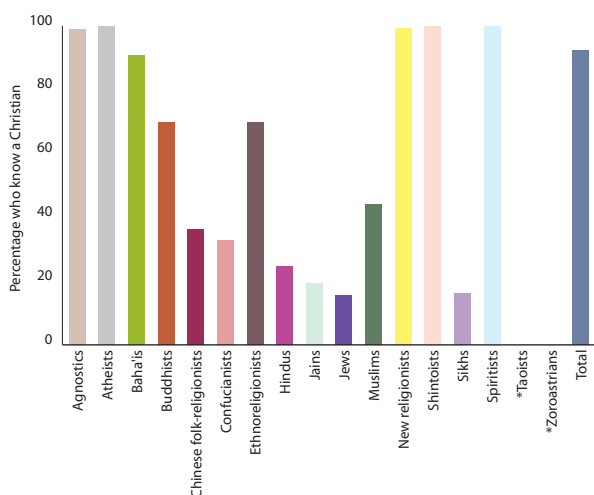
In Uruguay (63.9% Christian in 2010), agnostics and atheists together make up over 30% of the population throughout the 50-year period, representing 28.0% and 6.5% in 2010, respectively. Jews also made up 1.2% of Uruguay's population, and this percentage is expected hold steady through 2020. Uruguay is the only country in South America where Jews make up more than 1.0% of the population. Overall for South America, 46% of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists personally knew a Christian in 2010.

## Religious affiliation in South America, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
Christianity in its Global Context, June 2013

## Religionists in South America who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
Christianity in its Global Context, June 2013

## Society

Drug production and trafficking in South America continues to plague the region, with traffickers becoming increasingly sophisticated and violent. South America is the only place where cocaine is produced, with the United States as its major market. Governmental pressure, including from abroad, on drug producers in Columbia has caused traffickers to find new growing areas in Peru and Bolivia.

## Northern America

### Christianity

The demographics of Northern America are dominated by the United States. In no other region does a single country hold a higher share (more than 90%) of the total population or the Christian population, let alone both. As a consequence, patterns in Northern America (e.g., growth rates for all Christians and for Christian traditions) follow those of the United States. Most of the remaining population—total and Christian—lives in Canada; the other three countries combined account for less than 0.1% of the region's population.



Over the period 1970–2010 the Christian share of the population in each country shrank—most dramatically in Canada, where Christians fell from 94.5% of the population in 1970 to 69.4% in 2010, with a projected drop to 66.0% by 2020. The United States also saw a large decline in its Christian percentage, from 90.9% of the population in 1970 to 80.1% in 2010 (78.1% by 2020). Roman Catholics are the largest single Christian tradition, although only a plurality, in both Canada (where they are also a majority of church members) and the United States. The Catholic share of Canada's population has held steady over the 40-year period (41.7% in 1970, 43.6% in 2020), but there are sharp losses among both Protestants (from 19.1% of the total population in 1970 to 9.4% in 2020) and Anglicans (from 5.4% in 1970 to 1.5% in 2020). Similar patterns are evident in the United States (Roman Catholics: 23.1% in 1970 and 22.5% by 2020; Protestants: 27.3% versus 16.5%; Anglicans: 1.5% versus 0.6%). Note that Independents have surpassed Protestants as the second-largest tradition in the United States.

In Saint Pierre & Miquelon, Roman Catholics constitute an overwhelming majority of the total population, although this decreased somewhat over the period (96.1% in 1970; 93.3% in 2010). In Greenland—more than 95% Christian 1970–2020—most church members are Protestant (over 97% for the entire period). The Protestant share of the total population, however, has declined steadily, from 75.3% in 1970 to 66.3% in 2010 and a projected 63.3% by 2020.

The seeming paradox in Northern America as a whole is the rise in the number of Christians who are not affiliated with any particular church tradition. This phenomenon has been occurring most prominently in Canada, Greenland, and the United States. The religiously unaffiliated—who include, but not exclusively, agnostics and atheists—is a major change in the religious demographics of the region.

### Religion

Agnostics are the second-largest group of religionists in every country in the region. By 2020 they will have tripled from their 1970 percentages in the United States and Bermuda (and regionally) and increased their share by a factor of almost six in Saint Pierre & Miquelon, seven in Canada, and 13 in Greenland. In Cana-

### Christianity in Northern America, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Northern America	231,285,000	210,952,000	91.2	374,394,000	288,005,000	76.9	0.62
Bermuda	51,800	49,600	95.8	66,100	58,400	88.4	0.33
Canada	21,717,000	20,528,000	94.5	37,163,000	24,542,000	66.0	0.36
Greenland	46,400	45,600	98.3	56,900	54,500	95.7	0.36
Saint Pierre & Miquelon	5,500	5,400	98.4	6,000	5,700	94.3	0.09
United States	209,464,000	190,323,000	90.9	337,102,000	263,344,000	78.1	0.65

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

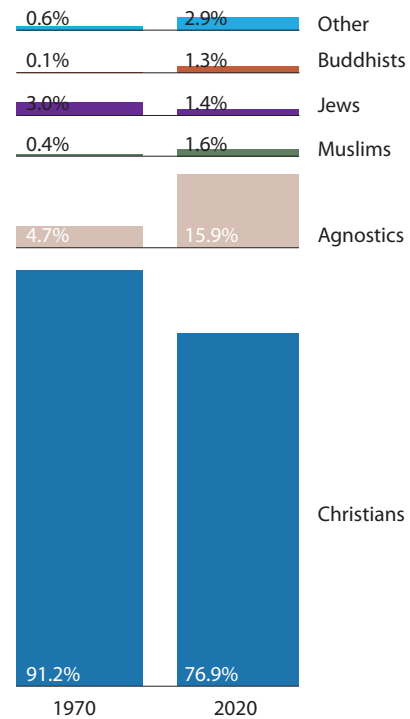
da, Jews—the third-largest group in 1970 (1.3% of the population)—have dropped to eighth in size as of 2010 and will fall to ninth (1.0%) by 2020. Both Muslims and atheists are expected to reach 1 million adherents by that time. The presence of nine religions each with at least 1% of the total population makes Canada one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world.

In the United States, Jews continue to rank third in size, despite a declining population—from 6.7 million (3.2% of the total) to 5.1 million (1.5%) over the period 1970–2010. Over the same period Muslims have grown from 800,000 (0.4%) to 4.1 million (1.3%). If current trends continue, Muslims will pass Jews as the third-largest religious group in the United States not long after 2020. The only other group claiming at least 1% of the total population is Buddhists, who have grown from 0.1% in 1970 to 1.3% in 2010–20.

Among the other countries, Bermuda is 2.7% Spiritist and about 1% Muslim in 2010–20 (up from 1.9% and 0% in 1970). In Greenland the ethnoreligionist population is projected to decline slightly in both size and percentage (from 1.1% in 1970 to 0.7% in 2020) while Baha'is show an increase (from 0.4% to 0.7%). Baha'is are expected to constitute 1.5% of the population of Saint Pierre & Miquelon in 2020 as well, up from 0.9% in 1970.

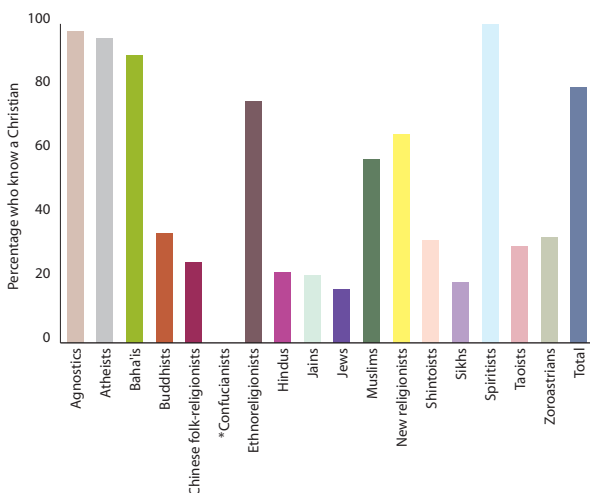
Given the religious diversity of Northern America, it is surprising that only 80% of all religionists personally knew a Christian in 2010. The percentages for Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists are lower in Northern America than in many regions of Latin America, which has much smaller populations of these religionists.

### Religious affiliation in Northern America, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

### Religionists in Northern America who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none  
present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
*Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

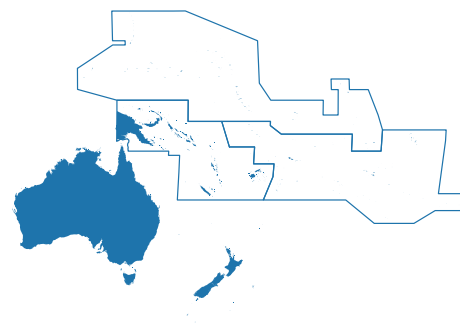
### Society

All countries in the region face issues of unemployment and underemployment. Greenland experiences high rates of alcoholism and suicide as well. In the United States and Canada, social issues include the role of immigrants in society (both legal and undocumented); providing (or maintaining) social services, particularly health care; and homelessness, especially in urban areas. Violence and regulation of firearms are volatile issues in the United States, while in Canada the place of Quebec in the country is hotly debated.

# Oceania

## Christianity

Christianity in Oceania has undergone significant changes over the 50-year period. In 1970, Christians were 92.5% of the region's population. This is a marked increase from the 1910 Christian percentage (78.6%) and is indicative of the great success of missionary efforts from many different Christian traditions. In a sense, 1970 embodies the height of Christianity in Oceania, following large-scale conversions from traditional religions, especially in Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Since 1970, however, Christianity's percentage of the population has been declining in all regions. Two major factors in its decline are (1) secularization, primarily in Australia and New Zealand, which dominate Oceania demographically; and (2) a decrease in conversions from ethnoreligions in Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.



Between 1970 and 2020 Christianity is expected to grow more slowly than the general population in Oceania (with average annual rates of 1.1% and 1.6%, respectively), resulting in a continued decrease in the religion's share of the population. Regionally, however, Christianity is expected to grow more rapidly than the population in Melanesia. This is likely because ethnoreligions are still quite prominent in that region (the second-largest religion, with 2.8% of the population in 2020), and thus could provide opportunities for conversions.

The internal make-up of Christianity in Oceania is also expected to change. Anglicanism and Protestantism are the oldest traditions in the region as a result of early missionary efforts, in the latter case by Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Lutherans. As a result, in 1970 Anglicans and Protestants represented 46.4% of the regional population. By 2020, however, that percentage is likely to drop to 34.4%, with Anglicanism actually shrinking (there will likely be only as many Anglicans in 2020 as there were in 1970).

Roman Catholics, Independents, Marginals, and Orthodox have each made gains over the 50-year period, although the Catholic percentage has been shrinking since 2000. Orthodox in particular have grown from 1.7% of the population to 2.6%, with more than 1 million adherents projected for 2020. However, nearly all of Oceania's Orthodox are found in Australia. Orthodoxy is relatively new in Australia and largely a product of immigration from Europe. The largest Orthodox traditions in Australia in 2010 were Greek Orthodox (over 500,000 members), Macedonian Orthodox (57,000), and Russian Orthodox (54,700). Marginal Christian traditions have also grown, mostly due to missionary efforts from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), which in 2010 had 129,000 adherents in Australia alone.

