

# Religions, 1910–2010

The map to the right depicts the world in 2010 by the religion with the most adherents in each of the world's 3,000 major civil divisions (note that in some cases this is a plurality rather than an actual majority). Although the story of religions over the past 100 years is one of increasing pluralism in many countries, this map shows the geographic reality of the world's major religions. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and even agnosticism are mainly coterminous by province. These huge blocs represent to some extent cultural realities (for example, Arabs as Muslims, South Asians as Hindus), but each of these religions also has enormous cultural diversity (for example, most Muslims are not Arabs).

Another feature of this map is that the relative strength of each majority religion is depicted. For example, the Muslim world can be seen to be stronger at its core (higher percentage majority Muslim) than on the periphery (lower percentage majority Muslim).

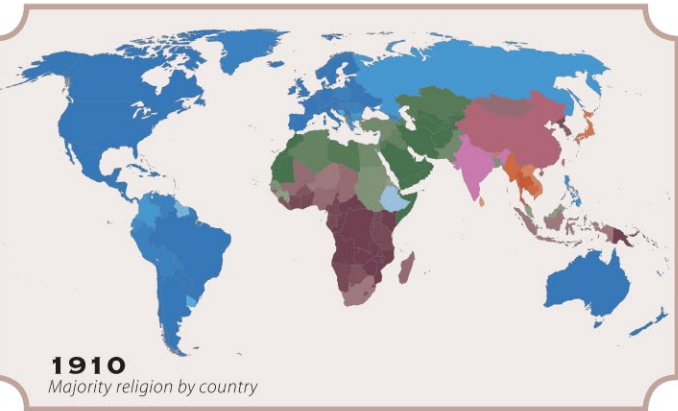
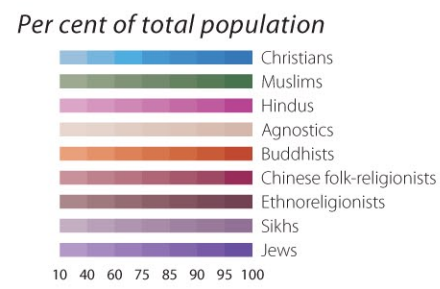
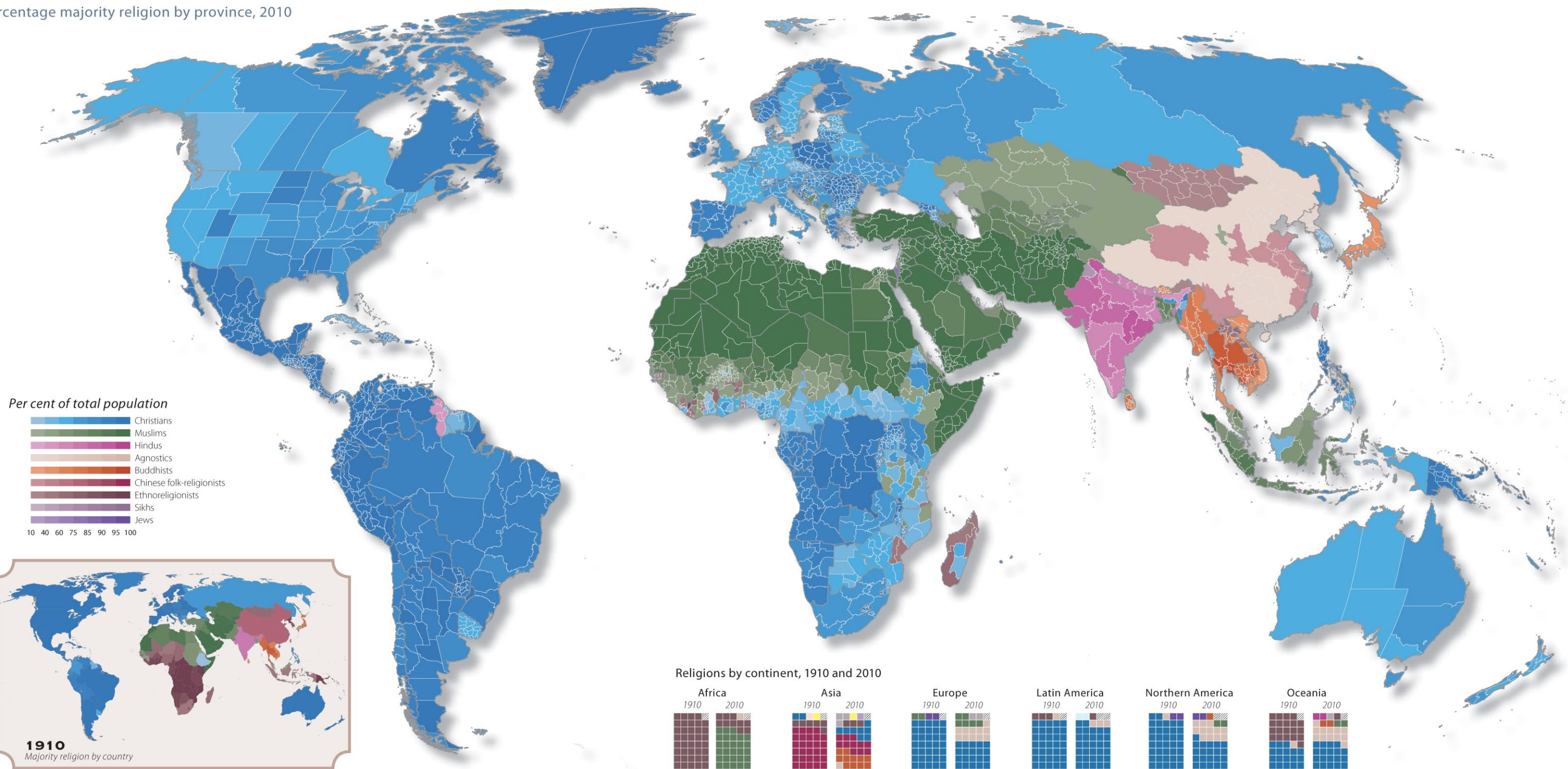
Interestingly, Chinese folk-religionists are an absolute majority in no country or province, although they make up over 6% of the global population; most live in China (where agnostics dominate). Conversely, Sikhism and Judaism – although less than 0.3% of the global total each – have local majorities in the Indian state of Punjab and in Israel, respectively. India is also notable for having the most different provincial majority religions (five) in a single country.

