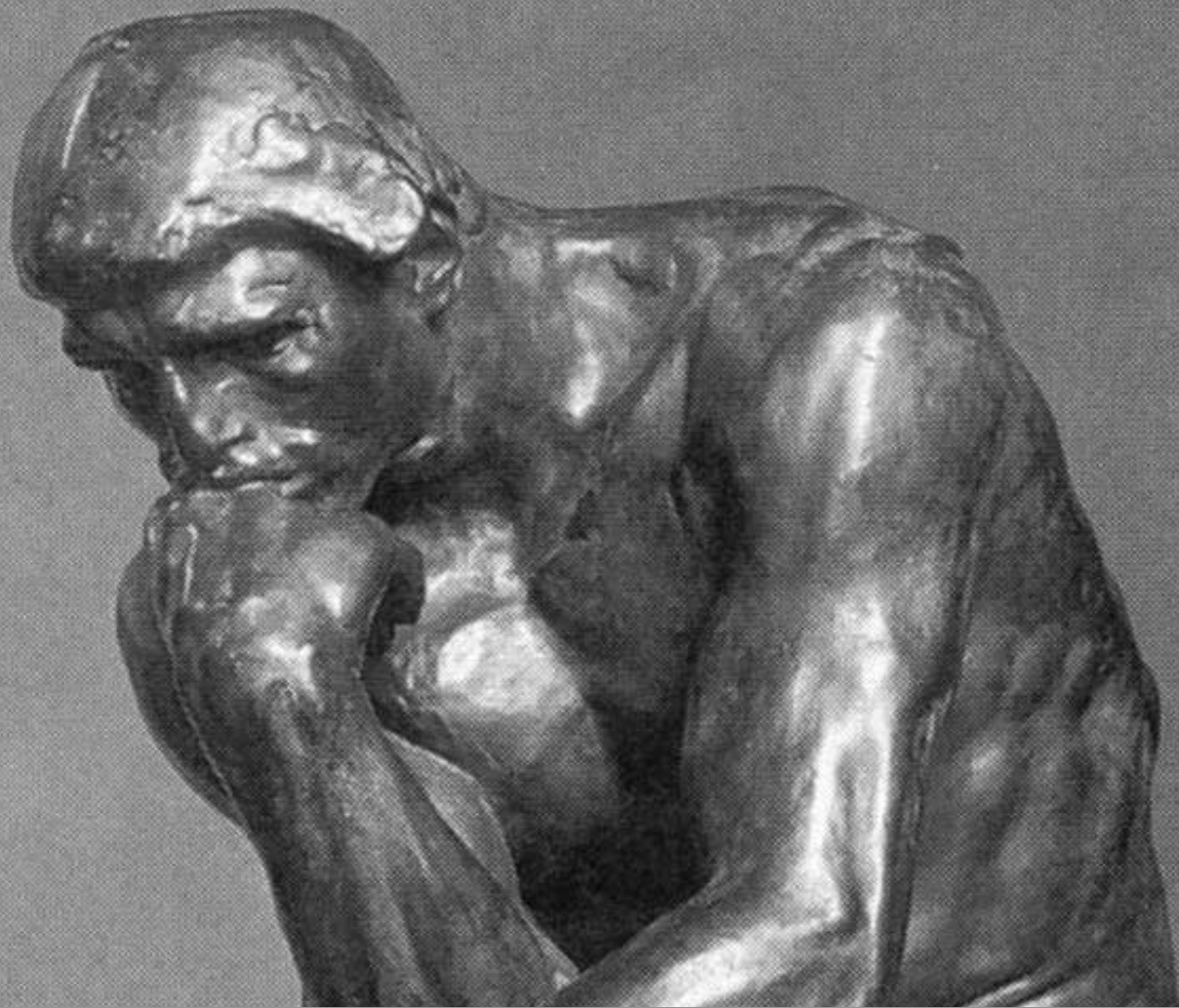




Religion



Human beings have the amazing capacity to question such things as the source and meaning of their existence.

We are more than just physical beings

...we are rational,
emotional,
and self-aware

... we are
spiritual beings



re · li · gion (ri-lij-uh n) noun

- 1. a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe**
- 2. a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons**
- 3. something one believes in and follows devotedly**

(Dictionary.com)

Religions provide an organized and coherent system of beliefs that often provide answers to many of life's fundamental questions.

Religions offer answers that have been tested by time, in some cases over thousands of years. They are also made stronger by the richness of tradition and the shared experience of community.



The Neanderthal people, who lived over 30,000 years ago, practiced ritual burial.

