



17464782397600847477584930231289212318186265431822546892142

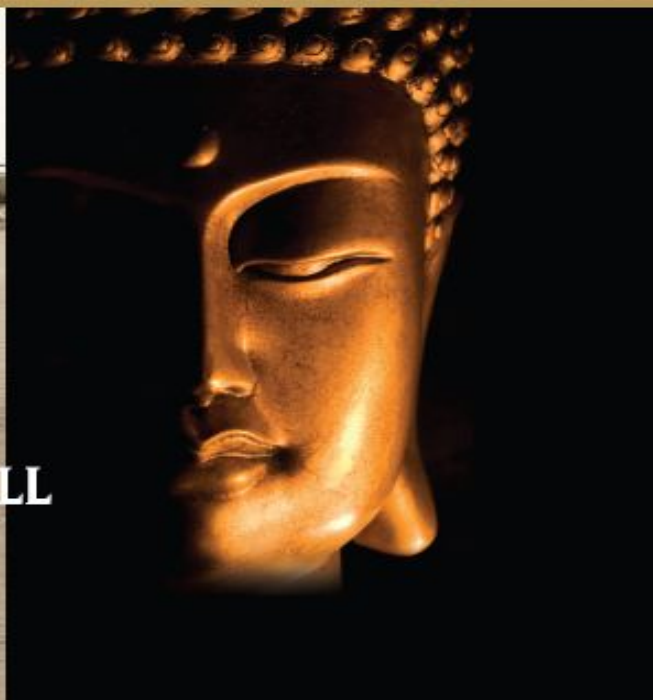
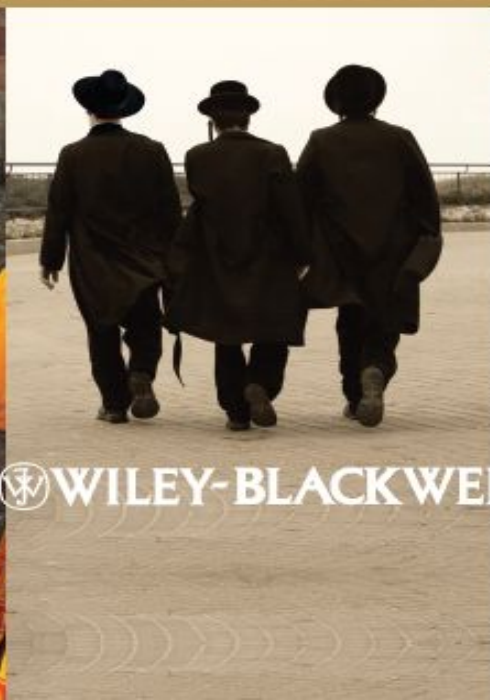
THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS IN FIGURES

An Introduction to International Religious Demography

TODD M. JOHNSON AND BRIAN J. GRIM

FOREWORD BY PETER L. BERGER

17464782397600847477584930231289212318158624682254624629362



 WILEY-BLACKWELL

Contents

[List of Figures](#)

[List of Tables](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Part I: Overview](#)

[Part II: Data and Methods](#)

[Part III: Case Studies](#)

[Recent History](#)

[A First Offering](#)

[Part I Overview](#)

[Chapter 1 Global Religious Populations,
1910–2010](#)

[Religiously Affiliated and Unaffiliated
Christians](#)

[Muslims](#)

[Hindus](#)

[Agnostics](#)

[Chinese Folk-Religionists](#)

[Buddhists](#)

[Ethnoreligionists](#)

[Atheists](#)

[New Religionists](#)

[Sikhs](#)

[Jews](#)

[Spiritists](#)

[Daoists](#)

[Baha'is](#)

[Confucianists](#)

[Jains](#)

[Shintoists](#)

[Zoroastrians](#)

[Chapter 2 Regional Religious Populations, 1910-2010](#)

[Africa](#)

[Asia](#)

[Europe](#)

[Latin America](#)

[Northern America](#)

[Oceania](#)

[Chapter 3 Religious Diversity](#)

[Diversity versus Pluralism](#)

[Changes in Religious Diversity from 1910 to 2010](#)

[Method 1: Religious Diversity Index \(RDI\)](#)

[Method 2: Religious Diversity by Number of Religions](#)

[Method 3: Religious Diversity by Size of Population](#)
[Religious Diversity in the United States](#)
[Globalization](#)
[Conclusion](#)

