

and cooperation.

There is a blessing in the partnership in the ministry but let us not forget that we have our own resources. Freely we have received, let us freely give what we have. We may be economically limited, but we can take the message to the “lame men” of the world:

“We have no money at all, but we give you what we have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth . . .”

As Christians, poverty is not a handicap to serving the Lord. He uses our experience to minister to the poor and all men as well.

GOOD NEWS FOR THE POOR II

Good News for the Poor

Tom Houston

There is something almost absurd about my discussing “Good News for the Poor.” I come from a wealthy country. I am one of the affluent. I have no grounds to speak, yet I must.

For years I have had two burdens about the evangelization of the world. One, is the vast populations in resistant countries with no knowledge of the Father’s love, the Savior’s cross, or the Spirit’s power to bring them out of darkness into light. These countries form a great swath on the map of the world starting with Japan, moving on to China, the Soviet Republics in Asia, Thailand, Indochina, the Indian subcontinent, Indonesia, West Asia, the Middle East, Turkey, North Africa, and Muslim West Africa.

My second burden is the great landslide away from the Christian faith in the West, in Eastern Europe, and in the countries of the British Commonwealth. They are abandoning the Father’s love, despising the Savior’s cross, and adopting an attitude of self-sufficiency with no need of the Spirit’s power (see Table 1).

If we are serious about world evangelization, then we need to find answers to both of these challenges.

It is interesting to note that the resistant countries have never been evangelized in modern times and, with the exception of Japan and some oil producing countries, they are poor. On the other hand, the countries of the West that are becoming secular *have* been evangelized in the past and are now relatively rich.

This broad contrast is intriguing. Are the two challenges and their answers related? Is there one answer that would address both problems?

The Gospel of Luke contains material not included in the other Gospels—about 40 percent. A significant part is focused on the rich and the poor, and there are ways in which they are directly linked to each other. It suggests that what the gospel says about the poor is connected to what it says about the rich.

Good News for the Poor

Luke uses the expression *preaching, or bringing* (TEV) *Good News to the poor* twice in his Gospel. Luke indicates that Jesus saw bringing, or preaching, Good News to the poor as central to his mission. The questions that arise are:

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- Who are the poor—then and now?
- What is the Good News?
- How significant to the task of evangelization are they meant to be?
- What are the implications for the rich and for those who feel the call to evangelize?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Is There Good News for the Poor?

Producer: Eric Miller

Writers: Tom Houston, Eric Miller

Tom Houston: In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus visits the synagogue in Nazareth immediately after he had resisted the temptations to use popularity, publicity, or power to accomplish his mission.

Standing, Jesus read from Isaiah 61:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to preach the Good News to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to announce the year when the Lord will save his people (Luke 4:18–19, TEV).

Later, when John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask about his credentials as the Messiah, Jesus healed many people of their sickness, diseases, evil spirits, and gave sight to many blind people. He answered John's messengers,

Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind can see, the lame can walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf can hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor (Luke 7:22, TEV).

For Luke, bringing or preaching Good News to the poor is clearly central to Jesus' understanding of his mission. The poor are to be special beneficiaries of his Good News.

As I studied Luke's Gospel, I was puzzled because Luke sees the poor as central to the mission of Jesus and then seems to say little about the poor as such. I felt I was missing something that was there.

As I looked closer, I noticed something similar in both places where Luke talks about Good News for the poor. In Jesus' announcement of his mission in Luke 4:18–19 (TEV), he proclaimed,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to preach the Good News to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, and to announce the year when the Lord will save his people.

Could it be that Jesus was including the captives, the blind, and the oppressed among those whom he calls poor?

Then I looked at Luke 7:22 (TEV), at the evidence Jesus gives that he is the Messiah,

Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind can see, the lame can walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf can hear, the dead are raised to life.

In other words, the Good News is preached to the poor. Perhaps the blind, the prisoners, the oppressed, the lame, the lepers, and the deaf are examples of the poor that Jesus is speaking of. Blind and lame people in the Gospels were often beggars. Prisoners were often in jail for debt or theft and did not come out until they had paid the last penny. Lepers were outcasts from society and were cut off from all means of making a living. If "the year when the Lord will save his people" was a reference to the Year of Jubilee, that year was intended to benefit debtors, slaves, and those dispossessed of their land.

