



The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050

The Global Religious Landscape

404,690,000

5.9%

33

UN Population Data by Religion



As of 2010, an estimated 405 million people – or about 6% of the world's total population – were adherents of folk or traditional religions, and that number is expected to grow to 450 million by 2050. This increase will not keep pace with overall population growth, however, and the folk religion population is expected to drop to roughly 5% of the total world population in the decades ahead.

Adherents of folk religions, as of 2010, were most prevalent in the Asia-Pacific region, where nine-in-ten (90%) members of the world's folk religion population resided. The remaining followers of folk religions were concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa (7%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (between 2% and 3%). In the decades ahead, the share of the world's folk religion population living in the Asia-Pacific region is expected to decline somewhat, to 82% by 2050, while the shares living in sub-Saharan Africa and the Latin America-Caribbean region are expected to increase (to 14% and more than 3%, respectively).

Folk religions are closely tied to a particular people, ethnicity or tribe. In some cases, elements of other world religions are blended with local beliefs and customs. These faiths often have no formal creeds or sacred texts. Examples of folk religions include African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian aboriginal religions.

Explore population characteristics of folk religionists using [Topics & Questions](#) or the [Data Explorer](#).

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