[Chapter 4 Projecting Religious Populations, 2010–50](#)

[Methodology](#)
[Findings for the Larger World Religions](#)
[Research on the Future of Religion](#)

[Part II Data and Methods](#)

[Chapter 5 Defining Religion and Religious Identity](#)

[How Many Religions, and What Religions, Are World Religions?](#)
[Defining not “Religion” but “a Religion”](#)

[Chapter 6 Religious Demography as an Emerging Discipline](#)

[Demography as a Growing Field of Study](#)
[Religious Demography](#)
[Religious Demography and Other Disciplines](#)
[Demography as a Disconnected Field of Study](#)
[Religious Demography Is Also Disconnected](#)
[Religious Demography and International Relations](#)

Chapter 7 Major Sources and Collections of Data

Censuses in Which a Religion Question Is Asked

Censuses in Which an Ethnicity or Language Question Is Asked

Surveys and Polls

Scholarly Monographs

Religion Statistics in Yearbooks and Handbooks

Governmental Statistical Reports

Questionnaires and Reports from Collaborators

Field Surveys and Interviews

Correspondence with National Informants

Unpublished Documentation (or Published Items with Limited Distribution)

Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, and Directories of Religions

Print and Web-Based Contemporary Descriptions of Religions

Dissertations and Theses on Religion

Physical and Electronic Collections of Data

Chapter 8 Analyzing Data on Religion

International Religious Demography Data Quality Index1

Reconciling Discrepancies Between Data

Chapter 9 Dynamics of Change in Religious Populations

Births

[Deaths](#)

[Births Minus Deaths/Total Fertility Rate](#)

[Converts To](#)

[Converts From](#)

[Converts To Minus Converts From](#)

[Immigrants](#)

[Emigrants](#)

[Immigrants Minus Emigrants](#)

[Part III Case Studies](#)

[Chapter 10 Estimating Changes in the Global Muslim Population](#)

[Data](#)

[Projection Assumptions](#)

[The Projected Global Muslim Population Scenarios](#)

[Discussion of Sources](#)

[A Note on Country and Territory Designation](#)

[Overview of the Findings](#)

[Growing, but at a Slower Rate](#)

[Muslim-Majority Countries](#)

[Sunni and Shi'a Muslims](#)

[Other Key Findings of the Study](#)

[Chapter 11 Factors Driving Change in the Global Muslim Population](#)

[Main Factors Driving Population Growth](#)

[Related Factors](#)

Chapter 12 Estimating China's Religious Populations

Overview

Reported Religious Affiliation in China According to Surveys

Toward a More Comprehensive Count of Religion Chinese Folk- or Traditional Religion

Buddhism and Taoism

Christianity

Islam

Atheism

A Comprehensive Estimate of Religious Affiliation in China

Government Officials Interested in Hearing about Religion

Chapter 13 Assessing Religious Populations in the Sudans

Religious Demography of the North and South

Chapter 14 Migration and Religious Diasporas

Religious Diasporas

Migration as One Component of Religious Change Civility

Additional Methodological Notes

Conclusion

[Appendix: World Religions by Country](#)

[Geographic](#)

[Religious adherents \(chapters 1-2\)](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Index](#)

The World's Religions in Figures

An Introduction to International Religious Demography

Todd M. Johnson and Brian J. Grim

With Gina A. Bellofatto

Foreword by Peter L. Berger

 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication

This edition first published 2013

© 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

Wiley-Blackwell is an imprint of John Wiley & Sons, formed by the merger of Wiley's global Scientific, Technical and Medical business with Blackwell Publishing.

Registered Office

John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate,
Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Offices

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK
The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19
8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell.

The right of Todd M. Johnson and Brian J. Grim to be identified as the authors of this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names,

service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book. This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Johnson, Todd M. (Todd Michael), 1958–

The world's religions in figures : an introduction to international religious demography /

Todd M. Johnson, Brian J. Grim; editorial associate, Gina A. Bellofatto.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-470-67454-3 (cloth)

1. Religions–Statistics. I. Bellofatto, Gina A. II. Title.

BL80.3.J65 2013

200.2'1–dc23

2012047272

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image: Top: Praying with rosary beads © spxChrome.

Detail from people praying on a sajadah © Eray

Haciosmanoglu. Priest in robe blessing wine for Communion

© kokophoto. Bottom: Sadhu Indian holyman sitting in the

temple © Bartosz Hadyniak. Three Hasidic Jews © Keith

Reicher. Detail of bust of Buddha © Navin Khianey.