## Religion

In 1910, most of Oceania was either Christian (78.6%) or ethnoreligionist (19.7%). By 1970 the nonreligious replaced ethnoreligionists as the second-largest tradition, with agnostics and atheists combined compos-

### Christianity in Oceania, 1970 to 2020

Region	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Oceania	19,506,000	18,037,000	92.5	42,057,000	30,818,000	73.3	1.08
Australia/New Zealand	15,548,000	14,520,000	93.4	30,065,000	19,735,000	65.6	0.62
Melanesia	3,306,000	2,885,000	87.3	10,661,000	9,822,000	92.1	2.48
Micronesia	242,000	231,000	95.5	603,000	561,000	93.1	1.79
Polynesia	409,000	401,000	98.1	728,000	699,000	96.1	1.12

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

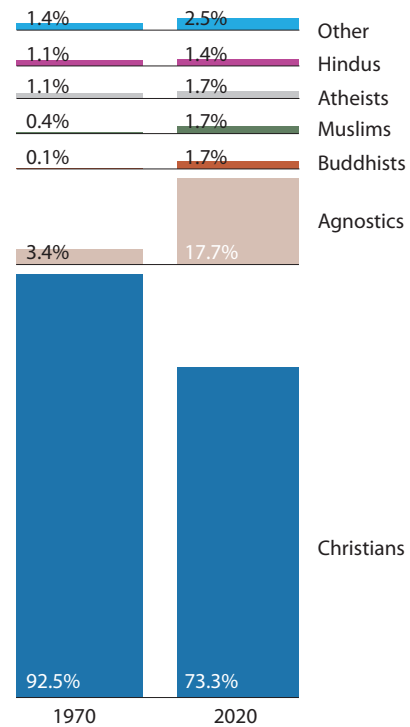
ing 4.5% of the population and ethnoreligionists dropping to only 0.8% (157,000 adherents). Large numbers of ethnoreligionists converted to Christianity during the twentieth century, raising Christianity's share of the population to 92.5% by 1970. However, since 1970 the region has experienced a strong trend toward secularization. As a result, the nonreligious population grew to 16.4% in 2010, with a projected increase to 19.4% by 2020.

One major factor affecting the religious demographics of Oceania is high rates of immigration from Asian countries. China is a significant sending country, contributing to the rise in Chinese folk-religionists (only 16,900 in 1970 and over 100,000 in 2010) and agnostics in the region. Many migrants also arrive from India, increasing the region's Hindu population (218,000 in 1970 and over 500,000 in 2010). Buddhists have increased significantly as well, due to migrants from Vietnam and other South-eastern Asian countries. Buddhism is the third-largest religion in the region, with 717,000 adherents by 2020 (1.7%), with the highest average annual growth rate of the major religions over the 50-year period (7.8%). Muslims have also experienced growth, from 0.4% of the population in 1970 to 1.7% in 2010.

In 2010, Oceania had nearly equal numbers of Buddhists, Muslims, and atheists. In addition, on average, 49% of individuals in these traditions personally knew a Christian.

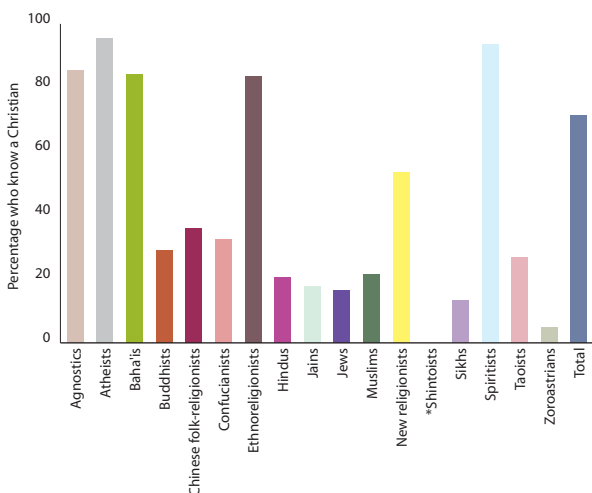
Most religious traditions are expected to grow more rapidly than the general population over the period 2010–20. The most rapid growth is expected among atheists (averaging 3.9% per annum), Confucianists (3.6%), and agnostics (3.0%).

### Religious affiliation in Oceania, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
Christianity in its Global Context, June 2013

### Religionists in Oceania who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
Christianity in its Global Context, June 2013

### Society

Every nation in Oceania is surrounded by water, which often puts them at great risk from many environmental issues. Globally, the countries with the most greenhouse gas emissions are least vulnerable to their effects, leaving smaller, and often poorer, countries in regions like Oceania to respond to the resulting challenges. Rising sea levels have had severe consequences on both humans and biodiversity, resulting in loss of habitat. Pacific Islanders need to be involved in the global conversation surrounding climate change in order to implement effective strategies to combat its potentially deleterious effects.

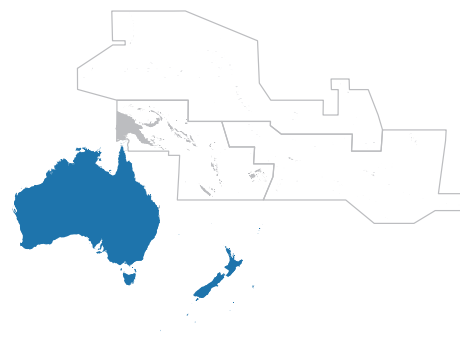


## Australia/New Zealand

### Christianity

In a pattern similar to that in many European regions, Christianity in Australia/New Zealand is losing its dominance. The region as a whole was 93.4% Christian in 1970 but dropped to 70.8% in 2010. By 2020 the Christian percentage is expected to reach 65.6%, lower than that of any region in Europe for the same year. Christianity's share of the population has declined more rapidly in New Zealand than in Australia—the number of Christians in New Zealand was less in 2000 than in 1970, although it has increased since 2000. Growth over the period 1970–2020 averages only 0.05% per annum in New Zealand, compared to Australia's 0.7%.

Most Christians in the region rarely attend church services except for special occasions like weddings, funerals, Christmas, and Easter. The church has had a declining impact on culture in the region, with most public discourse surrounding secular, rather than overtly religious, values. A general decline of respect and interest in religious institutions in public life characterizes the region, similar to the situation in Europe.



Historically, Anglicans have been the largest major Christian tradition in Australia/New Zealand. Since 1970, however, Roman Catholicism has surpassed Anglicanism as the largest major Christian tradition in the region (23.1% of the population in 2010, compared to Anglicanism's 16.6%). Protestantism is also on the decline, from 17.8% of the population in 1970 to 11.5% by 2020.

Orthodox and Marginals are the only traditions that are poised to increase their shares of the population over the 50-year period. The rise in Orthodox is due to immigration from European countries (such as Macedonian Orthodox from the former Yugoslavia and Orthodox of the ancient Assyrian Church of the East from Iraq and Iran). Marginal growth has been the result of missionary efforts from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and Jehovah's Witnesses. Mormons now total 129,000 in Australia and 101,000 in New Zealand; Jehovah's Witnesses are 91,700 in Australia and 23,200 in New Zealand. Smaller marginal groups include Christian Scientists and Christadelphians ("Brethren in Christ," a Unitarian group founded in Northern America in the nineteenth century).

Independents are poised to grow in New Zealand, from 1.5% of the population in 1970 to 3.9% in 2020. The largest Independent church in New Zealand is the Ratana Church, founded in 1918 by a Maori ex-Methodist. The church has made significant gains among the indigenous Maori population, featuring a fusion of Christian and Maori rituals, hymns, and prayers.

### Religion

Agnostics and atheists in Australia and New Zealand (ranking second and third) together constituted 22.2% of the region's population in 2010, with a projected share of 26.7% by 2020. The only majority nonreligious people group in Australia is Han Chinese (Mandarin- and Cantonese-speaking); Anglo-Australians are 76% Christian. Anglo-New Zealanders, equally split between Christianity and agnosticism, are more non-religious than their Australian neighbors. It is likely, however, that the scale will tip toward agnosticism,

### Christianity in Australia/New Zealand, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	Rate*
Australia/New Zealand	15,548,000	14,520,000	93.4	30,065,000	19,735,000	65.6	0.62
Australia	12,728,000	11,830,000	93.0	25,241,000	16,977,000	67.3	0.73
New Zealand	2,820,000	2,690,000	95.4	4,824,000	2,758,000	57.2	0.05

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

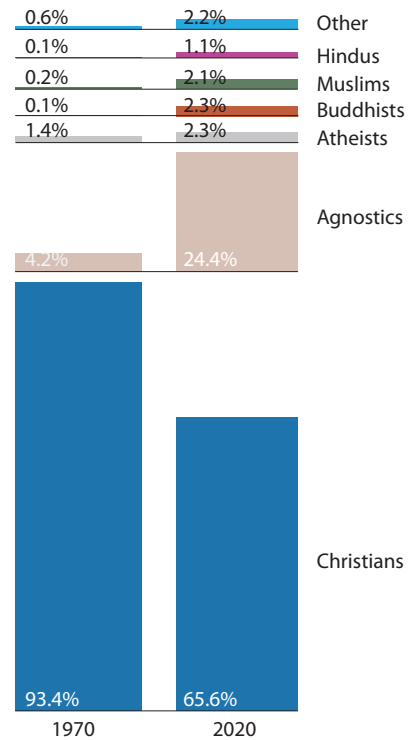
Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

since agnostics in New Zealand are poised to grow at least six times as fast as Christians between 2010 and 2020.

Buddhists, Muslims, and Hindus (ranked fourth, fifth, and sixth) have all made gains in the region, primarily a result of immigration from various Asian countries. In Australia the largest of these is Muslims, with most adherents coming from Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, and Iraq. In New Zealand, Buddhists are the largest of the three, hailing mainly from Cambodia, China, Japan, and Sri Lanka. In both cases, many of these religionists are refugees and migrant workers. Regionally in 2010, 23% of these religionists personally knew a Christian.

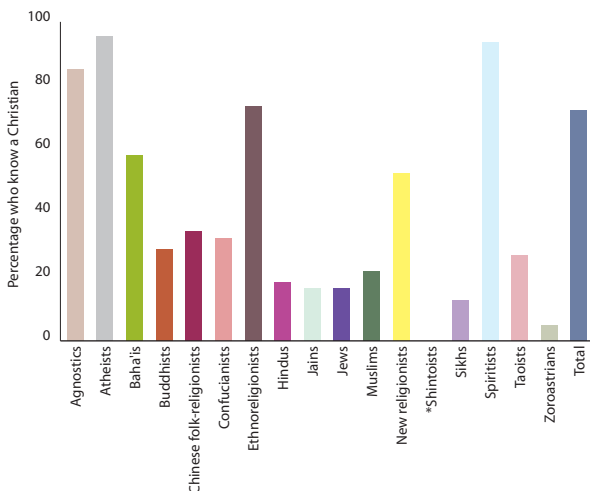
Over the 10-year period between 2010 and 2020, the fastest-growing religions in the region are expected to be atheism (averaging 4.0% per annum), Confucianism (3.6%), and agnosticism (3.1%). Many groups of religionists (such as Daoists, Zoroastrians, and Jains) were virtually nonexistent in the region in 1970 but are now found in small populations. Every religion in Australia/New Zealand is poised to grow faster than the general population over the 50-year period except Christianity, which is poised to grow only one third as quickly. This growth could potentially encourage more interaction between other world religionists and Christians.

