



Dialogue

of

Cultures, Religions

&

Civilisations

Dialogue

World's Major Religions

| Religion | 1970 | 2000 | 2025 |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <u>% of world population</u> | | | |
| Christians | 34 | 33 | 33 |
| Muslims | 15 | 20 | 23 |
| Hindus | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| Buddhists | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Other religions | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| Non religious | 26 | 22 | 19 |

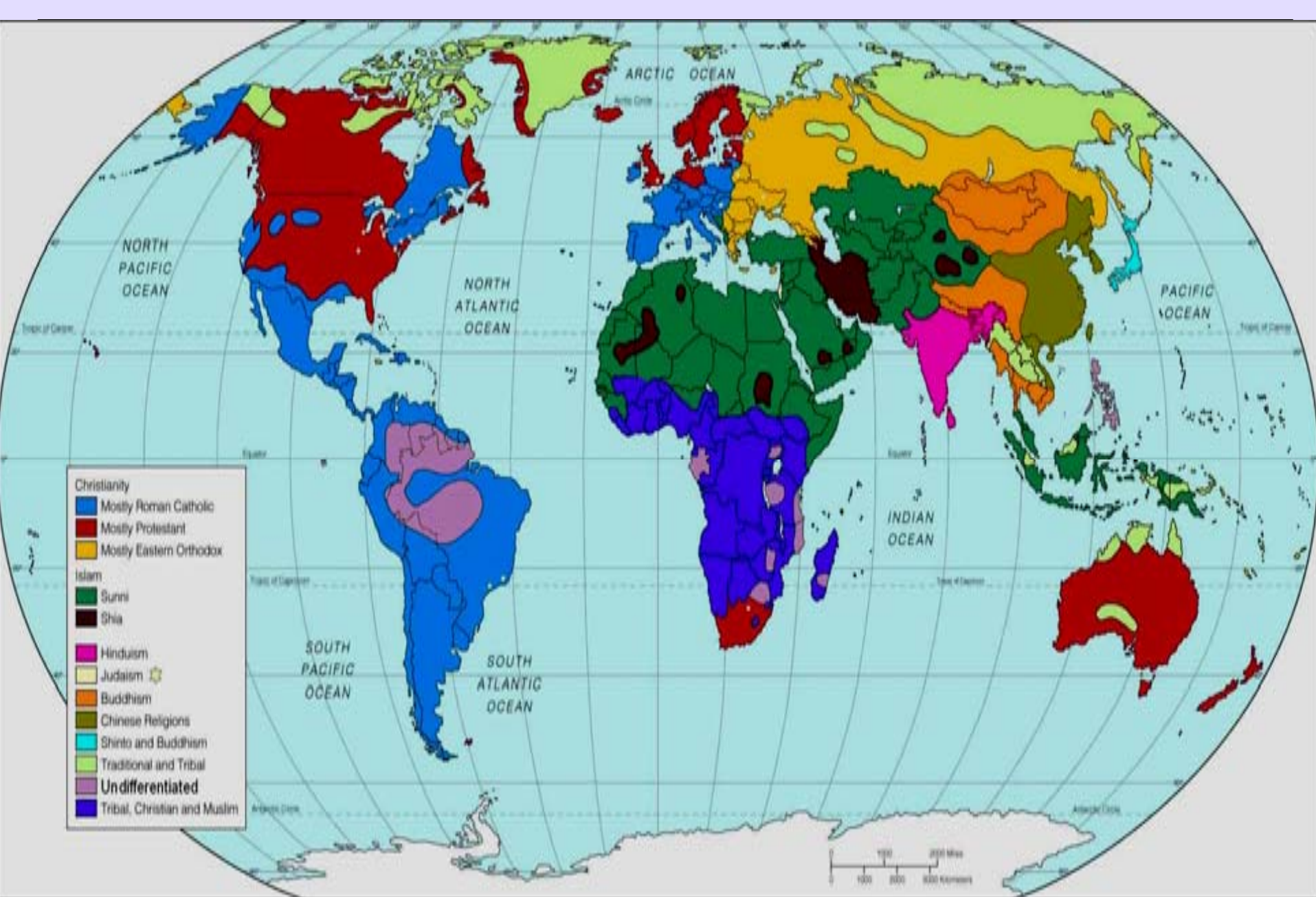
World population

(millions)

3,696

6,055

7,824



Dialogue

- Dialogue across cultures, religions & civilisations:
NOT A NEW IDEA

- An idea that gained momentum with:
 - ✦ **End of WWII**
e.g. UN – UNESCO: <http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en>

 - ✦ **End of Cold War**
*e.g. Global Agenda for Dialogue Among Civilisations
<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue/en/566.pdf>*

 - ✦ **September 11**
e.g. Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures: <http://www.euromedalex.org/En/AboutUs.htm>



Dialogue

Philosophy of Dialogue

- No cultural, religious or ethical tradition has a monopoly on truth or wisdom
- All of the world's major ethical traditions share a deep commitment to:
 - ✦ Dignity of human life
 - ✦ Personal fulfilment
 - ✦ Standards of *rightness* in human conduct



Dialogue

Philosophy of Dialogue *(cont)*

- **But there are also important differences ~ each tradition has:**
 - **Its distinctive ethos & symbolism**
 - **its own languages and customs**
 - **its own ethical perspectives**
 - **its own understanding of personal & social relationships**
 - **Its unique contribution to the human dialogue**



Dialogue

Philosophy of Dialogue *(cont)*

- There are significant differences within cultures and civilisations
 - No culture / civilisation can remain “pure” (entirely homogeneous)
 - All cultures / civilisations bear the impact of cross-cultural flows through:
 - Trade
 - War
 - Migration
 - Intellectual, scientific, artistic currents
 - Cultures / civilisations = living entities = change & diversify over time



Dialogue

Philosophy of Dialogue *(cont)*

- ❑ Difference is no cause for alarm – diversity is vital for growth
- ❑ Cultural diversity is part of the human inheritance
- ❑ All human beings share the same civilisational inheritance



Dialogue

Method of Dialogue

- Key to dialogue \neq merely to recognise diversity, but to engage the *other* in common search for truth & understanding
- To engage in dialogue = enter into respectful communication
- In dialogue, we *speak*, but just as importantly we *listen*



Dialogue

Method of Dialogue *(cont)*

- In dialogue, participants
 - hold up their own traditions up to critical examination
 - Seek to rediscover fundamental ethical impulse
- Dialogical method nurtures and is nurtured by:
 - Empathy
 - Compassion