Cover design by www.simonlevyassociates.co.uk

List of Figures

- [8.1](#) Bulgarian census, 2001
- [8.2](#) World Values Survey religion question for Bulgaria (European Values Survey Edition), 1999
- [9.1](#) Calculating net religious change
- [10.1](#) Muslims as a share of world population, 1990–2030
- [10.2](#) Annual population growth rates for Muslims and non-Muslims, 1990–2030
- [10.3](#) Percentage of population of Muslim-majority countries in selected age groups, 1990–2030
- [10.4](#) Annual population growth rates for Muslims by region, 1990–2030
- [10.5](#) Where Muslims live, 2010 and 2030
- [10.6](#) Annual population growth, Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, 1990–2030
- [11.1](#) Trends in fertility, 1990–2035
- [11.2](#) Trends in life expectancy at birth, 1990–2035
- [11.3](#) Percentage of births attended by skilled health professionals, 1990–2008
- [11.4](#) Trends in infant mortality, 1990–2035
- [11.5](#) Trends in migration, 1990–2035
- [11.6](#) Percentage of population in selected age groups, 2010 and 2030
- [11.7](#) Muslims as a share of world youth and young adults, 1990–2030, people ages 15–29
- [11.8](#) Trends in median age, 1990–2030
- [11.9](#) Percentage of population of Muslim-majority countries in selected age groups, 1990–2030
- [11.10](#) Percentage of population aged 60 and older, 1990–2030
- [11.11](#) Education and fertility in Muslim-majority countries, 2011
- [11.12](#) Poverty and fertility in Muslim-majority countries, 2011
- [13.1](#) Majority religion in Sudan and South Sudan by province
- [14.1](#) Calculating net religious change

List of Tables

- [1.1](#) World religions by adherents, 1910–2010
- [1.2](#) Percentage of the world's population belonging to no religion or religion, 1910–2010
- [1.3](#) Christians (C) by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
- [1.4](#) Countries with the most Christians, 1910 and 2010
- [1.5](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Christians, 1910 and 2010
- [1.6](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Christians, 1910–2010 and 2000–10
- [1.7](#) Christian (C) traditions and movements, 1910 and 2010
- [1.8](#) Christians by mother tongue, mid-2010
- [1.9](#) Muslims (M) by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
- [1.10](#) Countries with the most Muslims, 1910 and 2010
- [1.11](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Muslims, 1910 and 2010
- [1.12](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Muslims, 1910–2010 and 2000–10
- [1.13](#) Muslim traditions, 1910 and 2010
- [1.14](#) Muslims by mother tongue, mid-2010
- [1.15](#) Hindus by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
- [1.16](#) Countries with the most Hindus, 1910 and 2010
- [1.17](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Hindus, 1910 and 2010
- [1.18](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Hindus, 1910–2010 and 2000–2010
- [1.19](#) Hindu traditions, 1910 and 2010
- [1.20](#) Hindus by mother tongue, mid-2010
- [1.21](#) Agnostics (A) by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
- [1.22](#) Countries with the most agnostics, 1910 and 2010
- [1.23](#) Countries with the highest percentage of agnostics, 1910 and 2010
- [1.24](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of agnostics, 1910–2010 and 2000–10
- [1.25](#) Chinese folk-religionists (CFR) by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
- [1.26](#) Countries with the most Chinese folk-religionists (CFR), 1910 and 2010
- [1.27](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Chinese folk-religionists, 1910

- and 2010
- [1.28](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Chinese folk-religionists, 1910–2010 and 2000–10
 - [1.29](#) Buddhists by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
 - [1.30](#) Countries with the most Buddhists, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.31](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Buddhists, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.32](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Buddhists, 1910–2010 and 2000–10
 - [1.33](#) Buddhist traditions, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.34](#) Buddhists by mother tongue, mid-2010
 - [1.35](#) Ethnoreligionists (E) by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
 - [1.36](#) Countries with the most ethnoreligionists (E), 1910 and 2010
 - [1.37](#) Countries with the highest percentage of ethnoreligionists, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.38](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of ethnoreligionists, 1910–2010 and 2000–10
 - [1.39](#) Atheists (a) by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
 - [1.40](#) Countries with the most atheists, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.41](#) Countries with the highest percentage of atheists, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.42](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of atheists, 1910–2010 and 2000–10
 - [1.43](#) New Religionists (NR) by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
 - [1.44](#) Largest New Religions, 2010
 - [1.45](#) Countries with the most New Religionists, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.46](#) Countries with the highest percentage of New Religionists, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.47](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of New Religionists, 1910–2010 and 2000–10
 - [1.48](#) Sikhs by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
 - [1.49](#) Countries with the most Sikhs, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.50](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Sikhs, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.51](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Sikhs, 1910–2010 and 2000–10
 - [1.52](#) Jews by United Nations continents and regions, 1910–2010
 - [1.53](#) Countries with the most Jews, 1910 and 2010
 - [1.54](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Jews, 1910 and 2010