The two words used for "the poor" in the New Testament are *penes* and *ptochos*. *Penes* refers to the person who is oppressed, underpaid, and the working poor. *Ptochos* refers to the person who has no work to do and has to beg. It is sometimes translated "poor" and sometimes "beggar." The basic idea is dependence on others for the essentials of life: food, clothes, shelter, and health.

With that in mind, when we read Luke and Acts with this linguistic clue, we discover many references to the poor:

1. The hungry and their children, that Mary says will be filled with good things (Luke 1:53);
2. The people, and their children, who are oppressed by tax collectors who take more than their due, and by soldiers and policemen who take their money or bring false charges against them (Luke 3:12–14);
3. The disabled blind, deaf, lame, paralyzed, lepers, and demon possessed, and their children, who cannot work for a living and are cut off from society (Luke 3–7);
4. The widows, like the one in Nain, whose only son died, leaving her with no breadwinner in her home (Luke 7:11–17);
5. The widows who cannot get justice from judges (Luke 18:2–5), whose houses are expropriated by hypocritical religious leaders (Luke 20:47);
6. The women with medical problems who have spent all their money on doctors (Luke 8:43);
7. The victims of famine in Judea, and their children, who were helped by the Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:27–30).

It is evident in Luke and Acts that the poor to whom Jesus and the early church brought Good News included the naked, the hungry, the disabled, the oppressed, the imprisoned, the sick, the bereaved widows, and orphans. But the question remains, *What kind of Good News was needed by all these people?*

What Was the Good News?

It was the kind of Good News that brought a prostitute to wash Jesus' feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair, and then hear Jesus say, "Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:36–50, TEV).

It was the kind of Good News that brought the leper to kneel and say, "If you want

to, you can make me clean,” and feel Jesus’ touch and hear him say, “I do want to. . . . Be clean!” (Luke 5:12–15, TEV)

It was the kind of Good News that prompted a disabled man’s friends to bring him to Jesus and have their faith rewarded by hearing Jesus say, “Your sins are forgiven you, my friend. . . . Get up, pick up your bed, and go home” (Luke 5:17–24, TEV).

It was the kind of Good News that challenged a prominent religious leader to think about inviting the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind, who could not repay him, to a banquet as the true way to blessing (Luke 14:1–14).

The Good News of the kingdom of God is that sin, disease, and oppression are never the last word. Where Jesus is King, he brings forgiveness, healing, and liberation.

Jesus expected—and it should be expected today—the preaching of the Good News to bring help and hope to the sinner, help and hope to the poor. Because evangelism and social concern were inseparable in the mind of Jesus, they must be inseparable in our minds and ministry.

As representatives of Jesus, we must ask, *Who are the poor today who are desperately calling for Good News?*

Who Are the Poor—Today?

Young voices: We are the blind.

Narrator: Two hundred fifty thousand children will become permanently blinded this year for lack of a ten-cent vitamin A capsule or a daily handful of green vegetables (*The State of the World’s Children 1989* [London: Oxford University Press], 40.) And that is only one instance where people become blind because they are poor.

Young voices: We are the lame.

Narrator: Each year two hundred thirty thousand children are struck by polio because they do not receive the immunization which has virtually eliminated polio in the West.

Female voices: We are the mothers who lose our children before they are five years old.

Narrator: Fourteen million children will die this year from common illnesses and malnutrition. Most could be saved by relatively simple, low-cost methods. Two and a half million of them die from dehydration due to diarrhea, yet a solution of eight parts sugar and one part salt in clean water could save their lives.

Male and young voices: We are the husbands who lose their wives, and the children who lose their mothers and become orphans from preventable deaths in childbirth.

Narrator: In the next twenty-four hours more than a thousand young women will die because of something going wrong at childbirth. As long as the nutrition of girls is placed second to that of boys, as long as women eat last and least and work hardest and longest, as long as half of the babies in the developing world are delivered with no trained person in attendance, child bearing will remain one hundred fifty times as dangerous as in the West.

Mixed voices: We are the people who cannot read.