One can see two profound changes when comparing the strengths of religions in 1910 with those of 2010. First, sub-Saharan Africa was predominantly ethnoreligionist in 1910; by 2010 ethnoreligionists have been displaced as a majority bloc, as Christianity introduced from the south and Islam from the north now form the majority in almost all provinces. Second, China has gone from a majority of Chinese folk-religionists to a majority of agnostics and atheists. Third, the growth of agnostics and atheists is shown both on the world map (for example, China) and in the continental rectangles, where tan squares appear in every continent in 2010.

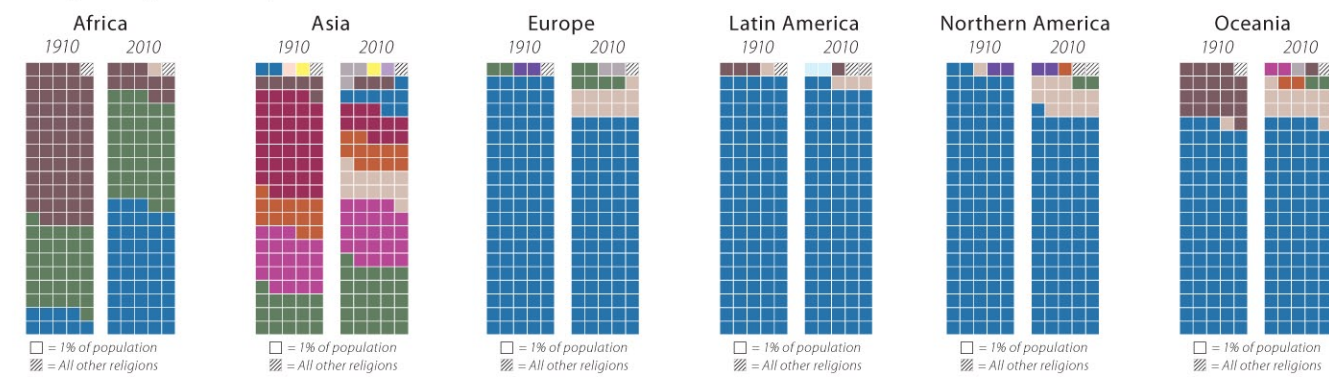
The graphs on these two pages show the relative strengths of religions in 1910 and 2010, for both the whole world (below) and by continent (on the facing page). One can immediately see the diversification of religion by continent; in every case the situation in 2010 is less monolithic than it was in 1910. The table on the facing page is a quick-reference for comparing the global strength of each religion as a percentage of the world's population in 1910 and 2010 as well as a way to compare a religion's growth rate with that of other religions and with the world's population as a whole. In addition, one can compare growth over the century (1910–2010) or over the past ten years (2000–10).

A related concept is religious diversity, presented on pages 32–3. Instead of the relative strength of a single religion, the presence (or absence) of more than one religion is examined.

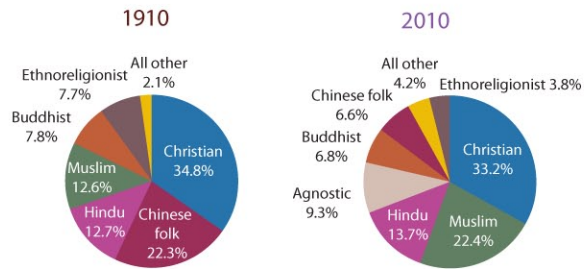
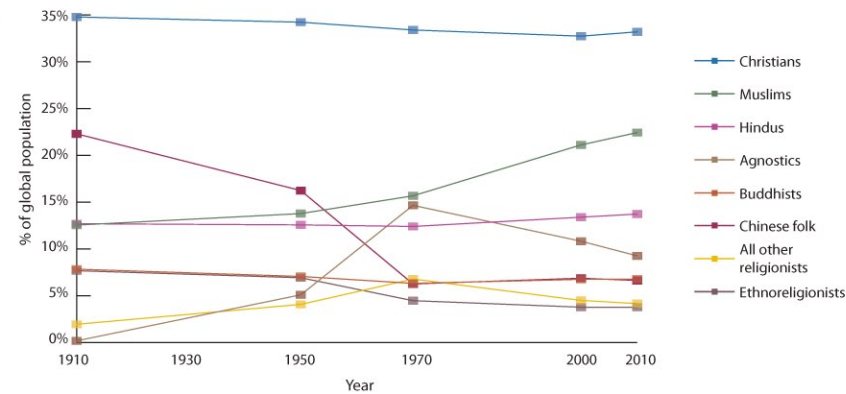
Percentage majority religion by province, 2010