- [1.55](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Jews, 1910-2010 and 2000-10
- [1.56](#) Spiritists (Sp) by United Nations continents and regions, 1910-2010
- [1.57](#) Countries with the most Spiritists, 1910 and 2010
- [1.58](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Spiritists, 1910 and 2010
- [1.59](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Spiritists, 1910-2010 and 2000-1056
- [1.60](#) Daoists (D) by United Nations continents, 1910-2010
- [1.61](#) Countries with the most Daoists, 1910 and 2010
- [1.62](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Daoists, 1910 and 2010
- [1.63](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Daoists, 1910-2010 and 2000-10
- [1.64](#) Baha'is (Ba) by United Nations continents and regions, 1910-2010
- [1.65](#) Countries with the most Baha'is, 1910 and 2010
- [1.66](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Baha'is, 1910 and 2010
- [1.67](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Baha'is, 1910-2010 and 2000-10
- [1.68](#) Confucianists (Co) by United Nations continents, 1910-2010
- [1.69](#) Countries with the most Confucianists, 1910 and 2010
- [1.70](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Confucianists, 1910 and 2010
- [1.71](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Confucianists, 1910-2010 and 2000-10
- [1.72](#) Jains by United Nations continents, 1910-2010
- [1.73](#) Countries with the most Jains, 1910 and 2010
- [1.74](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Jains, 1910 and 2010
- [1.75](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Jains, 1910-2010 and 2000-10
- [1.76](#) Shintoists by United Nations continents, 1910-2010
- [1.77](#) Countries with the most Shintoists, 1910 and 2010
- [1.78](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Shintoists, 1910 and 2010
- [1.79](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Shintoists, 1910-2010 and 2000-10
- [1.80](#) Zoroastrians (Z) by United Nations continents, 1910-2010
- [1.81](#) Countries with the most Zoroastrians, 1910 and 2010
- [1.82](#) Countries with the highest percentage of Zoroastrians, 1910 and 2010
- [1.83](#) Countries with the fastest annual growth of Zoroastrians, 1910-2010 and 2000-10
- [2.1](#) Religious affiliation and growth in Africa, 1910-2010

- [2.2](#) Religious affiliation and growth in Asia, 1910–2010
- [2.3](#) Religious affiliation and growth in Europe, 1910–2010
- [2.4](#) Religious affiliation and growth in Latin America, 1910–2010
- [2.5](#) Religious affiliation and growth in Northern America, 1910–2010
- [2.6](#) Religious affiliation and growth in Oceania, 1910–2010
- [3.1](#) Religious Diversity Index (RDI), 1910 and 2010
- [3.2](#) Countries with highest Religious Diversity Index (RDI) values, 2010
- [3.3](#) Countries with the most religions over 0.5% of the population, 2010
- [3.4](#) Countries with the most religions over 5% of the population, 2010
- [3.5](#) Countries with the most religions over 10% of the population, 2010
- [3.6](#) Number of countries with total populations crossing population thresholds, 2012
- [3.7](#) Religious diversity by size (example of a country from each major region), 2012
- [3.8](#) Most religious diversity by size, 2012
- [3.9](#) Least religious diversity by size, 2012
- [4.1](#) Major world religions, 2010–50
- [4.2](#) Christians (C) by United Nations continents and regions, 2010–50
- [4.3](#) Countries with the most Christians, 2010–50
- [4.4](#) Muslims (M) by United Nations continents and regions, 2010–50
- [4.5](#) Countries with the most Muslims, 2010–50
- [4.6](#) Hindus (H) by United Nations continents and regions, 2010–50
- [4.7](#) Countries with the most Hindus, 2010–50
- [4.8](#) Buddhists (B) by United Nations continents and regions, 2010–50
- [4.9](#) Countries with the most Buddhists, 2010–50
- [4.10](#) Agnostics (A) by United Nations continents and regions, 2010–50
- [4.11](#) Countries with the most agnostics, 2010–50
- [4.12](#) Atheists (a) by United Nations continents and regions, 2010–50
- [4.13](#) Countries with the most atheists, 2010–50
- [8.1](#) International Religious Demography Data Quality Index
- [10.1](#) Fertility scenarios: Examples from three Muslim-majority countries, 2005–35
 - [10.2.1](#) Population projection scenarios outside of Europe and the US
 - [10.2.2](#) European population projection scenario
 - [10.2.3](#) US population projection scenario
- [10.3](#) World Muslim population growth scenarios, 2020 and 2030
- [10.4](#) European Muslim population growth scenarios (includes Russia), 2020

