

WORLD WEEKLY

Is belief on the decline?

While only a small percentage of people worldwide say they are atheists, religiousness is dropping according to recent polls. The Religiosity and Atheism Index measures how many people around the world describe themselves as religious, non-religious or atheist.

More than 50,000 men and women in 57 countries were asked the following question: "Irrespective of whether you attend a place of worship or not, would you say you are a religious person, not a religious person or a convinced atheist?"

Comparing results from the same poll in 2005 reveals that overall religiosity has declined by 9 per cent.

Among believers, the proportion those who see themselves as religious is highest among Hindus, followed by Christian, Muslim and Jewish populations.



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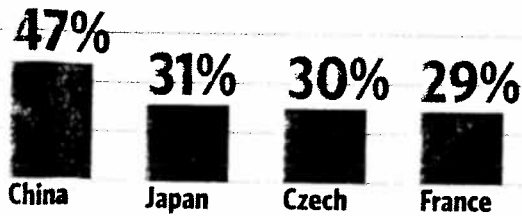
59
Percentage of the world's population who claim to be religious

23
Percentage who identify as "not religious"

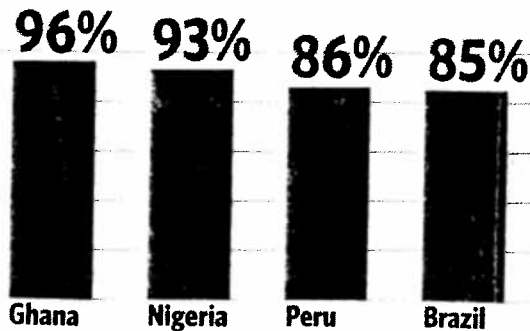
13
Percentage who say they are atheists

17
Difference in religious fervor between the poorest and richest in society; the wealthier the respondent, the less likely he or she was to identify as religious

Greatest concentration of **ATHEISTS**



Greatest concentration of **RELIGIOUS PEOPLE**



16
Percentage difference in religiosity between those who are college educated and those without high school education who tend to be more religious

13
Percentage decline in religiosity reported in Canada since 2005