### Religious affiliation in Australia/New Zealand, 1970 & 2020



Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
Christianity in its Global Context, June 2013

### Religionists in Australia/New Zealand who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

Center for the Study of Global Christianity,  
Christianity in its Global Context, June 2013

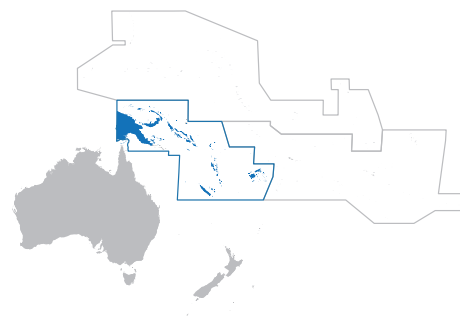
### Society

Despite marked progress throughout the twentieth century, indigenous populations in Australia and New Zealand still suffer inequality in relation to European-descended populations. Maori in New Zealand continue to suffer higher rates of poverty, incarceration, illness, and abuse. A major issue is protecting Maori property and treaty rights; a battle persists with the government over indigenous land claims. The situation is similar in Australia among Aboriginal people, where a cycle of poverty, ill health, and violence continues to plague the population. Cultural differences are a significant barrier to equal educational access.

# Melanesia

## Christianity

Melanesia (consisting of five island nations, the largest of which are Papua New Guinea and Fiji) is the only region in Oceania in which Christians' share of the total population shows continuing growth between 1970 and 2020. Gains in the region are being made largely through conversions from traditional religions, part of a larger trajectory reaching back to 1910. In 1910 the region was overwhelmingly ethnoreligionist (83.3%); by 1970 the region was 87.3% Christian and only 4.2% ethnoreligionist due to the vast missionary effort from a variety of Christian traditions. Christianity is averaging annual growth of 2.5% between 1970 and 2020, slightly higher than that of the overall population (2.4%). Even over the 10-year period 2010–20, Christianity is expected to outpace general population growth (2.1% for Christians, 2.0% for the general population).



The largest Christian tradition in Melanesia in 2010 was Protestantism. Protestants are growing in the region, representing 36.7% of the population in 1970 and 47.5% by 2020 (average annual growth of 2.9%). The majority of Protestants in the region are Methodists. In Fiji, Methodists are very politically active, taking sides in tensions between ethnic Fijians and Indian Fijians (who are largely Hindu). The fastest Christian growth in the region is among Independents, with average annual growth of 5.1% growth rate over the 50-year period. It should be noted, however, that this rapid growth resulted at least in part from the small number of Independents in 1970 (51,000) compared to Protestants (1.2 million).

Papua New Guinea and Fiji contain over 85% of Melanesia's population. The largest Christian tradition in Papua New Guinea is Roman Catholicism (1.9 million members), followed by Evangelical Lutheran (858,000), United Church of Christ (624,000), and Assemblies of God (569,000). The Christian make-up is very different in Fiji, where the largest denominations are Methodism (280,000), Roman Catholicism (101,100), and Assemblies of God (64,000). The diversity of Christianity in Melanesia is apparent in this listing, representing both Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions. In addition, Independent churches have experienced significant growth. In Fiji, Independents were just 0.7% of the population in 1970, but by 2020 they will likely be 8.3%. The situation is the same in Papua New Guinea, where Independents are projected to grow from 1.2% of the population in 1970 to 5.3% in 2020. The largest churches and denominations in Melanesia include Christian Fellowship Church, Christian Revival Church, Pentecostal Church, and Solomon Baptist Association.

## Religion

Only three of the world's religions have over 100,000 adherents in Melanesia in 2010: Christians (9.8 million), ethnoreligionists (296,000), and Hindus (251,000). Ethnoreligionists are predicted to decline from

### Christianity in Melanesia, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Melanesia	3,306,000	2,885,000	87.3	10,661,000	9,822,000	92.1	2.48
Fiji	521,000	263,000	50.5	923,000	596,000	64.6	1.65
New Caledonia	105,000	96,000	91.4	287,000	243,000	84.8	1.88
Papua New Guinea	2,435,000	2,298,000	94.4	8,464,000	8,048,000	95.1	2.54
Solomon Islands	160,000	150,000	93.9	684,000	652,000	95.3	2.98
Vanuatu	85,400	78,000	91.3	303,000	284,000	93.6	2.62

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

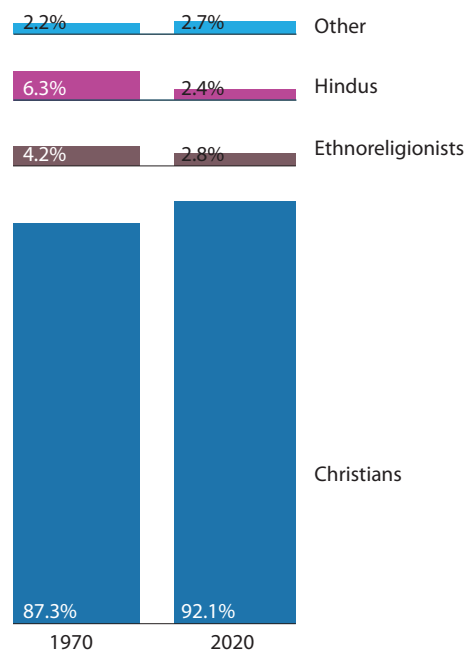
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4.2% of the population in 1970 to 2.8% in 2020, largely due to conversions to Christianity. Numerous people groups in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu remain majority ethnoreligionist, though many of these groups are particularly small (less than 2,000 people each; in the case of Vanuatu, all less than 1,000).

Hindus have a historic presence in the region, particularly in Fiji. Indo-Fijians are descendants of indentured servants brought to the island by the British in the nineteenth century. Not all Indo-Fijians are Hindu; some are Muslim, Christian, or Sikh. However, Hindus in Fiji have undergone persecution from the Methodist Church of Fiji, which after a coup d'état in 1987 endorsed forceful conversions to Christianity. Although Hindus are greatly outnumbered by Christians in Fiji, only 23% of them personally know a Christian. This is lower than Buddhists who know a Christian (34%) and Chinese folk-religionists (34%).

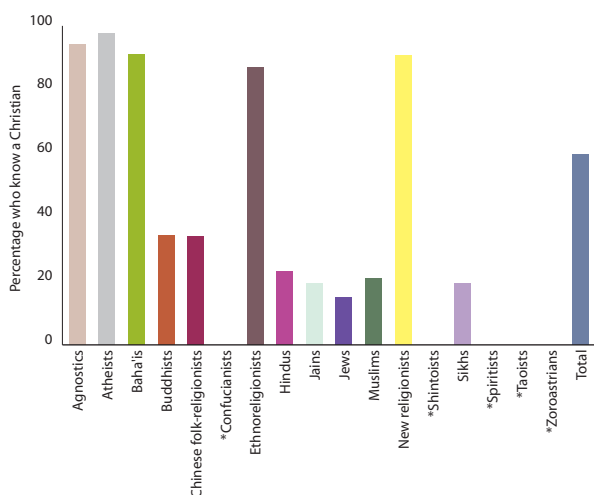
The Baha'i faith is the third-largest religion in Papua New Guinea, after Christianity and ethnoreligions. Baha'is arrived in Papua New Guinea in 1954 at the direction of the religion's founder, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Some local converts were made, and the community totaled 9,300 in 1970 (0.4% of the population). They have maintained steady growth, increasing to nearly 60,000 in 2010 (0.9% of the population).

### Religious affiliation in Melanesia, 1970 & 2020



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### Religionists in Melanesia who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

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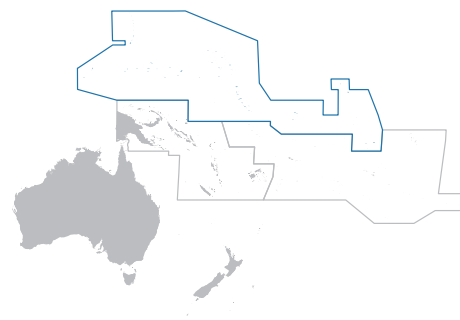
### Society

The traditional ways of life that have sustained the societies of Melanesia are breaking down. High levels of immigration are leading to increased rates of poverty; Melanesia is far from achieving Millennium Development Goal #1, reducing extreme poverty by half by 2015. Conflict is also a major problem in Melanesia. Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands have endured much civil conflict, and Fiji experienced at least four different coups between 1987 and 2000. Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands rank extremely low on the Human Development Index and Human Poverty Index for Oceania.

# Micronesia

## Christianity

Micronesia is home to seven island nations, the most populous of which is Guam, with 180,000 residents in 2010 (followed by Federated States of Micronesia, with 113,000). Christianity remains strong in Micronesia, though Christians have declined slightly as a share of the total population since 1970. Between 2010 and 2020, however, Christianity is projected to grow at about the same rate as the general population (about 1.2% annually). Barring major changes in mortality rates, increased defections from the religion, or mass emigration, it is likely that Micronesia will retain its high Christian representation well into the future.



Most Christians in Micronesia are Roman Catholic or Protestant. Roman Catholics grew as a share of the regional population, from 54.6% in 1970 to 62.8% in 2000, although this trend has reversed since then; Catholic percentages fell to 60.7% in 2010 and are predicted to decline further, to 57.8%, by 2020. Every country in the region is majority-Roman Catholic except Palau, where Roman Catholics are the largest plurality, and the Marshall Islands, which is majority Protestant (the largest denomination there is the Assemblies of God). Like Roman Catholics, Protestants are declining as a percentage of the regional population, from 35.3% in 1970 to 33.3% in 2010 and 32.8% by 2020.

Independents and Marginals have experienced steady growth in the region over the 50-year period. From 5,400 adherents in 1970 (2.2% of the regional population), Independents are expected to reach almost 30,000 by 2020 (a 4.9% share). The largest Independent representation in the region (over 10,000) is in the Northern Mariana Islands. This includes 3,400 Independent Filipino Baptists (who first arrived in 1985) and 2,500 Independent Korean Presbyterians (who first arrived in 1980).

Marginal Christians had even more dramatic growth, rising from 1,500 in 1970 (0.6% of the regional population) to nearly 35,000 (5.7%) by 2020. Every country in the region has a community of Marginal Christians, mostly members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and, to a much lesser extent, Jehovah's Witnesses. The largest Marginal populations in 2010 are in Kiribati (13,800), the Marshall Islands (5,900), and Federated States of Micronesia (4,500). Of these, the fastest growth over the 10-year period 2010–20 is expected to be in the Marshall Islands, averaging 2.0% per annum (faster than the 1.4% general-population growth rate of the country). Arriving in the country in 1960, Mormons represented 9.8% of the population of the Marshall Islands in 2010, with 11 congregations. In Kiribati, Mormons are 13.6% of the population with 39 congregations. In both countries, Mormonism is the third-largest Christian denomination.