and 2030

- [10.5](#) US Muslim population growth scenarios, 2020 and 2030
- [10.6](#) Muslim population by region, 2010 and 2030
- [10.7](#) Muslim population of Muslim-majority countries, 2010–30
- [10.8](#) Shi'a Muslim population growth in the four largest Shi'a-majority countries and Sunni Muslim population growth in the four largest Sunni-majority countries, 2010–30
- [11.1](#) Most children per woman among Muslim-majority countries, 2010–15
- [11.2](#) Fewest children per woman among Muslim-majority countries, 2010–15
- [11.3](#) Most access to clean drinking water among Muslim-majority countries, 2006
- [11.4](#) Least access to clean drinking water among Muslim-majority countries, 2006
- [11.5](#) Highest projected infant mortality among Muslim-majority countries, ranked as of 2010–15
- [11.6](#) Lowest projected infant mortality among Muslim-majority countries, ranked as of 2010–15
- [11.7](#) Highest projected life expectancies at birth among Muslim-majority countries, ranked as of 2010–15
- [11.8](#) Lowest projected life expectancies at birth among Muslim-majority countries, ranked as of 2010–15
- [11.9](#) Largest losses from emigration among Muslim-majority countries, 2010–15
- [11.10](#) Largest gains from immigration among Muslim-majority countries, 2010–15
- [11.11](#) Highest median age among Muslim-majority countries, 2010
- [11.12](#) Lowest median age among Muslim-majority countries, 2010
- [11.13](#) Highest percentage of population age 60 and older among Muslim-majority countries, ranked as of 2030
- [11.14](#) Highest percentage of population age 15–29 among Muslim-majority countries, ranked as of 2030
- [11.15](#) Where girls can expect to receive the most years of schooling among Muslim-majority countries, 2010
- [11.16](#) Where girls can expect to receive the fewest years of schooling among Muslim-majority countries, 2010
- [11.17](#) Highest percentage of population below the poverty line among Muslim-majority countries, 2000–06
- [11.18](#) Lowest percentage of population below the poverty line among Muslim-majority countries, 2000–06
- [11.19](#) Highest GDP-PPP per capita, 2010–15

- [11.20](#) Lowest GDP-PPP per capita, 2010–15
- [12.1](#) Importance of religion among Chinese public, 2006
- [12.2](#) Giving to religion among Chinese public, 2007
- [12.3](#) Reported formal religious affiliation from surveys in China
- [12.4](#) Traditional/folk practices and beliefs in China, 2007
- [12.5](#) Christians in China, 2010
- [12.6](#) Range of existing Christian population estimates for mainland China, 2010
- [12.7](#) Religious affiliation in China, 2010
- [12.8](#) Interest in the topic of religion by occupational group
- [13.1](#) Religious adherents in Sudan before 2011 split
- [13.2](#) Religion in Sudan (North) and South Sudan by province, 2011
- [13.3](#) Religion in Sudan (North), 1900–2010
- [13.4](#) Religion in South Sudan, 1900–2010
- [14.1](#) Religionists in diaspora, mid-2010
- [14.2](#) Top 10 host countries of diasporas ranked by diaspora population, mid-2010
- [14.3](#) Top 10 “sending” countries, ranked by size of diaspora outside of host country, mid-2010
- [14.4](#) Top 10 peoples, ranked by number of countries in diaspora, mid-2010
- [14.5](#) Top 10 peoples, ranked by percentage in diaspora, mid-2010
- [14.6](#) Top 10 diaspora peoples by religion, mid-2010

Foreword

This book is a remarkable achievement. It is the result of many years of work by the two authors, who must be considered the deans of international religious demography, a discipline that now has as its primary location the two centers with which the authors are associated (Todd Johnson with the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, near Boston, and Brian Grim with the Pew Forum for Religion and Public Life, in Washington). It pleases me that they have deposited (if that is the right word in our electronic age) their database at our Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs at Boston University. The book, with its plenitude of numerical tables, is a wonderful companion to another recent publication, this one full of maps, by Todd Johnson and Kenneth Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity* (2009). The two volumes together constitute an indispensable and enormously useful resource for anyone interested in the shape of religion in the contemporary world. These are not books to be read once and all from cover to cover, but rather to be kept close at hand for ready reference (my own case).