Religions by continent, 1910 and 2010

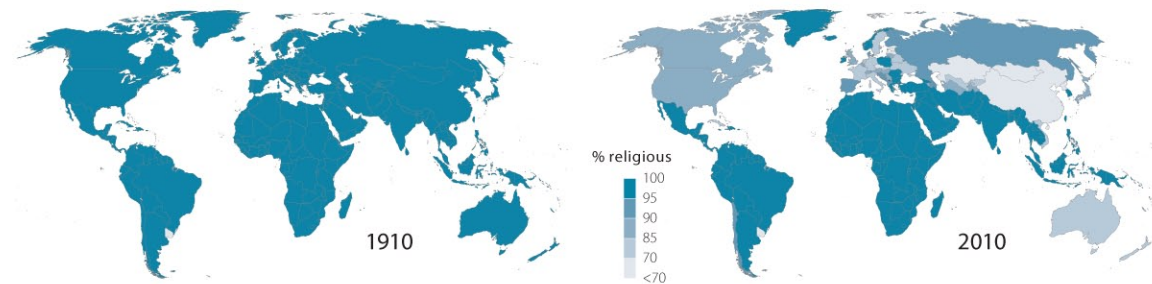


Global religious change over time  
The relative strength of the world's religions can be viewed over time. Here one can see that the rapid increase of agnostics over the twentieth century reached a high point around 1970 and then declined to its current position with the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and the rest of eastern Europe.



Global religion by proportion  
The pie charts show the relative strength of each religion in 1910 and 2010. Whereas Christianity is virtually unchanged as a global percentage, Chinese folk-religionists' share has shrunk while those of agnostics and atheists have increased dramatically.

Percentage of the world that is religious  
The maps to the left show the dramatic change in the percentage of the world that is religious over the past 100 years. In 1910, nearly the entire world claimed adherence to some sort of religious belief. By 2010, however, religious adherence had declined in many parts of the world. The reasons for this are largely two-fold: (1) the rise of Communism and the consequent rise of agnosticism and atheism where Communism predominated, and (2) the secularisation of the Global North.



Religions by global adherents, 1910 and 2010

Religion	1910		2010	
	Adherents	%	Adherents	%
Christians	612,028,000	34.8	2,292,454,000	33.2
Muslims	220,895,000	12.6	1,549,444,000	22.4
Hindus	223,419,000	12.7	948,507,000	13.7
Agnostics	3,367,000	0.2	639,852,000	9.3
Buddhists	138,025,000	7.8	468,736,000	6.8
Chinese folk	392,423,000	22.3	458,316,000	6.6
Ethnoreligionists	135,181,000	7.7	261,429,000	3.8
Atheists	243,000	0.0	138,532,000	2.0
New Religionists	6,865,000	0.4	64,443,000	0.9
Sikhs	3,232,000	0.2	24,591,000	0.4
Jews	13,193,000	0.7	14,641,000	0.2
Spiritists	324,000	0.0	13,978,000	0.2
Daoists	437,000	0.0	9,017,000	0.1
Baha'is	225,000	0.0	7,447,000	0.1
Confucianists	760,000	0.0	6,461,000	0.1
Jains	1,446,000	0.1	5,749,000	0.1
Shintoists	7,613,000	0.4	2,782,000	0.0
Zoroastrians	119,000	0.0	181,000	0.0
<b>Total population</b>	<b>1,759,797,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,906,560,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Rate = average annual growth rate, per cent per year, between dates specified

Religious growth rates\*, 100-year and 10-year

Religion	Rate* 1910–2010		Rate* 2000–2010	
	Religious growth	Global population growth	Religious growth	Global population growth
Christians	1.33	1.35	1.33	1.35
Muslims	1.97	1.82	1.97	1.82
Hindus	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46
Agnostics	5.39	-0.36	5.39	-0.36
Buddhists	1.23	1.25	1.23	1.25
Chinese folk	0.16	0.85	0.16	0.85
Ethnoreligionists	0.66	1.21	0.66	1.21
Atheists	6.55	-0.09	6.55	-0.09
New Religionists	2.26	0.46	2.26	0.46
Sikhs	2.05	1.61	2.05	1.61
Jews	0.10	0.61	0.10	0.61
Spiritists	3.84	1.15	3.84	1.15
Daoists	3.07	2.45	3.07	2.45
Baha'is	3.56	1.86	3.56	1.86
Confucianists	2.16	0.22	2.16	0.22
Jains	1.39	1.54	1.39	1.54
Shintoists	-1.00	0.06	-1.00	0.06
Zoroastrians	0.42	-0.11	0.42	-0.11
<b>Total population</b>	<b>1.38</b>	<b>1.21</b>	<b>1.38</b>	<b>1.21</b>