## Christianity in Micronesia, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Micronesia	242,000	231,000	95.5	603,000	561,000	93.1	1.79
Guam	85,500	82,300	96.3	202,000	190,000	93.9	1.68
Kiribati	43,900	42,700	97.4	116,000	112,000	96.7	1.95
Marshall Islands	20,400	19,200	94.1	62,200	59,400	95.5	2.29
Micronesia	61,400	57,600	93.8	119,000	113,000	95.0	1.36
Nauru	6,500	5,400	82.3	10,800	8,200	75.6	0.85
Northern Mariana Is	13,200	12,900	98.0	70,600	58,400	82.8	3.06
Palau	11,500	11,300	98.0	22,400	20,500	91.3	1.20

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

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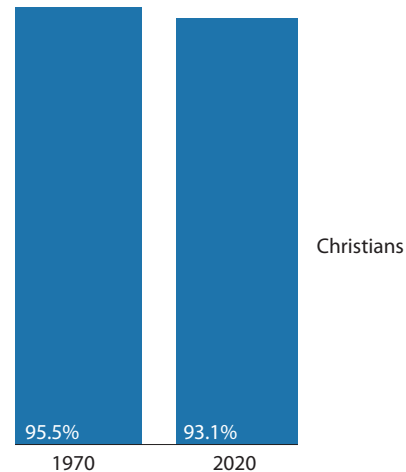
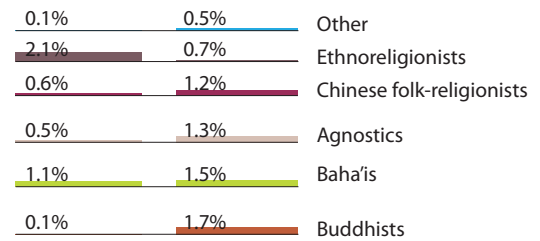
## Religion

Christianity is, by a wide margin, the dominant religion in Micronesia, though other religions have made gains since 1970. Buddhists, Baha'is, agnostics, and Chinese folk-religionists all increased their shares of the region's population, but each represents less than 2% in 2010 and 2020. Buddhism, the second-largest religion in the region, has grown from only 350 adherents in 1970 to an expected 10,000 by 2020, an average annual rate of 6.9% over the 50-year period. Growth will slow considerably between 2010 and 2020, however, averaging only 0.9% per annum. The Baha'i faith, the third-largest religion, is predicted to grow from 2,600 adherents in 1970 (1.1% of the population) to 9,100 in 2020 (1.5%). The Baha'is appear to have a significant amount of personal interaction with Christians in Micronesia (nearly all adherents likely knew a Christian in 2010).

Over the 10-year period between 2010 and 2020, agnostics are expected to grow at an average annual rate of 2.0% per annum, more than any religionists except Hindus (who are thought to number fewer than 100) and above the region's overall average growth rate of 1.2%. This is comparable to the 10-year rate for Melanesia but much slower than Oceania's of 3.0%, which is dominated by Australia/New Zealand's much larger population. Agnosticism is the second-largest religion in Guam, with 1.6% of the country's population in 2010 (although fewer than 3,000 individuals). This is largely due to the presence of Han Chinese in the country (both Mandarin- and Cantonese-speaking), mostly as migrant workers.

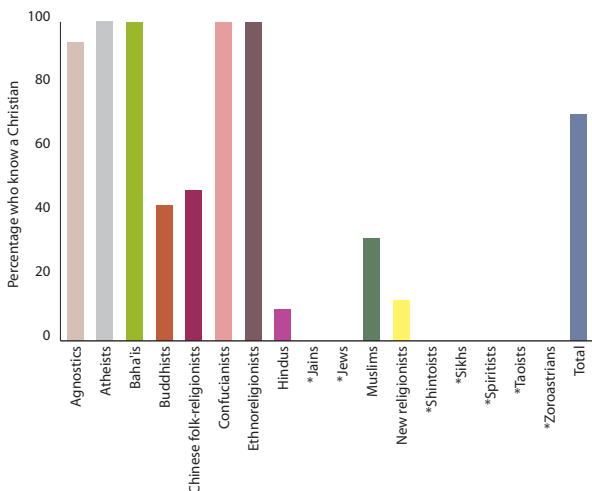
Most of the Buddhists (as well as tiny New religionist populations) in the region are Japanese business workers. Chinese folk-religionists in the region are Han Chinese, and Muslims are Bengalis in Palau, both migrant worker populations.

### Religious affiliation in Micronesia, 1970 & 2020



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### Religionists in Micronesia who know a Christian, 2010



\*Few or none present in region

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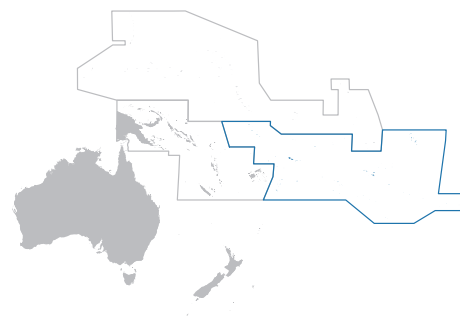
## Society

Micronesia, especially the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), is a source of sex-trafficked women and young girls. Women are recruited with promises of well-paying jobs in the United States and its territories, only to be forced into prostitution or labor upon arrival. The FSM government does not have in place any robust efforts to punish offenders. The FSM is on the U.S. State Department's Tier 2 Watch List of the Office to Monitor and Combat Sex Trafficking in Persons, which includes countries whose governments do not comply with minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with standards.

# Polynesia

## Christianity

Polynesia consists of nine island nations, ranging in population in 2010 from 1,200 (both Niue and Tokelau) to 273,000 (French Polynesia). Christianity is the majority religion in Polynesia, by the widest margin of any region in the world. Christians were 98.1% of the population in 1970, and by 2020 will likely represent 96.1%. Over both the 50-year period and the 10-year period 2010–20, Christianity is expected to maintain growth rates similar to those of the general population. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, the religious make-up of Polynesia will likely remain the same into the future.



The largest major Christian tradition in Polynesia is Protestantism, the result of missionary efforts from a multitude of denominations. In 2010, Protestants constituted 48.6% of the region's population; this represents a decline from 1970 (52.6%), however, as Marginal, Independent, and Roman Catholic populations have grown more quickly. The largest Protestant tradition in the region is Congregationalism, with significant populations in American Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Samoa. Methodists also have a significant presence in the region.

Roman Catholics are the largest group of Christians in French Polynesia (where they are a plurality) and Wallis & Futuna (more than 95% of the total population 1970–2020). French Polynesia actually was home to more Protestants than Catholics in 1970 (42.3% and 35.2% of the total population, respectively). By 2010, however, their positions had swapped, and it is likely that in 2020 Roman Catholics will constitute 40.3% of the country population and Protestants 34.9%. Though both are declining as a percentage, Protestants are doing so at a faster rate. In Wallis & Futuna Islands, Roman Catholics are 96.1% of the population 2010 and unlikely to be challenged by other traditions for the top spot.

An important change in Polynesia's Christian landscape during this period is the dramatic increase of Marginal Christian populations, who are overwhelmingly members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). Latter-day Saints entered the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1970, Marginal Christians were 12.2% of the population; by 2010 this had risen to 27.0%. Tonga is the only country in the world in which the majority of Christians—and residents—are Marginal Christians (54.3% of the total population in 2010). In fact, of the largest Marginal populations (by percentage) in the world, the top four are in Polynesia (Tonga, Samoa, Niue, and American Samoa), with over 22% of the total population in each.

## Christianity in Polynesia, 1970 to 2020

Country	1970			2020			Rate*
	Population	Christians	%	Population	Christians	%	
Polynesia	409,000	401,000	98.1	728,000	699,000	96.1	1.12
American Samoa	27,300	27,000	99.0	80,600	79,200	98.3	2.17
Cook Islands	21,400	21,300	99.4	21,400	20,600	96.3	-0.06
French Polynesia	111,000	107,000	96.1	298,000	280,000	93.8	1.95
Niue	5,100	5,100	99.9	1,200	1,200	96.3	-2.92
Samoa	142,000	140,000	98.7	191,000	189,000	98.8	0.59
Tokelau Islands	1,600	1,500	96.3	1,200	1,100	94.2	-0.62
Tonga	84,400	83,300	98.7	111,000	106,000	95.7	0.49
Tuvalu	7,300	7,200	98.6	10,200	9,600	94.3	0.58
Wallis & Futuna Islands	8,800	8,700	100.0	13,000	12,600	97.3	0.75

\*Rate = average annual Christian growth rate, percent per year 1970–2020

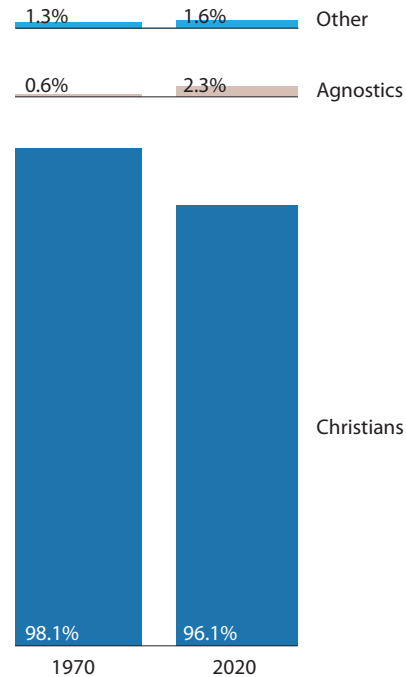
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## Religion

The religious context of Polynesia is not nearly as diverse as in other regions of Oceania. While all the major world religions are present in Polynesia, most populations (including Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, and Muslims) are under 1,000 adherents each for the entire region. The second-largest religion in Polynesia is agnosticism, which grew from 0.6% of the population in 1970 to 2.2% in 2010 (and likely 2.3% in 2020). In 2010, 99% of agnostics in the region personally knew a Christian.

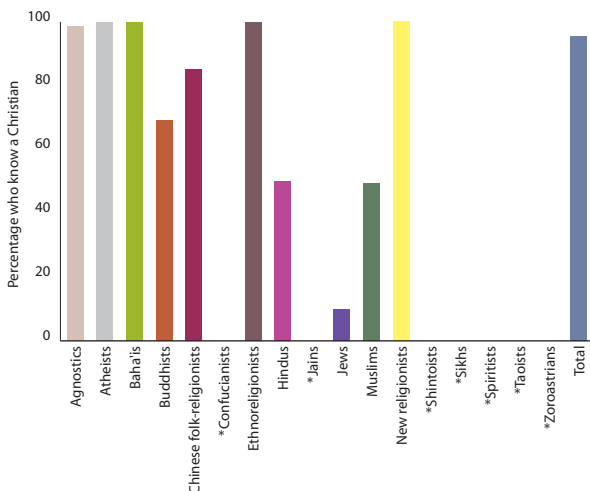
Christianity is the largest religion in every country in the region. In most countries agnosticism is the second largest, while in both Tonga and Tokelau, the Baha'i faith is the second largest. In Wallis & Futuna, ethnoreligionists are the second-largest group of religious adherents; this is the only country in the region in which they constitute a substantial share of the population (1.2% in 2010). The Baha'i faith is the third-largest religion in Polynesia, with 6,100 adherents in 2010 (0.9% of the population). Samoans (American Samoa and Samoa), Maori (Cook Islands), and Tahitians (French Polynesia) all have small numbers of adherents to the Baha'i Faith, mostly from conversions. Similar to other regions in Oceania, the Baha'i in Polynesia appear to have significant interaction with Christians. Chinese folk-religionists arrived in Polynesia throughout the twentieth century as immigrants from China. The Chinese folk-religionist population in 2020 is likely to be around 1,600, or 0.2% of the regional population.