The present volume consists of three sections. The first section, the juiciest of the three, contains an overview of the findings. There follows an elaborate discussion of the methodology employed. This is obviously of most interest for any putative practitioners of religious demography, but it is also useful in allaying the skepticism about statistics felt with good reason by many scholars of religion: we know that people lie about their own religious activity or find it difficult to fit themselves into the categories of a survey questionnaire, that numbers declared by religious institutions and by governments are iffy, and that many

believers meet in informal or even illegal gatherings which are difficult to count. Johnson and Grim are skeptical themselves, and they explain in great detail how they have developed methods which painstakingly cull credible findings from highly discrepant bodies of evidence. The third section of the volume consists of what they call “case studies” – two from very important areas, the Muslim world and China – to which is added the religious demography of the new nation of South Sudan and of what remains of Sudan after its southern parts seceded. Needless to say, this unhappy region is not very important on the contemporary scene, but the secession is the result of a violent conflict (not yet fully ended) between the Christian South and the Muslim North – an instructive case of what Samuel Huntington famously called “the bloody frontiers of Islam” (in *The Clash of Civilizations*, 1996).

It would be futile, indeed impossible, to summarize the rich contents of the present volume. It contains well over 150 numerical tables (I started to count, gave up before I got to the end). This is a formidable mountain to climb even for someone less numerophobic than me. (I have often explained that, every time arithmetic was taught in my elementary school in Vienna, I had the measles – like three times weekly.) I will not pretend to have studied every table (no one would believe me if I did). I have skimmed through the volume, especially the first section, and often stopped to read especially intriguing portions of the text. What I will do here is to comment briefly on what I think are key findings, some of which throw startling light on the global religious scene. Then I will, also briefly, point out significant political implications that should be of interest to people not particularly enamored of religious demography. Johnson and Grim are obviously fond of numbers. But they succeed in making the numbers speak. Often the numbers make us change the way we look at the world.

Perhaps the most startling findings come from a comparison of two dates – 1910 and 2010. The former date, not so incidentally, marks the international Protestant missionary conference in Edinburgh, which proclaimed the twentieth century as the era of world evangelization. That purpose was remarkably successful. However, in addition to spreading Christianity in general and Protestantism in particular, into previously “heathen” regions, the time span between the two dates saw an amazing demographic shift from the global North to the global South. In 1910 over 80% of Christians lived in Europe and North America; in 2010 that had shrunk to less than 40%. Today the majority of Christians live in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. This shift has many important implications. Possibly the most important is the fact that Christians in the global South (Protestant as well Catholic) are more robustly supernaturalist than their coreligionists in the North. Thus African Christians, for example, live in a world of spirits (divine as well as demonic), miracles, and exorcisms quite different from their Northern brethren – and much closer to the world of the New Testament. This theological fact is now beginning to sink in widely. It is vividly illustrated by developments in the Anglican communion, as dissident conservative Episcopalians in places like the parish in Falls Church, Virginia (where George Washington, no less, used to worship), put themselves under the care of African bishops, and as the Archbishop of York, the second-ranking cleric in the Church of England, is an African. But it is mostly through immigration that Southern Christianity is washing over into the Global North – for example, in the increasing presence of Latinos in the Catholic Church in the United States.

Despite the great successes of Evangelical and especially Pentecostal missionaries in many countries, notably in Latin America, there are now more Catholics than Protestants among Christians globally (51.5%) than there were in 1910

(47.6%). While Catholics may not match Protestants in missionary successes, they keep up demographically by way of fertility. But this comparison obscures an enormously important fact: the dramatic growth in both groupings of what the authors call “Renewalist” Christianity (a less than happy synonym, in my opinion, for what is conventionally called Pentecostal or Charismatic). This is, precisely, a robustly supernaturalist version of the faith, characterized by the “gifts of the spirit,” notably miraculous healing and “speaking in tongues.” “Renewalists” were 0.2% of all Christians in 1910, but had grown to 25.8% in 2010. Put simply, *at least* one fourth of today’s Christians have a worldview much closer to the New Testament than that of most theology professors in Europe and the United States. This fact should be understood in the larger context that, in all likelihood, the majority of all Christians in the global South, not only the Charismatic ones, have a familiar relationship with the supernatural that is much rarer in the North. In other words, the “gifts of the spirit” are even washing up into the suburbs of Washington.

