

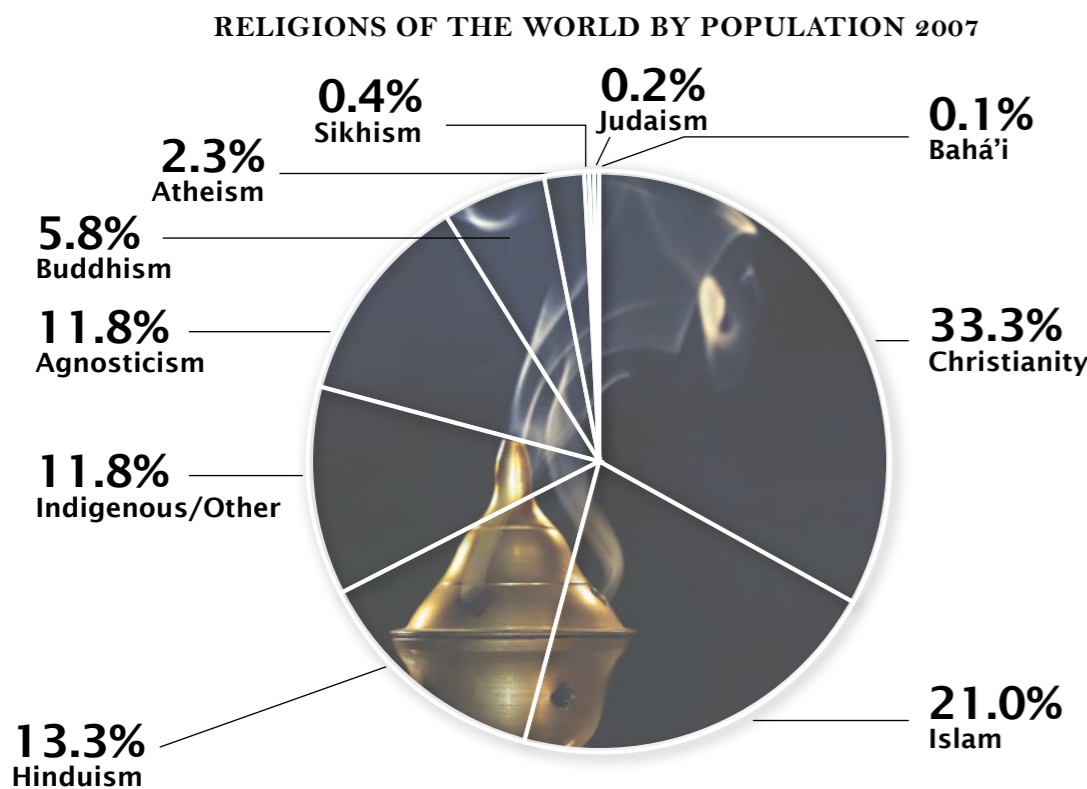
RELIGION

“Every human being is the author of his own health or disease.”
—SIDDHĀRTHA GAUTAMA BUDDHA (563–483 BCE)

Religion plays an important role in the daily life of many people throughout the world, influencing each nation’s social norms and cultural traditions.

Tobacco, an indigenous plant of the Americas, is considered a sacrament by many Native American cultures. In the Cherokee tradition, for instance, smoke acts as a messenger carrying prayers to the spirit world. In the pre-Columbian era, ceremonial and ritualistic uses of tobacco leaf in Native American culture were infrequent and typically did not lead to addiction or create public health problems. Today, however, Native American and indigenous groups exhibit some of the highest rates of tobacco use in the world.

Most major religions of the Old World, founded before the advent of the tobacco pandemic, do not specifically address tobacco in their founding texts, but the general precepts of every religion agree that people should protect their life and health, as well as the sanctity of their family and community.