Religious affiliation  
in Polynesia, 1970 & 2020



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Religionists in Polynesia  
who know a Christian, 2010



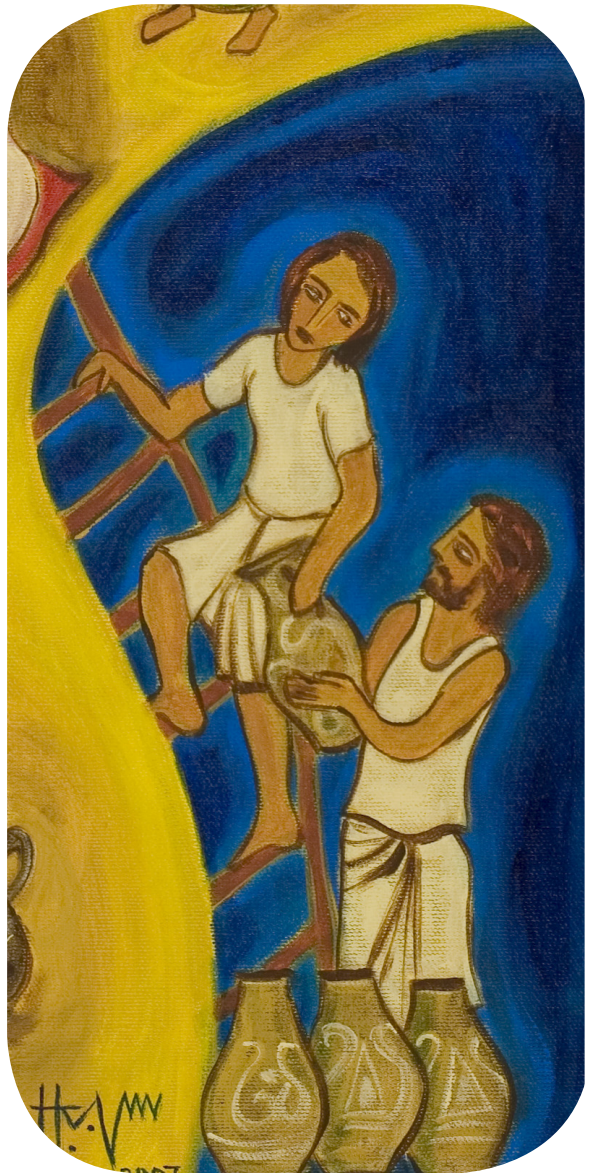
\*Few or none  
present in region

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## Society

Many countries in Polynesia suffer from unequal distribution of wealth and resources, with rural communities bearing the largest burden. Many small, isolated islands have limited resources and vulnerable economies. With the deleterious effects of climate change and natural disasters, many nations in Polynesia need to consider how to create sustainable ways of utilizing their natural resources, including in farming, fishing, and logging. For example, a 2010 study conducted by the French Development Agency found that 28% of the population of French Polynesia is poor, and the gap between rich and poor is as high as in many Latin American countries.

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## **Part IV: Mission and society**



## Missionaries sent and received

The twenty-first century has witnessed the sending of international missionaries to all of the world's countries from almost every country. In 2010, Christians from all traditions sent out approximately 400,000 international missionaries; this figure does not include missionaries who were at work in their home countries.

### Global North & global South

These international missionaries increasingly are coming from the global South. This is occurring at the same time that missionary sending from the global North is declining significantly. Thus, of the ten countries sending the most missionaries in 2010, three were in the global South: Brazil, South Korea, and India. The “second top ten” included six Southern countries: South Africa, the Philippines, Mexico, China, Colombia, and Nigeria (making nine of the “top 20” from the South). Southern missionaries go not only to other Southern countries but also to Northern countries, in a reverse of the pattern seen over much of the twentieth century. While many of these international missionaries from the global South work among their own peoples in diaspora, they are also increasingly seeking to reach the native populations of the countries in which they minister.

Data on missionary sending and receiving, however, show that large imbalances still exist. For example, the ten countries that sent the most international missionaries in 2010 were home to 32% of the world's church members but sent almost 73% of all international missionaries. (Church members—rather than the number of Christians—are used in calculations related to missionary sending because most data on missionary sending come from denominations, associations, and individual churches as well as from para-church mission agencies supported by churches and church members.)

Likewise, the ten countries that received the most international missionaries in 2010 (over 36% of the total) were home to 29% of the world's non-Christians but also 37% of the world's Christians. When India (ranked tenth) is left off the list, however, the “top nine” receiving countries were home to only 3.5% of the world's non-Christians but received more than 34% of all international missionaries! All nine have Christian majorities, and they were home to over 34% of the world's Christians in 2010. They also sent almost 53% of international missionaries.

### Missionaries sent and received, 2010

Most sent		Most sent per million church members		Most received		Most received per million population	
Country	Total	Country*	Total	Country	Total	Country*	Total
1 United States	127,000	Palestine	3,401	United States	32,400	Micronesia	4,779
2 Brazil	34,000	Ireland	2,131	Brazil	20,000	Samoa	4,167
3 France	21,000	Malta	1,994	Russia	20,000	Tonga	3,922
4 Spain	21,000	Samoa	1,802	DR Congo	15,000	Netherlands Ant.	3,317
5 Italy	20,000	South Korea	1,014	South Africa	12,000	Guam	2,833
6 South Korea	20,000	Belgium	872	France	10,000	French Polynesia	1,612
7 United Kingdom	15,000	Singapore	815	United Kingdom	10,000	US Virgin Islands	1,532
8 Germany	14,000	Tonga	619	Argentina	10,000	Belize	1,438
9 India	10,000	United States	614	Chile	8,500	Vanuatu	1,399
10 Canada	8,500	Netherlands	602	India	8,000	New Caledonia	1,344

\*Countries greater than 100,000 population

Source: Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, eds. *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

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In contrast, the ten countries with the most non-Christians in 2010 were home to 73% of all non-Christians globally. Because many of them restrict or deny missionary access, however, they received only 9% of all international missionaries. Two of them, China and India, together were home to almost 58% of the world's non-Christians; they, along with Nigeria, are home to most of the Christians in the ten countries as well. In these three countries, large numbers of home missionaries also work among non-Christians.

## Missionaries sent & received per capita

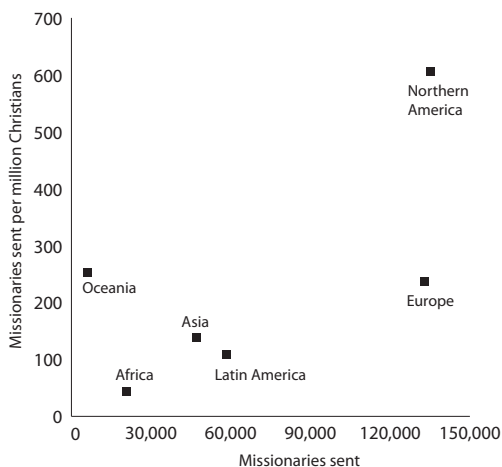
Viewing the data in relationship to the total population in each country, rather than in absolute terms, reveals that the countries receiving the most missionaries per million people are overwhelmingly in Oceania and the Caribbean and have majority Christian populations. The ten countries listed as receiving the most missionaries per million population averaged 2,634 per million people. Because of their large Christian majorities, however, together they received one international missionary for every 32 non-Christian in 2010.

More striking, the ten countries that received the most missionaries per million non-Christians averaged almost one for every seven. Samoa, at the top of the list, received more than one missionary for every three non-Christians. None of these countries was less than 90% Christian and only three were less than 95%. Suriname, with a bare Christian majority (51%), ranked 93rd on the list, while Albania, the highest-ranked country with a true Christian minority (32%), ranked 137th out of 232 countries. In addition, Samoa received one missionary for every 2.5 non-Christians. Tonga received one missionary for every 7.4 non-Christians, and Micronesia one for every 11.1 non-Christians.

Nine of the ten countries receiving the fewest missionaries per million non-Christians were the same as those receiving the fewest per million population. Home to 25% of the world's population and over 34% of all non-Christians, these countries combined received 1.5% of all missionaries, or one for every 272,000 non-Christians. North Korea received the fewest missionaries per capita on this basis: one for every 1.2 million non-Christians.

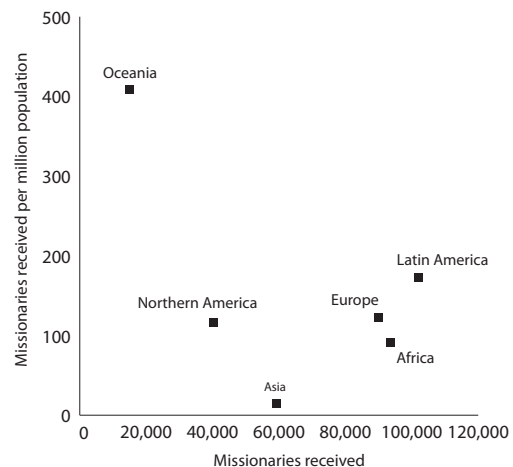
While the shift from North to South in mission-sending will likely continue to and through 2020, the imbalances described above are not expected to change significantly.

Missionaries sent by continent, 2010



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Missionaries received by continent, 2010



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## Personal contact

People often ask questions such as “How many Muslims have a Christian friend?” or “How many Hindus personally know a Christian?” or “How many Buddhists have significant contact with Christians?” In an effort to provide an answer, in 2007 Todd Johnson and Charles Tieszen published an analysis of personal contact between Christians and other religionists (*Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 43(4):494–502). “Personal contact” and “personally know,” as used by Johnson and Tieszen, implied more than casual or superficial relationship, although not necessarily deep friendship or intimacy.

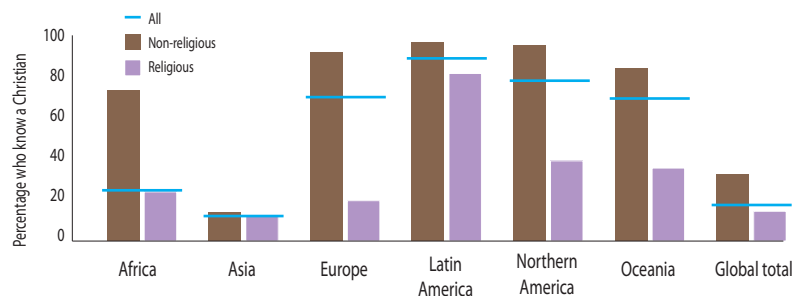
**“Globally, only 19% of religionists personally know a Christian from any tradition.”**

They found that, globally, only 19% of religionists personally knew a Christian (from any tradition). Furthermore, among Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists—the three largest religions globally (other than Christianity)—less than 14% (or 1 in 7) had personal contact with a Christian. The non-religious (atheists and agnostics) were more likely to know a Christian than were other religionists (33% versus 15%); this was true for every continent as well. It is not surprising, however, as many non-religious people in the West are former Christians.

### Continental perspective

At the continental level, in Asia individuals were least likely to know a Christian (only 13%, or about 1 in 8). The likelihood was only slightly greater for the non-religious (14%) than for the religious (13%). At the other end of the spectrum, religionists in Latin American were most likely to know a Christian (91%). Latin American also had the highest percentages for both the non-religious (99%) and the religious (84%) who knew a Christian. (Buddhists and Hindus were mostly likely to know a Christian if they lived in Latin America. Muslims were most likely to know a Christian if they lived in Northern America.) The greatest extreme was in Europe, where 99% of the non-religious knew a Christian, compared to only 19% of the religious (72% for all non-Christians).

Personal contact by continent, 2010



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### Regional perspective

Regionally, individuals were most likely to know a Christian in Polynesia (96%), followed by Central America (95%) and South America (92%). Among atheists and agnostics, the likelihood was highest in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America (99% in each); the figure exceeded 90% in nine other regions as well. The religious were most likely to know a Christian in Polynesia (90%), Central America (88%), and South America (87%).

