

**THUMBS** - an acronym to remember the 5 BLOCS  
of UPGS (Unreached People Groups)

Tribals – 262,502,000 – (4.0% of world population) – 11,500 Missionaries (1 for every 22,826)  
Hindus – 888,300,000 – (13.7% of world population) – 5,300 Missionaries (1 for every 167,603)  
Unreligious – 1,175,334,000 – (18.1% of world population) – 14,400 Missionaries (1 for every 81,620)  
Muslims – 1,359,745,000 – (20.9% of world population) – 4,000 Missionaries (1 for every 339,936)  
Buddhists – 386,023,000 – (6.0% of world population) – 2,000 Missionaries (1 for every 193,000)

### Tribal Peoples



Tribal peoples often live in isolated areas like jungles or mountain villages. Although they believe in a creator who made the world, they do not believe that he can be known in a personal way or that he is interested in the everyday lives of human beings. Tribal peoples are *animists*, believing that powerful spirits indwell objects in nature like trees, rocks, water, mountains, and animals. These spirits have control over what happens in peoples' daily lives. Some tribal groups believe that the spirits of their dead ancestors also influence their lives. Tribal groups live in constant fear of making the spirits angry and spend their lives providing gifts and sacrifices to

appease them. Rituals that include costumes, body painting, songs, dances, or chants are believed to bring good luck and prevent evil. Tribal peoples often wear amulets or charms to protect themselves from evil spirits. Tribal peoples believe that the spirits communicate to them through special members of the community. Depending on where a tribe lives, these intermediaries may be called witchdoctors, shamans, medicine men, or spirit healers. Tribal peoples do not understand that their creator God loves them and has made a way for them to have a personal relationship with him.

### Hindus



Hindus believe in millions of gods, both good and evil. They worship idols at the temple or at a special shrine set up in their house. They give these idols offerings of flowers, food, incense, money, and even hair. Through praying, visiting temples, and offering gifts to the "gods," Hindus believe they can make their hearts clean. Hindus believe in *reincarnation*, a continuous cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. According to Hindu beliefs, a person's actions in his present life will determine the quality of his next life. This relationship between actions and life situation is called *karma*.

When a person who does good dies, he will come back to earth as something better, like a rich or important person. A person who behaves badly will be punished in his next life. He will come back to earth like a poor person, an animal, or an insect. Hindus hope to break the cycle of reincarnation and achieve a state of peace. They do not understand that Jesus is unique, not just another god among the millions. They do not understand that Jesus died on the cross to free them from the power and penalty of sin.

### Unreligious Peoples (atheists)



Unreligious peoples, or atheists, do not believe God exists. Schools in many atheistic countries teach children that God is a myth and that people who believe in God are weak or foolish. Children are encouraged to trust in their education for wisdom, leaning on their own hard work and intelligence to insure a good future. Unreligious peoples trust their country's leaders for guidance and their armies for protection. They look to science for explanations about the universe, including how the earth and people came into existence. Atheistic governments make laws that forbid religious groups to meet, print and distribute religious materials, and teach children about God. Believers in these cultures face many forms of persecution. Unreligious peoples do not understand that God created them, loves them, and wants to them to look to him as their source of wisdom, provision, security, and hope.

### Muslims



The Muslim religion is called Islam, meaning submitted to the will of Allah (Arabic word for God). Unlike Hindus, Muslims believe there is only one God. The *Qur'an* (kuhr-ahn) is the Muslim holy book. It teaches that Jesus was a good prophet, but not the Son of God. Muslims do not believe that Jesus died on the cross or was raised back to life. Muslims try to please God by their actions. They hold to five pillars, or duties: 1. Reciting this creed, or belief statement: "There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is his prophet." 2. Praying five times a day. 3. Giving to the poor. 4. Fasting in the daytime during their holy month of *Ramadan* (rah-muh-dahn) 5. Making a pilgrimage to the city of Mecca at least once in their lifetime. Muslims believe they can earn their way to heaven by doing more good things than bad, but can not be sure that Allah will accept them. Muslims do not understand that Jesus has already made a way for their hearts to become right before God. They need to have the hope of eternal life that God provides.

### Buddhists



Buddhists follow the teachings of "the Buddha," a man who lived 2,500 years ago. They do not believe in a God who is separate and different from mankind, but that every person contains a part of God within himself. According to Buddhist teachings, all suffering comes from selfish desires, wanting what we cannot have or wanting things that are bad for us. Buddhists think they can learn to be good by following the Eight-fold Path, a set of rules for acting, thinking, and feeling. Because it takes many lifetimes to remove evil desires, Buddhists believe that they are reincarnated after death. Meditation, yoga, and martial arts are practiced to clear the mind of evil desires and distractions and reach a state of mind that is peaceful. Buddhists strive to reach the ultimate state of peaceful existence, called *nirvana* (ner-vahn-ah). Buddhists do not understand that true peace comes from a relationship with Jesus, the one who forgives sin and breaks the power that sin holds over us.