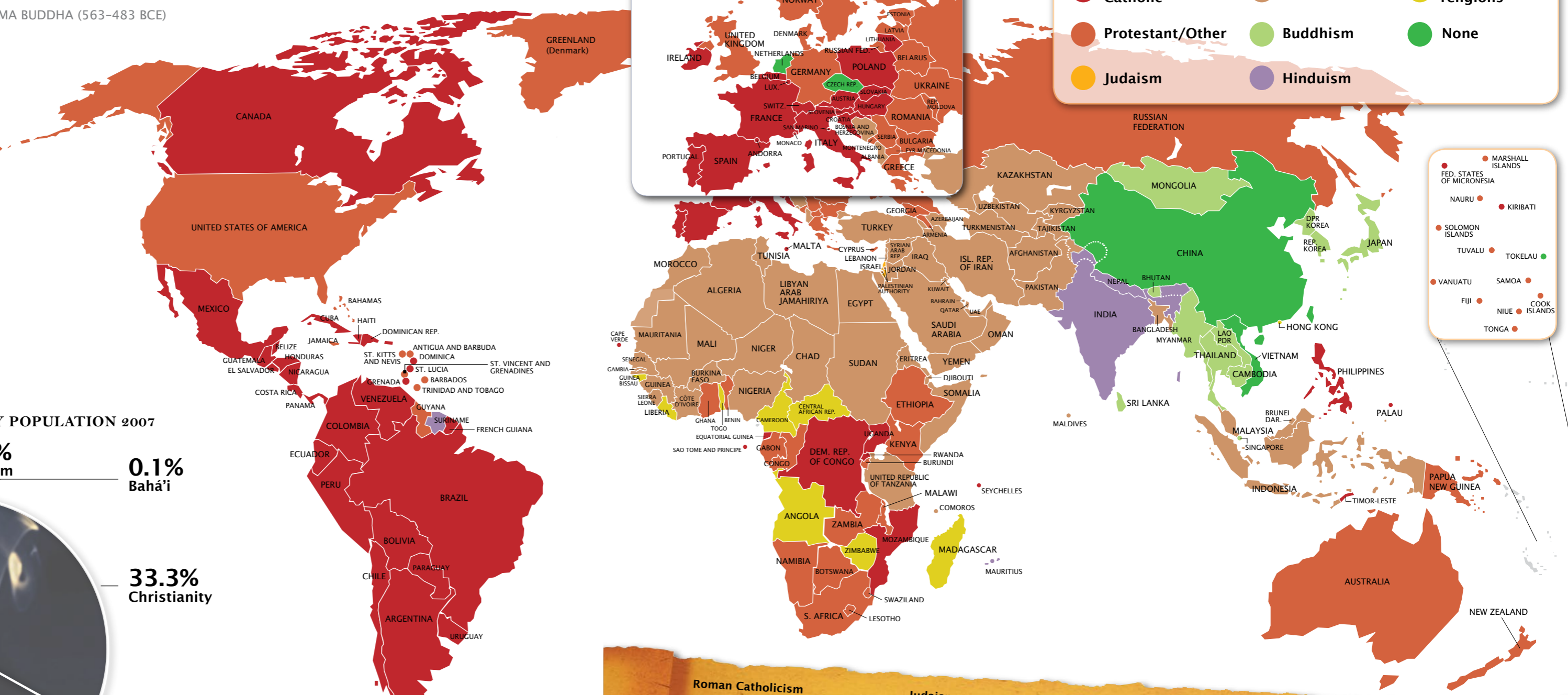
! “Offering cigarettes to monks is a sin.”
—Thai Anti-Smoking Campaign Project poster used to curb smoking among Buddhist monks, 2002

“Since the damage caused by smoking to human life is so evident, there is no doubt that it is haram (forbidden).”
—Dr. Ahmad Omar Hashim, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt

“If smoking causes substantial harm to a male or female smoker or to the fetus, then it is prohibited.”
—Shiite Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, Najaf, Iraq

“Whatever short-lived pleasure it may provide, there is now no doubt that the use of tobacco is a cause of much disease and misery.”
—His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama

“Our faith traditions inform us that our bodies are gifts from God and, therefore, should be treasured and treated with dignity. This means, among other things, that tobacco companies should not be allowed to entice our children to pollute their bodies.”
—James Winkler, chair, Faith United Against Tobacco Convention



Roman Catholicism
The ancient concept of *mens sana in corpore sano* (a sound mind in a sound body) was reaffirmed in the Pontifical Council’s recognition of tobacco’s harmful effects and the papal committee’s 2002 ban on public smoking in the Vatican.

Christianity
Many Christian churches consider tobacco a violation of the body—“the temple of the Holy Spirit.” Churches may abjure tobacco in the interests of social justice and to achieve wholeness and well-being for their members and the broader community.

Judaism
Intellectual, physical, and spiritual faculties are considered gifts presented to each human. Striving to preserve the body is a measure of the esteem in which those gifts are held. Halakha—Jewish law—prohibits the smoking of tobacco products.

Islam
Islamic law (Fiqh) concerning the integrity of the individual proscribes all products and practices that jeopardize life or health. Because tobacco is harmful to health, its consumption is contrary to the spirit of Islam. In 2002, the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia were declared tobacco-free.

Buddhism
Buddhism teaches the path to enlightenment, freedom, and mental clarity. Freedom implies no dependence or addiction. Anything that harms the body or mind, one’s own or those of others, must be avoided.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)
Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith specifically proscribed tobacco consumption: “Tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man . . .” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 89:4, 8). The state of Utah—70 percent Mormon—has the lowest smoking prevalence and lung cancer rates in the United States.

Hinduism
Hinduism defines *vyasana* as a dependence unnecessary for the preservation of health. *Vyasana*—addiction—causes suffering and impedes attainment of a spiritual life. Tobacco use violates Hindu principles against causing harm to self and others.

Bahá’i Faith
The Tablet on Purity scriptures by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá condemns the use of tobacco and asks God to “Deliver [the people of Baha] from intoxicating drinks and tobacco, save them, rescue them . . .”

Sikhism
The Reht Maryada (Code of Conduct) strictly forbids tobacco use, one of the four cardinal transgressions, or *Kurahits*.