Narrator: Many are poor because no one has taught them to read. They are cut off from much that could enrich their lives.

Young voices: We are the children who cannot go to school.

Narrator: In the last few years, governments of the thirty-seven poorest nations have cut spending on health by 50 percent and on education by 25 percent, in order to pay the West the interest that they owe on their huge debts.

Mixed voices: We are the refugees who have lost our homes.

Narrator: Today fourteen million displaced people have lost citizenship, homeland, relationships, and the opportunity to work, and much that gives life meaning.

Young voices: We are the orphans.

Narrator: Thousands of children are orphaned by war, civil strife, revolution, and terrorism. Millions more are being abandoned by their parents. There are three million of these in Brazil alone.

Women’s voices: We are the prostitutes.

Narrator: To provide for their children, many women are forced to turn to prostitution. Many children in cities like Bangkok are sold by desperate parents as slave labor or for sexual exploitation.

Young voices: We are the children of the streets.

Narrator: One hundred million children living in the streets of our great cities are drawn inevitably into a life of crime and corruption.

Young voices: We are teenagers, losing our future.

Narrator: The future of many teenage boys and girls in our cities has been taken captive by drug pushers, violence, and promiscuity; they end up as unmarried mothers, victims of drug violence, or wasting away from AIDS.

Mixed voices: We are the prisoners.

Mixed voices: The world’s prisons are overcrowded. Some are in prison for crimes, some for conscience, others are the victims of unjust legal systems. All their families suffer.

Mixed voices: We are the destitute.

Narrator: There are nearly one billion people who are defined as “the absolute poor,” whose existence is characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy, and disease, and is beneath any reasonable definition of human decency.

Tom Houston: Yes, that is who the poor are, but if we are to bring them Good News, then we must also know where they are today.

Where Are the Poor Today?

Tom Houston: The five countries with the largest number of absolute poor are China, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Pakistan (see Table 2).

The five countries with the highest percentage of absolute poor are Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Haiti, and Papua New Guinea (see Table 3). The five countries with a GNP per capita less than \$150 per year are Chad, Ethiopia, Nepal, Burkina Faso, and Bhutan (see Table 4).

Six countries where 20 percent of the population gets less than 2 percent of the income are Botswana, Brazil, Iraq, the Philippines, Jamaica, and Peru (see Table 5).

The five countries with the highest “under five” infant mortality rate are Afghanistan, Mali, Mozambique, Angola, and Sierra Leone (see Table 6).

More than half the world’s population live in these twenty-four poor nations. Yet the poor of the world, the hungry, the disabled, the oppressed, the sick, and the marginalized are found in every country and Jesus says we must bring Good News to them.

How Significant Are They to the Task of Evangelization?

Nearly half the world’s population is poor and the world will not be evangelized until the Good News is brought to them.

Today, eight of the ten countries with the largest number of non-Christians have serious problems with poverty. The ten are China, India, the Soviet Union, Indonesia, Japan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam, Nigeria, and Thailand (see Table 7). They need to be given priority and there is no exaggerating the magnitude of the task of bringing the Good News to the poor in these countries.

Yet, when all is said and done, the church must bring Good News to the poor for more than strategic reasons. The Lord Jesus so identified with the poor that unless we serve the poor, we do not serve him.

(END VIDEO SCRIPT, RESUME ADDRESS FROM PAGE 154)

After the video we are left with the question, *What are the implications for the rich?*

We need to go back to Luke. Jesus asked some of those who wanted to follow him to sell all their belongings and give the money to the poor (Luke 12:33). Luke alone records that the four fishermen and Matthew actually did that when they followed him (Luke 5:4–11,28).

It is important to notice that by doing so, they put themselves into the same category of dependence on others that defines the poor. Jesus became poor when he left the carpenter’s shop. His disciples became poor when they left their homes and their means of earning a living. Luke then tells three stories that are built around the same challenge.

The first is the story of the rich young ruler who wanted to know how he might inherit eternal life. He was told that he should sell all that he had, give the money to the poor, and follow Jesus; then he would have riches in heaven or eternal life he was looking for. He refused to do this and walked away with the sad verdict implied by Jesus to his disciples that he had missed the kingdom of God (Luke 18:18–30).