Islam has grown substantially in the relevant time span – from 12.6% of the world population to 22.5% in 2010. In some parts of the world the increase was due to missionary activity, especially in Africa, but mostly it was caused by high fertility. The future projections are interesting; I’ll get to them presently. But today the geographical distribution of Muslims is very interesting indeed: The largest number is in Indonesia, followed by India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Iran. Egypt occupies the sixth place in this demographic hierarchy. The denizens of Cairo may be justified in thinking of themselves as being at the heart of the *Arab* world, but surely not of the *Muslim* world. In other words, the center of the Muslim world is *not* in the Middle East, as is widely assumed. Arabs can proudly recall that Islam originated in Arabia, that the language of the Qur’an is Arabic, and that

the holiest cities for Muslims are indeed in the Middle East. But today most Muslims live in countries to the east of that region.

Those of us who have long pondered the questions raised by so-called secularization theory – the proposition that modernity means a decline of religion – can also derive useful lessons from the demographic data in this volume. If there was a process of secularization in the past, it reached its worldwide peak in 1970, when around 20% of the global population was self-described as “not religious.” Needless to say, one might quibble about what this phrase actually means (probably very different things to different people), or for that matter about the categories of “agnostic” and “atheist” used by the authors. Be this as it may, the number of people who can be described as “nones” (having no allegiance to any religion, here arrived at by a combination of “agnostics” and “atheists”) stands today at 11.8%. By contrast, there has been a steady increase since 1970 of people who describe themselves as religious. *That* category is projected to be 91% by 2050. Again, this may be due to differential fertility – the religious have more kids – not necessarily to greater religious fervor. In many countries there will be greater religious diversity. If I may beat my own drum in this connection, I have long argued that secularization theory should be replaced by pluralization theory. But that is another story.

I am much intrigued by the authors’ projections of future demographics. Of course these are prefaced by the phrase “if present trends continue.” The phrase reminds me of the one coined by Herman Kahn, sometimes called the father of futurology – “surprise-free future”; we know all too well how many surprises, many of them very unpleasant, the future may hold. Still, some present trends *will* continue, and it is instructive to imagine the ensuing demographic scenarios.

There is what the authors call “the continued resilience of world religions into the future.” Christians in 2010 number 32.8% of the world population, and are projected to number 35.8% in 2050. The corresponding Muslim numbers are, respectively, 22.5% and 27.5%. In other words, there will probably be no great change in the global distribution of the two major religions. There is projected a significant decrease in the number of people under the age of 30 in Muslim-majority countries, from 60% to 50% – bad news for Jihadist recruiters (even worse news would be comparable or larger decreases of unemployed young men in this age bracket). The aforementioned decrease in the “agnostic/atheist” category will likely continue unabatedly, from 11.8% to 8.7%. In other words, the age of triumphant secularity, whether hoped for or feared, is becoming more implausible as we look into the future.

As an old joke has it: As the lady said to the insect specialist after sitting next to him at a dinner party, during which he told her endlessly about his beloved insects – “This is very interesting, if you are interested in it.” There are important *political* reasons to be interested in demographic data about religion. This has become increasingly clear to people in international relations and in the policy community since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The first focus, logically enough, was on Islam. Then grew an understanding of the complexity of the Muslim world, and the insight that religious groups with no terrorist activists can be politically relevant. If the Muslim projection is broken down from the “resilient” total, things become very interesting indeed. The Muslim population in Europe is projected to go from 5.6% now to 6.9% in 2050 – a sizable increase, but hardly supporting the “Eurabia” dystopia evoked by anti-Muslim agitators. In the United States the Muslim population is projected to go from 2.6 millions now to 6.2 millions in 2050. The political implications of this

become clear when one reflects that the increase will mean that there will be roughly equal numbers of Muslims and Jews in the country, with probable consequences for US Middle East policy. Demography is also likely to be significant for the domestic future of Israel. Palestinian fertility seems to be declining, while the fertility of Orthodox Jews in Israel (as in America) is expected to remain high. Consequently, demography suggests that there is no basis for the fear (by many Israelis) and the hope (by many Arabs) that there will be before long a Palestinian majority even within the 1967 borders of Israel (not to mention the entire territory “between the river and the sea,” that is within the borders of historic Palestine).