Individuals were least likely to know a Christian in Western Asia (10%), Northern Africa (11%), and South-central Asia (12%). These were also the regions in which the religious were least likely to know a Christian (10%, 12%, and 12%, respectively). Atheists and agnostics were least likely to know a Christian in Eastern Asia (14%), South-central Asia (18%), and Northern Africa (19%); the figure was 28% in Western Asia.

Buddhists were least likely to know a Christian in Northern Africa (12%)—which has the lowest percentage of Buddhists (less than 0.1%) in the total population—and South-eastern Asia (13%), where 26% of the

population is Buddhist (the most of any region). They were most likely to know a Christian in South America (70%) and Polynesia (69%). Among Hindus, those in Micronesia (10%) and Western Africa (12%) were least likely to know a Christian, while those in Polynesia (50%) and Eastern Europe (34%) were most likely. Muslims in Eastern Asia (5%) and Western Asia (10%) were least likely to know a Christian, while the greatest likelihood for was Muslims in Central America (78%) and Southern Africa (58%)

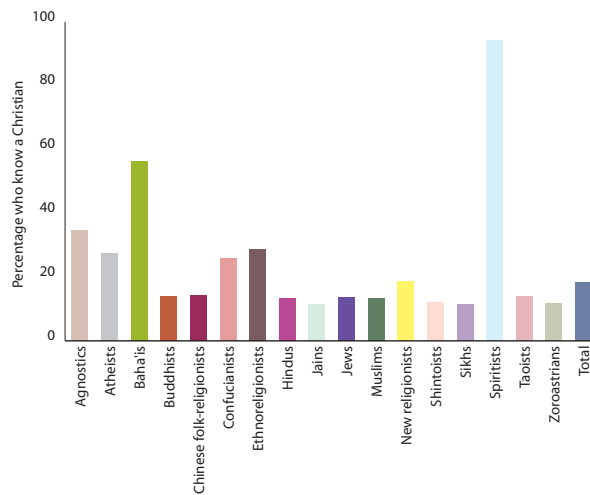
### Country perspective

The countries in which the fewest religionists know a Christian are overwhelmingly Muslim. Of the ten countries with the lowest percentages, Muslims constitute at least 98% of the population in all but one: North Korea, which is more than 72% non-religious (atheist and agnostic), was also the most Christian among the ten (0.8%).

The countries in which the fewest religious people personally know a Christian are the same as the “all religionists” list (see table below), although the percentages are slightly less. That the two lists are identical is not surprising given the overwhelming Muslim majorities in nine of the ten and the isolation of Christians in North Korea.

The countries in which the non-religious have the least contact with Christians are more diverse, yet they do share some commonalities. First, all of them are less than 2% Christian except Myanmar (8%), and in Myanmar Christians are found mostly among ethnic minorities. Second, All of them are also less than 2% non-religious except North Korea, Mongolia (16%), and Japan (13%). In the latter three the large non-religious population is mostly native and thus unlikely to be secularized Christians or to have had other Christian contact.

Religionists who know a Christian, 2010



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Least personal contact with a Christian, by country, 2010

By all religionists		By religious		By non-religious	
Country	%	Country	%	Country	%
1 Afghanistan	2.9	Afghanistan	2.9	North Korea	6.1
2 Mayotte	5.7	Mayotte	5.5	Algeria	6.8
3 Mauritania	5.9	Mauritania	5.8	Western Sahara	8.7
4 North Korea	6.1	North Korea	6.1	Bhutan	9.7
5 Algeria	6.1	Algeria	6.1	Mongolia	9.8
6 Western Sahara	6.6	Western Sahara	6.6	Turkey	10.0
7 Somalia	6.7	Somalia	6.7	Tunisia	11.1
8 Turkey	7.2	Turkey	7.1	Japan	11.4
9 Yemen	7.3	Yemen	7.3	Somalia	11.4
10 Iran	7.3	Iran	7.3	Myanmar	11.8

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## Unreached peoples

The concept of unreached people groups burst onto the missions scene when Ralph Winter spoke about them at the 1974 Lausanne Congress. In 1982 the Lausanne Strategy Working Group defined a people group, for evangelistic purposes, as “the largest group within which the Gospel can spread without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.” A people group was considered “unreached” if there was no indigenous Christian community within it capable of carrying on the task of evangelization and church planting without outside assistance. The ensuing decades have seen “people-group thinking” and the concept of unreached people groups take a prominent place in mission strategy.

### *World Christian Database*

There are many ways to divide the world’s peoples and multiple ways to measure Christian progress among them. The method used by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity (CSGC) in the *World Christian Database* is to divide each country into ethnolinguistic groups and to measure 20 different ways of evangelizing. By this model there were 13,461 people groups in 2010. Of those, 4,402 (32.7%) were classified as least-evangelized (less than 50% evangelized) peoples in 2010. These least-evangelized peoples represented 1.72 billion individuals, or 24.9% of the world’s 6.90 billion people. Unevangelized persons in all people groups numbered 2.04 billion (29.6% of all people) in 2010.

**“Despite almost 40 years of emphasis on unreached people groups, many still have no church-planting work of any kind among them.”**

### Joshua Project & Southern Baptist International Mission Board

Two other major sources of data on people groups—the Joshua Project (JP) and the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB)—look more directly at the phenomenon of unreached people groups (UPGs). The IMB defines people groups based on ethnolinguistic considerations and considers a people group unreached if less than 2% of its population is evangelical Christian. Using these criteria, the IMB identifies 11,294 total people groups, with 6,388 (56.6%) of them being UPGs. These UPGs represent some 4.2 billion people, or 60% of the global population of 7 billion.

The Joshua Project uses slightly different definitions. Unlike the IMB, JP includes caste considerations in identifying peoples. As a result, their total number of people groups is 16,585. In order for a group to be considered unreached by JP, it must be both less than 2% evangelical *and* less than 5% Christian adherents. The latter criterion was added to distinguish between peoples with little to no Christian adherence, witness, and resources and those who have a Christian heritage but need to be re-evangelized. JP’s number of UPGs is 7,165 (43.2% of all people groups), representing 2.88 billion of the world’s 7.03 billion people (41.0%).

Despite almost 40 years of emphasis on unreached people groups, however, many still have no church-planting work of any kind among them. Others might have had such work in the past but do not currently. Such groups are sometimes identified as unengaged unreached people groups (UUPGs), and many mission strategists are seeking to move churches and mission agencies beyond “adopting” a people to actively “engaging” them in actual church planting work.

### Finishing the Task

Finishing the Task (FTT), an association of mission organizations, denominations, and congregations, publishes a list of groups that are prioritized for ministry. Originally including 639 people groups with populations over 100,000 each that had no known church planting work among them (representing more than 500 million people in total), the list today encompasses 1,312 with populations of at least 25,000 each. Of



these, 256 are considered unengaged, 273 are “adopted but not yet engaged,” and 763 are “engaged by international churches, missionaries, or near-neighbor Christians.”

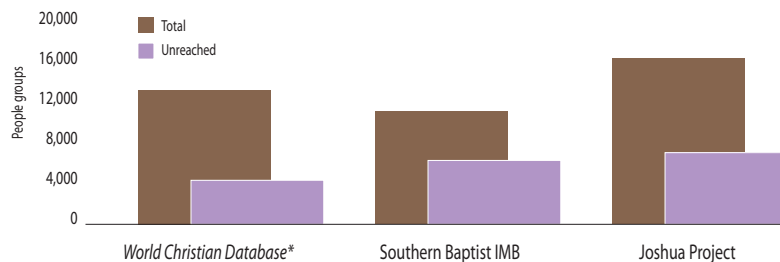
FTT has been criticized for its promotion of UUPGs, most notably at Lausanne’s 2010 Cape Town Congress. While some of the reaction was merited—for example, the list of UUPGs that was distributed in Cape Town included some 110 peoples that participants reported were in fact engaged—other criticism might be the result of misunderstandings about the intent behind the concept or confusion over the difference between UPGs and UUPGs.

## Controversy

In fact, the idea of people groups in general is not without controversy. Missiologists currently wrestle with the issue of whether caste differences pose sufficient barriers of acceptance to merit classifying different castes as different people groups. If “higher” and “lower” social classes, or adherents of different religions, within a people refuse to mix with one another, are different approaches to evangelism and church planting, and even different Bible translations, needed for each different subunit?

Some people even wonder whether “people-group thinking” has run its course. Some people who accepted people groups as a useful concept in the past now question whether increasing urbanization and globalization, by which individuals from many backgrounds are in increasingly close contact with one another, renders other paradigms necessary. Finally, the notion of an “unreached people group” has been broadened in some quarters far beyond the original definition, so that it encompasses groups (such as university students) that include non-Christian individuals but that are both more than 2% evangelical (or 5% Christian) and are part of a larger people group that has church-planting work among it. Nonetheless, efforts by researchers to identify peoples with little or no access to the gospel go on. These assessments of unreached peoples are contrasted with the fact that the vast majority of Christian resources (including missionaries) are deployed among “reached” peoples. This means that strategic planning related to the world’s least-reached peoples is likely to continue well into the future.

Comparison of unreached people group assessments, 2013



Source	People groups	Unreached	%**
World Christian Database	13,461	4,402*	25%
Southern Baptist International Mission Board	11,294	6,388	60%
Joshua Project	16,585	7,165	41%

\*Least-evangelized  
 \*\*% = Percentage of global population

Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Peoples in migration

In 2012, the Center for the Study of Global Christianity released a study on what can be called “religionists in diaspora” or “religious diasporas.” The report utilizes the taxonomies of religions and peoples found in the *World Christian Database* and *World Religion Database* and a data-collection mechanism that gathers data from both religious communities themselves and censuses taken by governments. The study reports that, in mid-2010, 859 million people from 327 people groups were living in diaspora, a total of 12.5% of the global population. As illustrated in table 1, nearly half of these were Christians (47.4%), and a quarter were Muslims (25.4%). One of the key findings of the report is that together, Christians and Muslims make up 55.3% of the world’s population, but they represent 72.8% of all people in diaspora.

### Sending countries

Both the countries of origin and the destination (or host) countries are significant when studying religious diasporas. The Center’s report found that Mexico, Bangladesh, and Argentina are the top three “sending” countries of international migrants, sending 137.8 million, 87.9 million, and 68.2 million, respectively (see table 2). Mexico, perhaps unsurprisingly, sent the most Christian migrants, the majority settling in the United States. However, the figure for Christian migrants from Mexico is inflated because Mestizos in Latin America are treated as one people in the methodology, even though they are clearly distinct from country to country. Because Mexico has the largest number of Mestizos, it is treated as the home country, and all other Mestizos are considered diasporas. Bangladesh is the leading sending country of both Hindus (60.8 million) and Muslims (24.8 million), many of whom are found across the border in India as modern geopolitical migrants post-partition. Of the ten largest sending countries, three are in Latin America, five in Asia, and one each in Northern America and Europe (no countries in Africa and Oceania appear in the top ten list). The majority of those from these ten countries are Christians.