The second is the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector who, without being specifically challenged, gave half of his goods to the poor and set out to restore fourfold any taxes he had taken beyond what was due. Jesus responded by saying that he had been lost but was now found and saved, and he was shown to be a true son of Abraham (Luke 19:1–10).

The third story is about the rich man who went about enjoying life and failed to do what Jewish law required for the beggar Lazarus, who was laid daily at the gate of his compound. Jesus indicated that he thought he was a son of Abraham but did not reach Abraham’s bosom. Instead, he ended up condemned (Luke 16:19–31).

When we consider these stories in the context of Jesus’ declared mission to bring Good News to the poor, we come to this conclusion: Jesus intended to have Good News brought to the poor by his followers identifying with the poor, as well as telling them about him and urging them to turn from their sins.

One part of compassion is economic. We may not be required to give up our jobs or sell our property, but we must give up something significant if the compassion of Jesus for the poor is to be seen in us.

Another part of compassion has to do with meeting the other needs of the poor. When Jesus “saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). Jesus was quoting from Ezekiel. The shepherds or rulers of Israel had not taken care of the weak ones, healed those that were sick, bandaged those that were hurt, or looked for those that were lost, so the people of Israel were like sheep without a shepherd (Ezekiel 34:4–5).

Jesus urged his disciples to pray that the Lord would send out workers into his harvest, shepherds who would have compassion and truly care for the weak, the sick, the hurt, the wandering, and the lost among the sheep.

It would appear that the rich man in Lazarus’s story had no compassion. The dogs who licked his sores did more for Lazarus than the rich man, who lost heaven by his neglect. We run the same risk. If economic and human compassion is not seen in the lives of those who follow Jesus, an enormous number of the poor will never have convincing evidence to believe the Good News of the kingdom.

The tragedy is that many of our churches contribute to this credibility gap. For example, the affluent and nominally Christian countries of Europe, North America, and the Commonwealth are becoming wealthier. The GNP of the top ten countries is 123 times greater than the GNP of the bottom ten. Yet with the growth in material prosperity, there is a great exodus from the churches and it seems likely to continue. Wealth leads to forgetting God, which is the essence of secularization. The message of Jesus becomes less palatable to people in the West as their prosperity increases. While nearly one billion people live in absolute poverty, in their desire to have more, the followers of Jesus are not easily distinguishable from others.

If Luke were paraphrased today, it might sound like this:

The prosperous are still living in luxury and paying little attention to the poor outside their door or half a world away. The rich fools are still going for the bigger and better and losing their souls in the process. The unjust businessmen are still obsessed by their margins of profit and will end up without friends in eternity. Wealthy, upright leaders still want to believe they can have eternal life without any significant parting with their goods for the benefit of the poor. Religious leaders still pass by those on the other side who have been robbed on the highways of life and economics.

Today, many who were in the church are moving away from trust and belief in God;

they believe in mammon. Some nominal Christians who still try to serve God and mammon, do not believe Jesus when he says it is impossible. Even some evangelical Christians have a long way to go before they are distinguishable from the mammon worshippers.

According to David Barrett, 52 percent of all Christians live in affluence. Thirty-five percent are comparatively well off. Only 13 percent live in absolute poverty. The influential worldwide community of evangelicals alone have personal income totalling just under \$1 trillion a year. He maintains that the global sharing by Christians of money, wealth, property, and goods could solve most of the world's problems including those of famine, poverty, disease, unemployment, unsafe water supplies, and so on (*International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, [October, 1983], 147).

What an impact it would have on the poor's perception of the Good News of Jesus Christ if his followers were seen sharing in that way. A major way in which we can make the Good News of Jesus convincing in a hostile or reluctant world is to show by our compassion its relevance to the poor and their needs. We will also be able to combat secularism in the West if we restore this kind of authenticity to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

What Are the Implications?

We all must go back to our countries, open our eyes to the needs of the poor, and become poor in spirit. That is, identify with them and share the Good News of Jesus Christ. There is no general blessing on the poor apart from their response to him. The blessings of the kingdom for them are forgiveness for the repentant and acceptance for the excluded. They need to hear that in a credible way.

