

# THE 'GOOD COUNTRY INDEX'

A portrait of what people believe



*By Mike Burnard*

The idea of the **GOOD COUNTRY INDEX** is simple: to measure what each country on earth contributes to the common good of humanity, and what it takes away, relative to its size. Using a wide range of data from the UN and other international organisations, a 'balance-sheet' for each country is drawn up, showing at a glance whether it's a 'net creditor' to mankind, a burden on the planet, or something in between. So in this context, "good" means the opposite of "selfish", not the opposite of "bad".

Criteria used includes the following comprehensive data:

- International students
- Journal exports
- International publications
- Nobel prizes
- Patents
- Creative goods exports
- Creative services exports
- UNESCO dues in arrears as % of contribution
- Freedom of movement
- Press freedom
- Peacekeeping troops
- Dues in arrears to UN peace keeping budgets
- International violent conflict
- Arms exports
- Internet security (2014)
- Charity giving
- Refugees hosted
- Refugees generated
- Birth rate
- UN treaties signed
- Ecological footprint
- Reforestation since 1992
- Hazardous pesticides exports
- CO2 emissions
- Ozone
- Open trading
- UN volunteers abroad
- Fairtrade market size
- FDI outflows
- Development assistance
- Food aid
- Pharmaceutical exports
- Voluntary excess donations to the WHO
- Humanitarian aid donations
- International health regulations compliance

The **GOOD COUNTRY INDEX** therefore measures those nations where governments are saying "We want what is best for our nation and for every human being on earth", as opposed to those governments who are saying "How can we as a nation be prosperous?"

## BACKGROUND

Simon Anholt is a professor at the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom. He has given up most of his work to focus on building the **'GOOD COUNTRY MOVEMENT'**. It was through his experience of working with the heads of state and heads of government of more than fifty countries over the past twenty years that the idea of the **'GOOD COUNTRY INDEX'** was born.

Anholt started the **GOOD COUNTRY INDEX** *"to change how our leaders run our countries"*. He has worked with leaders, helping them to engage more productively and imaginatively with the rest of the world.

The **GOOD COUNTRY INDEX** is a way to *"measure what each country on earth contributes to the common good of humanity, and what it takes away, relative to its size"*.

## IN A RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

This report aims to analyse the top 50 countries of the 163 found in the **GOOD COUNTRY INDEX**. These nations are generally classified as "net creditors to mankind" – nations contributing to the global good of humanity. For the benefit of South African readers, we also include South Africa, which ranks as number 51 on the list.

The **GOOD COUNTRY INDEX** does not include religion, so this report aims to 'connect the dots' of what people believe and how this relates to the benefit of mankind. The two main sources used for this analysis are the **GOOD COUNTRY INDEX (GCI)** compiled by Simon Anholt and **OPERATION WORLD (OW)**, a tool used as a prayer guide for believers globally. This widely used resource has been compiled by different nationalities, generations and denominations.

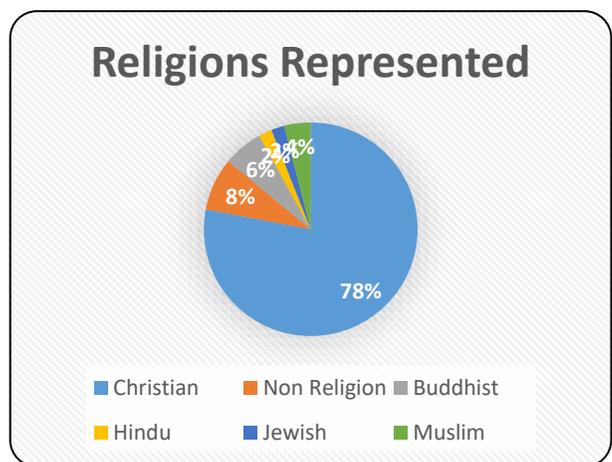
## THE INDEX

	<b>COUNTRY: GCI</b>	<b>% Christians: OW</b>	<b>Position of Christianity</b>
1	SWEDEN	57.20%	First
2	DENMARK	85.29%	First
3	NETHERLANDS	46.55%	<i>Second – 'Non Religious' being the first</i>
4	UNITED KINGDOM	59.66%	First
5	SWITZERLAND	75.76%	First
6	GERMANY	64.25%	First
7	FINLAND	83.75%	First
8	FRANCE	61.14%	First
9	AUSTRIA	82.57%	First
10	CANADA	72.07%	First
11	IRELAND	91.72%	First
12	NEW ZEALAND	53.20%	First
13	NORWAY	91.08%	First
14	BELGIUM	62.72%	First
15	CYPRUS	72.42%	First
16	ITALY	82.38%	First
17	LUXEMBOURG	81.63%	First
18	AUSTRALIA	69.50%	First
19	JAPAN	1.54%	<i>Fourth – BUDDHIST being the first</i>