Approximate number of adherents of the world's top 22 religions (or belief systems)

- **Christianity:** 2.1 billion
- **Islam:** 1.3 billion
- **Secular/Nonreligious/Agnostic/Atheist:** 1.1 billion
- **Hinduism:** 900 million
- **Chinese traditional religion:** 394 million
- **Buddhism:** 376 million
- **primal-indigenous:** 300 million
- **African Traditional & Diasporic:** 100 million
- **Sikhism:** 23 million
- **Juche:** 19 million
- **Spiritism:** 15 million
- **Judaism:** 14 million
- **Baha'i:** 7 million
- **Jainism:** 4.2 million
- **Shinto:** 4 million
- **Cao Dai:** 4 million
- **Zoroastrianism:** 2.6 million
- **Tenrikyo:** 2 million
- **Neo-Paganism:** 1 million
- **Unitarian-Universalism:** 800 thousand
- **Rastafarianism:** 600 thousand
- **Scientology:** 500 thousand

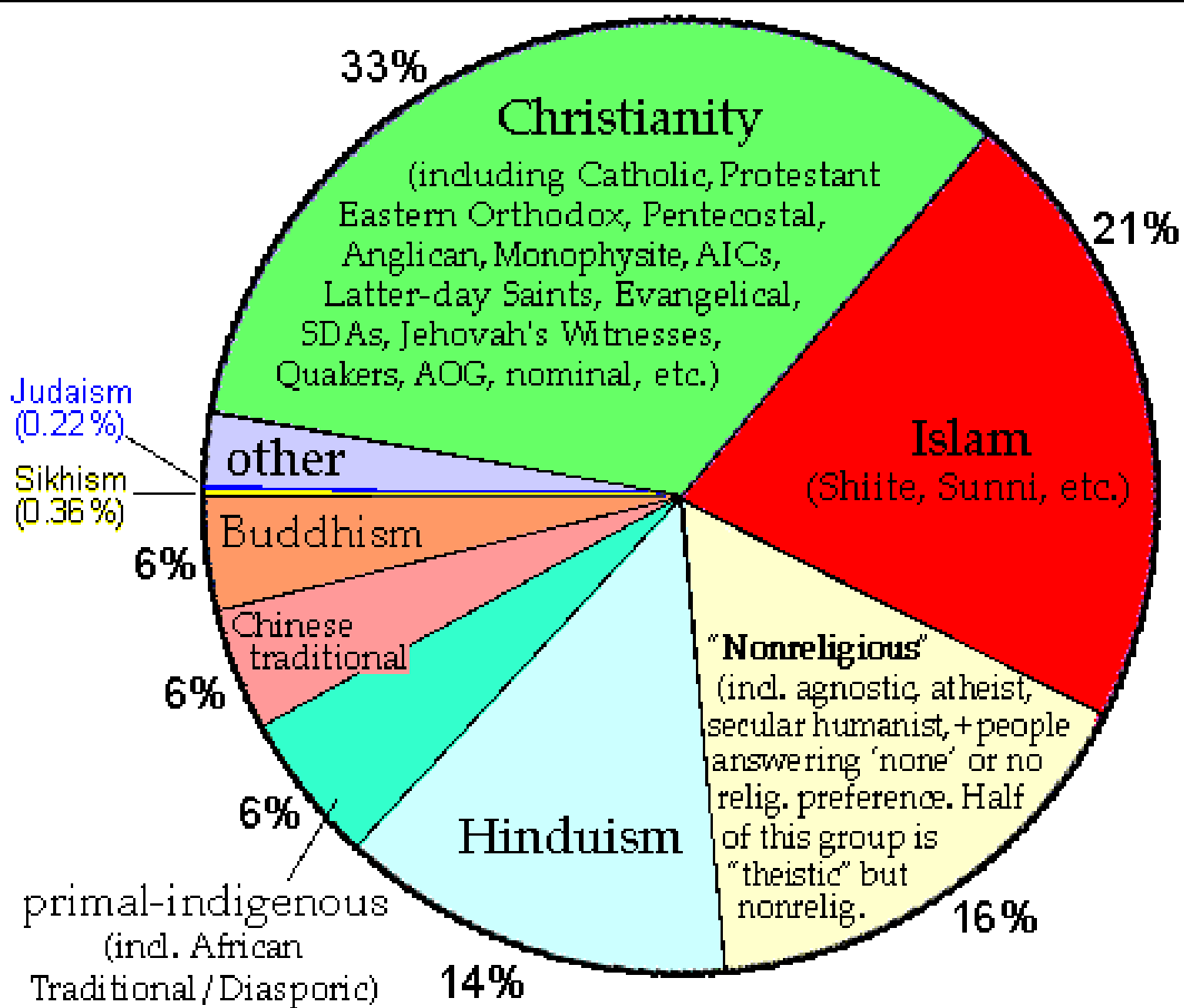
Notes:

-the figures in this table total nearly 7 billion people, yet the world population was only 6.4 billion (2005). However, a person doesn't necessarily have to be an adherent of solely one religion.

Sources:

Adherents.com

Wikipedia.org



NOTE: Total adds up to more than 100% due to rounding and because upper bound estimates were used for each group. © 2005 www.adherents.com