It will mean challenging the rich inside and outside of our churches to remember the poor. We all need to preach Luke's stories until their impact is felt deeply and controls the way we follow the Master.

Second, we must focus on massive prayer, generosity, and evangelism in the neediest countries of the world. China, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Indochina need to be given priority.

One hundred ninety-five million of our Christian brothers and sisters live in absolute poverty. David Barrett says, "This Church of the Poor is the only part of global Christianity whose lifestyle is similar to that of Jesus on earth" (Barrett, *Missionary Research*, 8, 151). They are the key to the evangelization of the world. They are the ones we need to learn from. They are the ones we need to support in the task. If, together, we have the determination, we will find ways of bringing Good News to the poor.

Perhaps it is time for the churches to begin to surpass our governments in both the giving and receiving of aid. Perhaps it is time for the Christian citizen to change the attitudes of our governments, business, and banking communities to do something about Third World debt.

In 1979, a net \$40 billion flowed from North to South. Today, the South, while still poorer, is transferring a net \$20 billion to the North. If we add the reduction of commodity prices in the same period, the annual flow from the poor South to the rich North might be as much as \$60 billion (*World's Children 1989*, 15).

Without a massive increase in practical compassion for the poor, there will be little increase in world evangelization. We need to proclaim the Good News fully by word, deed, and sign (Romans 15:18-19). Only as we do so, will we have the power of the Spirit with which to face the task (Luke 4:18-19).

In the last forty years there have been two great trends in world evangelization. One

has been the growth of organizations such as CAFOD, Caritas, Church World Service, Compassion International, Inter-Church Aid, Lutheran World Federation, Mennonite Central Committee, Tear Fund, World Concern, World Relief, World Vision, and others who have witnessed to the truth of the Good News of Jesus by deeds of mercy and compassion. Christian relief and development agencies have mushroomed and have begun to make their mark on the world. Proclaiming by deed is taking place and it must continue and intensify.

In the same period, there has been the remarkable growth of the Pentecostal and charismatic movement. David Barrett and C. Peter Wagner have shown us that the Pentecostals and charismatics are one-fifth of the Christian population, one-fourth of the workers, and are responsible for half of the growth in the worldwide church—and their force is by no means spent (*International Bulletin of Missionary Research* [July, 1988], 119). They have gone to the poor and, as with Jesus, they have been anointed by the Spirit to heal the sick and cast out demons. Proclamation by signs is also happening, and it must continue and intensify.

We need both of these thrusts. For not all the sick and disabled are going to be healed by miraculous signs today any more than in Jesus' day. In the Old Testament, when God proclaimed, "I am the Lord, who heals you" (Exodus 15:26), it was in the context of his people obeying his laws, many of which were about health and cleanliness. We need to proclaim both the Good News that Jesus can heal the sick, and the Good News that there are better ways to live together to please God so that people do not become sick, or can be cured by skills that can be learned.

But we must not disregard the need for the Good News to be proclaimed by *word*. A second look at the Pentecostal growth and impact on both urban and rural poor shows that they communicate the word of salvation more effectively than traditional churches. They emphasize the spoken word more than the written Word, as does the New Testament. They are an audio church, which is necessary for illiterate people. They have effective music. They continually preach and teach with great joy and perseverance, the Good News that Christ died for our sins. This is the only way to communicate in poor societies where the homes are hovels and people cannot read or have nothing to read.

While "It is written" is the essence of revelation, it will be a continuing limitation in bringing Good News to the poor if the churches do not learn about identification with the poor and master skills of communication to non-reading cultures.

The use of the movie *Jesus* is a powerful illustration. Half a million people a day are viewing that film in 130 languages with remarkable response in some of the most unlikely places. Many of those responding could not read a Gospel of Luke if they had one. But seeing the Gospel of Luke acted out as well as spoken in film or video, they can *see* Jesus as the compassionate Savior we have been talking about, delivering the captives, healing the blind, the lame, the deaf, and the brokenhearted.

In my Father's house are many mansions, and Jesus speaks about feasts and banquets in these mansions. He says that some who were invited to the feast will not be there because they were preoccupied with lands and cattle and family. But others who will be there are from the poor, the sick, the lame, and the blind. And they will respond more readily than the sophisticated people who are better off (Luke 14:15-24).