China is another focus in this volume. Demography features highly in any speculation about its future. Overall is the much-discussed consequence of the one-child family policy. A shrinking workforce will have to take care of an expanding population of the non-working aged. No religious factors come immediately to mind (unless it be a decline in the Confucian virtue of filial piety). But there are two demographic developments involving religion. Ethnic minorities have been exempted from the one-child policy, thus making for a higher birthrate among ethnic Muslims than among Han Chinese. Also, there has been a big increase in the number of Christians, now estimated by Johnson and Grim to be about 67 millions, or 5% of the population. Given the great difficulties of counting Christians in China, because of the illegal or semi-legal status of many churches, I suspect that this estimate is too low. If present trends continue, the number of Christians is likely to grow considerably. Much of this growth is Protestant, not (as in many other regions) by upwardly mobile poor people, but through the conversion of people who are already middle class (some with the wonderful title of “boss Christians”). One can only speculate on the political effects of an

assertive Protestant middle class in China, possibly similar to effects already visible in Latin America.

I think I have said enough on why this book is important and why it should be read by people who are not, and do not aspire to become, religious demographers. Todd Johnson and Brian Grim are to be warmly congratulated and thanked.

Peter L. Berger
Senior Research Fellow
Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs, Boston
University

Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the support of our two research projects: the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MA, and Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project at the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life in Washington, DC, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and the John Templeton Foundation.

We would not have been able to write this book without significant help from our Editorial Associate, Gina Bellofatto. Gina worked with us from the beginning of this project, organizing and editing the material, filling in the gaps, and keeping us moving in the midst of many other commitments.

At the Center for the Study of Global Christianity we are grateful for the work of our Data Analyst, Peter Crossing, who provided all the detailed tables extracted from the *World Religion Database*. We are also thankful to Research Associate Albert Hickman for copy-editing this text, making numerous suggestions and improvements throughout. Other researchers working at the Center include LouAnn Stropoli, Brad Coon, Shawn Woo, Joanne Yen, Elizabeth LeLievre, Chak Him Chow, Sam Rogers, and Katie Bethea.

At the Pew Research Center, we thank Conrad Hackett, Philip Connor, Juan Carlos Esparza Ochoa, Chris Gao, Noble Kuriakose, Anne Shi, Peter Henne (now at the University of Virginia), Becky Hsu (now at Georgetown University), and Mehtab Karim (now at George Mason University). Also, Vegard Skirbekk, Marcin Stonawski, Michaela Potančoková, and Anne Goujon, researchers at the Age and Cohort Change Project at the International Institute for Advanced

Systems Analysis (IIASA), Laxenburg, Austria, contributed to the case studies on Muslim population growth.

We are also grateful to Peter Berger and Robert Hefner at the Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs at Boston University for hosting us as Visiting Research Fellows in the Study of International Religious Demography. The *World Religion Database*, on which much of this study is based, is housed there.

The opinions expressed in this book are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Introduction

Censuses of people have been conducted for several centuries. The science of counting religionists around the world, however, is a relatively new field of study – the development of the academic discipline of international religious demography has taken place largely in the latter part of the twentieth century. In 1969, Hyman Alterman published *Counting People: The Census in History*,^{[1](#)} one of the first comprehensive treatments of censuses. Our book, over 40 years later, is an attempt to compose an analogous volume on counting religionists around the world. We describe the emerging discipline of international religious demography by examining its methods and techniques in the context of national, regional, and global statistics on religious adherents. We define “religious demography” as the scientific and statistical study of the demographic characteristics of religious populations, primarily with respect to their size, age-sex structure, density, growth, distribution, development, migration, and vital statistics, including the change of religious identity within human populations and how these characteristics relate to other social and economic indicators. In this sense, we go beyond basic demographic features of religion (age, sex, fertility, mortality) and look at religion as a demographic characteristic of human populations deserving its own field of inquiry.

The increased prominence religion has assumed in academic fields including history, sociology, international relations, and a host of others is one of the unexpected developments of the early twenty-first century. In the latter part of the twentieth century, conventional wisdom held that religion was on the wane and, by implication, that the