Table 1. Religionists in diaspora, mid-2010

Religion	Adherents	% of global population	Adherents in diaspora	% in diaspora	% of all diasporas
Christians	2,260,440,000	32.8	407,548,000	18.0	47.4
Muslims	1,553,773,000	22.5	218,317,000	14.1	25.4
Hindus	948,575,000	13.8	81,429,000	8.6	9.5
Agnostics	676,944,000	9.8	57,379,000	8.5	6.7
Chinese folk-religionists	436,258,000	6.3	24,857,000	5.7	2.9
Buddhists	494,881,000	7.2	25,259,000	5.1	2.9
Ethnoreligionists	242,516,000	3.5	13,548,000	5.6	1.6
Atheists	136,652,000	2.0	10,060,000	7.4	1.2
New religionists	63,004,000	0.9	7,431,000	11.8	0.9
Sikhs	23,927,000	0.3	1,642,000	6.9	0.2
Jews	14,761,000	0.2	3,249,000	22.0	0.4
Spiritists	13,700,000	0.2	2,749,000	20.1	0.3
Daoists	8,429,000	0.1	2,946,000	35.0	0.3
Baha’is	7,306,000	0.1	1,405,000	19.2	0.2
Confucianists	6,449,000	0.1	933,000	14.5	0.1
Jains	5,316,000	0.1	198,000	3.7	0.0
Shintoists	2,761,000	0.0	101,000	3.7	0.0
Zoroastrians	197,000	0.0	37,900	19.2	0.0
<b>Global total</b>	<b>6,895,889,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>859,088,900</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

Table 2. Top 10 “sending” countries, mid-2010

Source country	Diaspora	Christians	Muslims	Hindus	Buddhists
1 Mexico	137,751,000	132,959,000	2,100	6,500	0
2 Bangladesh	87,873,000	446,000	24,728,000	60,785,000	0
3 Argentina	68,156,000	60,574,000	0	2,800	0
4 China	60,580,000	7,095,000	571,000	0	15,171,000
5 India	41,319,000	2,716,000	22,099,000	14,289,000	0
6 South Korea	30,453,000	3,245,000	310	0	1,867,000
7 Russia	24,063,000	15,646,000	2,618,000	0	0
8 Pakistan	22,055,000	52,200	19,026,000	2,909,000	0
9 United States	18,267,000	14,396,000	216,000	0	0
10 Syria	15,951,000	6,114,000	9,155,000	0	0

Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Host countries

Among destinations, the United States hosts the most total migrants, 118.1 million, or 38.0% of its population (including 96.3 million Christians). India ranks second at 93.0 million, or 7.6% of its population, receiving significantly more Muslims than the United States (23.6 million compared to 2.5 million). Together these two nations host nearly a quarter of all diasporas worldwide (24.6%). Of the ten largest host countries, four are in Asia, five in Latin America, and one in Northern America (none of the ten largest are in Africa, Europe, or Oceania).

Tracking the religious affiliation of migrants is important because immigrants generally do not leave their faith behind; it travels with them and impacts their destinations. Not only does the faith of the migrants internally change, but their communities, with their rich traditions and deep-seated beliefs, also significantly alter the religious landscapes of the countries in which they settle. It is critical for existing religious communities—especially those in the majority—to welcome the millions of Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists that arrive in their neighborhoods every year. Changing religious landscapes affects local politics, cultures, and societies in significant ways, and studying the religious affiliations of migrants will enable communities to make the necessary changes and offer vital support for migrants and non-migrants alike.

Table 3. Top 10 host countries, mid-2010

Country	Pop. 2010	Diaspora #	Diaspora %	Christians	Muslims	Hindus	Buddhists
1 United States	310,384,000	118,070,000	38.0	96,272,000	2,487,000	1,426,000	3,775,000
2 India	1,224,614,000	93,047,000	7.6	744,000	23,607,000	66,170,000	377,000
3 Colombia	46,295,000	34,203,000	73.9	33,048,000	22,800	9,300	1,800
4 Venezuela	28,980,000	25,608,000	88.4	24,123,000	95,300	0	35,400
5 North Korea	24,346,000	24,298,000	99.8	388,000	0	0	362,000
6 Taiwan	23,216,000	22,780,000	98.1	1,055,000	80,700	0	6,122,000
7 Mexico	113,423,000	19,885,000	17.5	18,395,000	99,400	3,400	0
8 Pakistan	173,593,000	16,947,000	9.8	126,000	16,200,000	499,000	6,200
9 Chile	17,114,000	15,610,000	91.2	13,958,000	15,200	0	5,600
10 Afghanistan	31,412,000	15,539,000	49.5	29,500	15,468,000	10,700	0

Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context*, June 2013

## Millennium Development Goals

Since 1972, the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potentials*, compiled and published by the Union of International Associations, has been addressing critical problems facing the world and offering various solutions and global strategies. This presentation has covered a complex set of problems including poverty, violence, disease, lack of education, environmental degradation, and resource shortages.

In 1990, the United Nations developed a method to summarize and address these problems, presented as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs categorize some of the most critical human problems and set forth action plans concerning eight major goals: extreme poverty; primary education; gender equality; child mortality; maternal health; HIV/AIDS and malaria; environmental sustainability; and global partnership for development. Leaders around the world have embraced these goals, setting out to reach them by the year 2015. The *Millennium Development Goals Report 2012* is the most recent assessment of progress and presents both a positive and a negative picture. Progress has been made in reducing extreme poverty, but the world's poorest children still seriously suffer.

### Extreme poverty

Extreme poverty continues to decline in many countries and regions. The proportion of people living on less than US\$1.25 a day fell from 47% in 1990 to 24% in 2008. By 2015 it is expected that the global poverty rate will fall below 16%. This global trend has continued despite the effects of deep economic recession in recent years. Four of every five people living in extreme poverty in 2015 will likely live in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia.

**“By 2015 it is expected  
that the global poverty rate  
will fall below 16%.”**

### Children in poverty

Despite gains made in reducing extreme poverty, the world's poorest children have made the slowest progress in term of improved nutrition, and hunger remains a global challenge. Between 2006 and 2009, 850 million people around the world still lived in hunger, 15.5% of the world's population. Even though extreme poverty has decreased, progress has been slow in reducing child malnutrition. In 2010, nearly one in five children globally was underweight, including one third of children in Southern Asia.

### Christian involvement

Christian involvement in caring for the poor has deep roots. Each of the major Christian traditions has developed strong theological foundations for social action. The core concept seems to be the consistent concern that God shows for the poor, especially in the reconciling work of Jesus.

Current efforts by Christians to alleviate poverty tend to dovetail with those initiated by the United Nations and various governments. Many of these initiatives take the form of non-governmental agencies, ranging in size from multi-billion-dollar global enterprises to local family-run ministries. Christian networks such as the Micah Challenge, in partnership with the World Evangelical Alliance, represent a global network of Christians who hold governments accountable to improve areas addressed by the MDGs by 2015. They aim to empower Christians to speak out for justice and turn compassion into action. Individuals and organizations also ambitiously launch and carry out their own action plans, such as Rick Warren's PEACE plan. One of the largest Christian development organizations is World Vision. World Vision is directly involved in MDGs four and five (reducing child mortality and improving maternal health). World Vision focuses on tackling both the symptoms and causes of poor health, especially among mothers and their children, to break cycles of poverty.

Yet, both development communities and Christian organizations struggle to adequately implement solutions. One of the greatest obstacles appears to be the uneven distribution of resources. Sixty percent of all Christians live in the global South, but they hold only 17% of all Christian financial resources. Addressing this imbalance is at the heart of any solution to human suffering.

**“Sixty percent of all Christians live in the global South, but they hold only 17% of all Christian financial resources.”**

Another problem is duplication and competition among different Christian groups. As part of the fragmentation of Christianity into 43,000 denominations, there is a strong tendency for each of these to create their own organizations focused on alleviating human suffering. When these do not work together, they undermine their universal mission of compassion.

Christians will only be effective in social change if they work in close collaboration with both each other and the wider development community. This means increased cooperation between religious communities, such as Christian-Buddhist cooperation in South-eastern Asia, Christian-Hindu cooperation in South-central Asia, and Christian-Muslim cooperation in Asia and Africa. While there are specifically Christian reasons for helping the poor, there are no reasons why Christians cannot work side-by-side with people of other faiths, or no faith, who share similar goals. In relation to 2020, it is likely that while some progress will be made, development efforts will continue to fall far short of the goals set by the United Nations.

## Slum dwellers

The United Nations defines a slum as, “an area that combines, to various extents, the following characteristics: inadequate access to safe water; inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality of housing; overcrowding; and insecure residential status.” One in six people lives in slums globally, and the number continues to rise, with urbanization outpacing slum improvements. In 2010, there were an estimated 828 million slum dwellers in developing regions, compared to 260 million in 1970. Slums in urban areas are unpredictable, but it is estimated that by 2020 one billion urban residents might live in slums or in slum-like conditions.

Christian involvement in slums is disappointingly small. Jayakumar Christian of World Vision points to the uneven nature of development work, where many overlook the reality of urban poverty. Due to the rural bias in development projects, slums often do not receive the necessary funds or attention to enact change. In his 2012 book *Slum Life Rising*, Ash Barker states that even the largest Christian mission organization is using only around 7% of its budget on urban programs and less than 2% on slum ministry. In addition, it is estimated that fewer than 1 in 500 Christian foreign missionaries works in slums. A tiny fraction (perhaps 1 in 10,000) of national workers (pastors, evangelists, etc.) work in slums in their own countries. The vast majority of Christians who do work in the slums live outside the slums. While many of these have effective ministry, the most promising work appears to be that of incarnational teams living in the slums.

**“Fewer than 1 in 500 Christian foreign missionaries work in slums.”**

The increasing number of slum dwellers globally and the new rise of the urban poor is more than just a socio-economic phenomenon. It is a call for new and sustained engagement by Christian churches, both local and global. Barker and others have shown that this is a new frontier in mission, and one that is best addressed by humble Christians quietly living alongside slum dwellers, infusing them with hope and confidence in the message of Jesus.



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## Part V: Methodology

## Data sources

The *World Christian Database* (WCD; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007) is an online database containing comprehensive demographic statistics on global Christianity. Over 400 categories of information including religious adherents, Christian traditions, and mission trends are available at the province, country, people group, language, and city levels for the entire world. Its partner site, the *World Religion Database* (WRD; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), contains detailed statistics on religious affiliation for every country in the world. The WRD provides both current and historical data, as well as forecasts of future developments. For each of the world's religions, best estimates at multiple dates for the period 1900 to 2050 are provided. The WRD also offers access to the sources that underlie the figures in the database, such as censuses and surveys. Both of these databases are utilized for Center publications, such as the *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009) and *The World's Religions in Figures: An Introduction to International Religious Demography* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). *Christianity in its Global Context, 1970–2020* adheres to the standard methodology of the discipline of international religious demography.

The information contained in the *World Christian Database* and *World Religion Database* generally is recorded according to an every-five-years cycle (2005, 2010, 2015, 2020, etc.) rather than an annual cycle (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, etc.). For some sections of this report (“Missionaries sent and received,” “Personal contact,” “Unreached peoples,” and “Peoples in migration”), the most recent data available are for 2010.