Our Father wants his house to be full. Will we go out into the highways and byways to help him fill it?

TABLE 1
Landslide from the Churches 1900-1985

Source: *World Christian Encyclopedia* country tables, adding the Non Religious and Atheist categories both in percentage and numbers. In descending order of 1985 percentages of "non religious" plus "atheist". This takes no account of nominal Christians.

	1900		1985	
	ATHEIST OR NONRELIGIOUS			
	%	(in millions)	%	(in millions)
First World Countries				
Sweden	1.1	0.06	28.7	2.5
Italy	0.2	0.06	16.2	0.1
France	0.3	0.12	15.6	8.6
Australia	1.0	0.04	14.9	2.2
Netherlands	1.5	0.08	12.1	1.7
UK	1.9	0.7	9.5	5.4
New Zealand	0.6	0.005	8.0	0.26
Belgium	0.8	0.06	7.5	0.8
USA	1.3	1.5	6.9	15.3
Canada	0.2	0.01	6.3	1.5
Finland	0.0	0.0	5.5	0.2
Luxembourg	0.0	0.0	4.9	0.017
Portugal	0.0	0.0	4.6	0.4
Germany, West	0.3	0.009	4.6	2.9
Denmark	0.2	0.006	3.6	0.18
Spain	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.88
Austria	0.1	0.01	2.7	0.2
Iceland	0.1	0.0	2.1	0.04
Switzerland	0.2	0.1	1.9	0.12
Norway	0.6	0.01	1.7	0.07
Malta	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.03
Ireland	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.01
Greece	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.03
Total		2.68		43.44
Eastern Europe and USSR				
Albania	0.1	0.001	74.1	2.1
USSR	0.2	0.25	51.2	158.3
Germany, East	0.3	0.03	25.3	4.4
Bulgaria	0.1	0.004	24.8	2.2
Czechoslovakia	0.4	0.04	20.3	3.1
Yugoslavia	0.1	0.008	16.7	3.7
Hungary	0.5	0.03	15.9	1.7
Romania	0.3	0.03	15.9	3.5
Poland	0.1	0.025	9.5	3.4
Total		0.42		182.40
Total of Both		3.1		225.84

TABLE 2
10 Countries with largest number of Absolute Poor

	Millions		Millions
China	?	Mexico	35.90
India	380.50	Nigeria	31.60
Banladesh	89.50	Brazil	28.70
Indonesia	67.40	Ethiopia	28.20
Pakistan	65.20	Philippines	21.90

TABLE 3
11 Countries with the highest percentages of Absolute Poor

	Percentage	GNP \$pc	Country
Bangladesh	86	80	Chad
Burkina Faso	75	80	Laos
Burundi	75	120	Ethiopia
Haiti	72	150	Nepal
Papua New Guinea	67	150	Burkina Faso
Sudan	65	150	Bhutan
Benin	65		
Pakistan	64		
Uganda	64		
Ethiopia	63		
Afghanistan	63		

TABLE 5
9 Countries where 20% of Population get less than 2.5% of the income

(% of income received by lowest 20%)	
Botswana	1.6
Brazil	2.0
Iraq	2.0
Philippines	2.0
Jamaica	2.0
Peru	2.0
Panama	2.1
Kenya	2.3
Tanzania	2.3

TABLE 6
Countries with the highest Under 5 Mortality rate

1. Afghanistan
2. Mali
3. Mozambique
4. Angola
5. Sierra Leone
6. Malawi
7. Ethiopia

Figures taken from The State of World's Children 1989, supplemented by The 1988 World Population Data Sheet.

TABLE 7
The 10 most populous and least Christian nations

Country	Total Population	Non Christian Population	Percentage
	(in millions)		
China	1087.0	1032	95
India	816.8	792	97
USSR	286.0	191	67
Indonesia	177.4	157	89
Japan	122.7	120	98
Bangladesh	109.5	109	99.6
Pakistan	107.5	105	98.4
Vietnam	65.2	60	92.5
Nigeria	111.9	57	51
Thailand	54.7	54	99

Numbers taken from Operation World by subtracting the percentage Christian from 100%