## Growth rates

The average annual growth rate (in percent per year) for a population of interest is calculated as

$$100 \times \left( \left[ \frac{P_2}{P_1} \right]^{1/(y_2 - y_1)} - 1 \right)$$

where  $P_1$  is the population size in year  $y_1$  and  $P_2$  is the population size in year  $y_2$ . Two situations involving calculation of average annual growth rates are of special note. First, rates of growth for the six major Christian traditions sometimes are not consistent with the over-all Christian growth rate. This is because the total Christian population is the sum of the six major traditions, plus unaffiliated Christians, minus doubly affiliated, minus disaffiliated. Therefore, the growth rate of the total Christian population is influenced by three factors that do not enter into calculations for the six major traditions. In the case of the doubly affiliated, multiple major traditions (or multiple minor traditions within a major tradition) can claim the same person as an adherent, with each growth rate reflecting that person's presence. Because such a person can be counted only once in the total Christian population, however, it is possible for the overall growth rate for Christians in an area to be lower than the growth rate for any of the traditions individually.

The other special situation involves calculating growth rates when the starting population is zero. In such cases, to avoid dividing by zero in the rate equation (thus giving an infinite growth rate), an approximation of the growth rate was made by substituting 10 as the starting population (or 1 as the initial value if the final population value is less than 50). Note that the resulting growth rate estimate is subject to a much wider margin of error than where the true starting value is greater than zero. This is especially true when the number of adherents of a particular religion is reported as 0 for an entire continent.

## Major traditions

The total number of Christians in any area consists of the figures for each of the six major traditions (Anglican, Independent, Marginal, Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic), plus the unaffiliated (those who claim no affiliation with a church), minus the doubly affiliated (those who are counted as affiliated with multiple major or minor traditions), minus the disaffiliated (one-time church members who have repudiated their membership). Thus, the figures given for the major traditions can perhaps be considered a measure of “affiliations” rather than individuals. A count of affiliations, unlike one of individual Christians, legitimately can exceed not only the number of Christians in an area, but also even the total population. While some of the affiliations reported by the churches are inaccurate (disaffiliated Christians; Christians who have left

one tradition for another with no intention of returning), others are indeed accurate—at least to the doubly affiliated individuals who genuinely hold to dual identities (for example, as both Catholic and Protestant, or both Protestant and Independent, or in more than one minor tradition within a major tradition). Asking such individuals to select a single affiliation would seem, to them, arbitrary.

## Renewalists

The report views the twentieth-century Renewal in the Holy Spirit as one single cohesive movement into which a vast proliferation of all kinds of individuals and communities have been drawn in a whole range of different circumstances. Whether termed Pentecostals, Charismatics or Independent Charismatics, they share a single basic experience. The case for the statistical presentation of the Renewal as a single interconnected movement can best be made by considering how the movement starts off and spreads in any area, from the days of the earliest Pentecostals to those of current Charismatics and Independent Charismatics. The start of the movement anywhere has always been an unexpected or unpredictable happening rather than the result of any human planning or organization. First, individuals (at random across the existing churches), then groups, then large numbers in organized movements become filled with the Spirit and embark on the common Charismatic experience. All of them, originally, can collectively and correctly be termed Renewalists. All these Renewalists find themselves living initially within existing mainline non-Pentecostal churches and denominations. But before long evictions begin, and ejections, withdrawals and secessions occur in varying degrees. First, various individuals, then groups, then whole movements are forced into schism or opt for it and so begin separate ecclesiastical structures and new denominations. From its beginnings in this way, the Renewal has subsequently expanded in three types.

### *Type 1: Pentecostals*

These are defined as Christians who are members of the major explicitly Pentecostal denominations whose major characteristic is a rediscovery of, and a new experience of, the supernatural, with a powerful and energizing ministry of the Holy Spirit in the realm of the miraculous that most other Christians have considered to be highly unusual. This is interpreted as a rediscovery of the spiritual gifts of New Testament times, and their restoration to ordinary Christian life and ministry. Pentecostalism usually is held to have begun in the United States in 1901. For a brief period Pentecostalism expected to remain an interdenominational movement within the existing churches without beginning a new denomination, but from 1909 onward its members increasingly were ejected from all mainline bodies and so forced to begin new organized denominations. Pentecostal denominations hold the distinctive teaching that all Christians should seek a post-conversion religious experience called baptism in the Holy Spirit, and that a Spirit-baptized believer may receive one or more of the supernatural gifts known in the Early Church: instantaneous sanctification; the ability to prophesy, to practice divine healing through prayer, to speak in tongues (glossolalia) or to interpret tongues; singing in tongues, singing in the Spirit, dancing in the Spirit, praying with upraised hands; dreams, visions, discernment of spirits, words of wisdom, words of knowledge; miracles, power encounters, exorcisms (casting out demons), resuscitations, deliverances, signs and wonders.

From 1906 onward, the hallmark of explicitly Pentecostal denominations, by comparison with Holiness/Perfectionist denominations, has been the single addition of speaking with other tongues as the “initial evidence” of one’s having received the baptism of the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit), whether or not one subsequently experiences regularly the gift of tongues. Most Pentecostal denominations teach that tongues-speaking is mandatory for all members, but in practice today only 35% of all members have practiced this gift either initially or as an ongoing experience.

Pentecostals are defined here as all associated with explicitly Pentecostal denominations that identify themselves in explicitly Pentecostal terms, or with other denominations that as a whole are phenomenologically Pentecostal in teaching and practice.

### *Type 2: Charismatics*

These are defined as Christians affiliated to non-Pentecostal denominations (Anglican, Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox), who receive the experiences above in what has been termed the Charismatic Movement. The Charismatic Movement's roots go back to 1907 and 1918, but its rapid expansion has been mainly since 1950 (later called the Charismatic Renewal). Charismatics usually describe themselves as having been “renewed in the Spirit” and experiencing the Spirit’s supernatural and miraculous and energizing power. They remain within, and form organized renewal groups within, their older mainline non-Pentecostal denominations (instead of leaving to join Pentecostal denominations). They demonstrate any or all of the *charismata pneumatika* (Greek New Testament: gifts of the Spirit) including signs and wonders (but with glossolalia regarded as optional). The whole Movement is sometimes termed the “Second Wave” of the twentieth-century Renewal. Concerning the key word, note that, “In the technical Pauline sense charismata (AV, gifts) denote extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit” (*Thayer’s Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1886, 1977: 667). Charismatics usually are defined as those baptized or renewed in the Spirit within the mainline non-Pentecostal denominations, from the first mass stirrings in 1918 in Africa on to the large-scale rise from 1950 of the Charismatic Movement (initially also termed Neo-pentecostalism to distinguish it from Classical Pentecostalism) who remain within their mainline non-Pentecostal denominations. The Movement was later called the Charismatic Renewal. Note that many individuals and groups in the mainline churches already had been receiving baptism in the Spirit without publicity for many years before the usually quoted beginning dates.

### *Type 3: Independent Charismatics*

Since 1945 thousands of schismatic or other independent Charismatic churches have come out of the Pentecostal or Charismatic Movements; these independents have from 1900 to the present numbered more than the first two types combined. They consist of Evangelicals and other Christians who, unrelated or no longer related to the Pentecostal or Charismatic renewals, have become filled with the Spirit, or empowered or energized by the Spirit and experiencing the Spirit’s supernatural and miraculous ministry (though usually without recognizing a baptism in the Spirit separate from conversion); who exercise gifts of the Spirit (with much less emphasis on tongues, as optional or even absent or unnecessary) and emphasize signs and wonders, supernatural miracles and power encounters; and who leave their mainline non-Pentecostal denominations but also do not identify themselves as either Pentecostals or Charismatics. In a number of countries they exhibit Pentecostal and Charismatic phenomena but combine this with rejection of Pentecostal terminology. These believers frequently are identified by their leadership as Independent, Postdenominationalist, Restorationist, Radical, Neo-Apostolic, or the “Third Wave” of the twentieth-century Renewal. Also largely Pentecostal or semi-Pentecostal are members of the 250-year-old Independent movement of Christians, primarily in the Global South, or churches begun without reference to Western Christianity. Indigenous denominations, though not all explicitly Pentecostal, nevertheless have the main phenomenological hallmarks of Pentecostalism (including Renewalist spirituality; oral liturgy; narrative witness/theology; dreams and visions; emphasis on filling with the Holy Spirit; healing by prayer; atmospheric communication [simultaneous audible prayer], and emotive fellowship). The case for enumerating adherents of these movements as Renewalists has been fully made by W. J. Hollenweger, in “After twenty years’ research on Pentecostalism,” *International Review of Mission* (April 1986), and *Pentecostalism* (1997).

## Personal contact

The concept of personal contact is built into previous measurements related to evangelization of ethno-linguistic peoples. Twenty variables measuring evangelization among every ethno-linguistic people in the world were isolated (Barrett and Johnson, *World Christian Trends*, 756–7). Two of these variables relate very closely with personal contact between Christians (of all kinds) and other religionists. The first, “discipling/personal work,” is an indication of how much contact local church members have with other religionists. The second, “outside Christians,” extends this concept further by looking at the presence of Christians from other peoples who live nearby. Under normal circumstances, the more Christians there are nearby, the more likely the contact between religionists. Thus, for every other religious population in the world there is



an indication of Christian presence and contact.

A formula was then developed to make an estimate of those personally evangelized (contacted) by Christians. The formula applied to each ethnolinguistic people is

$$(\text{Population 2010} * [\text{Disciple Code (0-10)} + \text{Outside Christian Code (0-10)}]) / ([100 - \text{Christian Percentage}])$$

Separate values for these two codes are reported for each ethnolinguistic people. These are summed for each country, region, and continent, producing a global total described in this report. A listing of the world's peoples with these variables appears in Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, "Part 8 Ethnosphere" vol. 2, 30–241 and in the online World Christian Database. For a more complete treatment on this subject see Todd M. Johnson and Charles L. Tieszen, "Personal Contact: The *sine qua non* of Twenty-first Century Christian Mission," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, October 2007, pages 494–502.

## Peoples in migration

As noted in the section "Peoples in migration," "the figure for Christian migrants from Mexico is inflated because Mestizos in Latin America are treated as one people in the methodology, even though they are clearly distinct from country to country. Because Mexico has the largest number of Mestizos, it is treated as the home country, and all other Mestizos are considered diasporas." This is but one example of a known shortcoming in the methodology used for calculating diaspora populations. That is, all people groups are assigned a single home country (usually the country with the largest population of that people), and populations of that people group in other countries are treated as diaspora populations, when in fact they might not be. A similar situation exists for Latin American Whites, whose country of origin is taken to be Argentina, home to the largest population of that people (see table 2 of that section).

In the same way, Bangladesh is considered the "sending" country for Bengalis in India, when in fact much of that "diaspora" resulted from the drawing of the boundary line between the two countries (although, to be sure, there was actual migration by those on the "wrong" site ethno-religiously once the boundary had been determined). Other examples include the large "diaspora" populations shown in table 3 for Colombia, Venezuela, and Chile due to the presence of Latin American Mestizos ("from Mexico"), for North Korea (Koreans "from South Korea"), and for Afghanistan (Pathan peoples "from Pakistan"). Both South Korea and Pakistan are listed among the top "sending countries" in table 2 as well.

## Population data

Population figures for the world as a whole, the 21 United Nations regions, and most countries were obtained from *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision* (<http://esa.un.org/unpp>), prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. Data for countries not listed in *World Population Prospects* were obtained from national surveys and census.

## Rounding

For display purposes, large numbers are rounded using a custom function that tiers the amount of rounding according to size, allowing smaller values to retain their meaning. For example, in a table of country populations, rounding all populations to the nearest 1,000 would leave countries with fewer than 500 people showing as zero population. Calculations, however, such as growth rates and percentages, are made on the unrounded "actual" values for greater accuracy between tables.

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