20	USA	77.62%	First
21	SPAIN	77.13%	First
22	SINGAPORE	16.04%	<i>Third – BUDDHIST being the first</i>
23	PORTUGAL	94.40%	First
24	HUNGARY	87.99%	First
25	POLAND	89.63%	First
26	CHILE	87.23%	First
27	MALTA	96.82%	First
28	SLOVENIA	54.18%	First
29	BULGARIA	79.91%	First
30	ICELAND	90.60%	First
31	REPUBLIC OF KOREA	30.95%	<i>Second – ‘Non Religious’ being the first</i>
32	GREECE	91.46%	First
33	MAURITIUS	32.71%	<i>Second – HINDU being the first</i>
34	MOLDOVA	73.36%	First
35	CZECH REPUBLIC	25.92	<i>Second – ‘Non Religious’ being the first</i>
36	ROMANIA	96.96%	First
37	SLOVAKIA	93.34%	First
38	ESTONIA	45.30%	<i>Second – ‘Non Religious’ being the first</i>
39	COSTA RICA	93.94%	First
40	CROATIA	91.96%	First
41	LATVIA	60.00%	First
42	MALAYSIA	9.43%	<i>Third – MUSLIM being the first</i>
43	TUNISIA	0.22	<i>Third – MUSLIM being the first</i>
44	ISREAL	2.04%	<i>Fourth – JEWISH being the first</i>
45	LITHUANIA	85.36%	First
46	BARBADOS	94.94%	First
47	BRAZIL	91.40%	First
48	SERBIA	80.37%	First
49	GEORGIA	78.67%	First
50	THAILAND	1.10%	<i>Sixth – BUDDHIST being the first</i>
51	SOUTH AFRICA	75%	First

**Summary according to majority religion in these 50 countries:**

- 1) Christianity: 39 countries out of 50 (78%)
- 2) Non-Religion: 4 countries out of 50 (8%)
- 3) Buddhism: 3 countries out of 50 (6%)
- 4) Islam: 2 countries out of 50 (4%)
- 5) Hinduism: 1 country out of 50 (2%)
- 6) Judaism: 1 country out of 50 (2%)



## CONCLUSION

- Of the top 50 countries, **39 are nations built on Christian values**, with a Christian history and Christian-influenced constitutions and law. These nations are not regarded as good countries because they are prosperous or peaceful, but because of their contribution to the common good of people who live both inside and outside their respective nations. This is truly significant.
- 30 out of the 39 'Christian' countries are **European**. It remains significant that even though Europe has largely been seen to move towards secularism, Christianity is still recognised as the majority religion in Europe. It has been practised in Europe since the 1<sup>st</sup> century. According to a survey by the Pew Research Centre in 2012, 76.2% of Europeans considered themselves Christians and Christian culture has guided the course of philosophy, literature, art, music and science, and has even had a significant impact on education and medicine, with the Church often providing the foundation (*Wikipedia*, 2017).
- Many debate whether Europe is becoming more secular, but it remains clear is that **Europe is still defined by what has come before**; it is defined by Christianity, and by Greek philosophy, and by a number of other cultural and intellectual movements, according to Ben Ryan, a researcher for *Theos*. He believes it is still embedded in its Christian identity (*Debating Europe*, 2015).
- By this we can conclude that, in the midst of all the 'bad' that is happening in the world, **Christianity still presents a solution** based on the character of Christ and the platform of Scripture. The reality is that where there is a larger Christian identity, the nation in general thrives for the good of others.
- The first **Muslim** country that is seen as a contributor to 'global good' is Malaysia, number 42 on the list. This is also a significant indicator of a religion that seeks domination more than servanthood.

## SOURCES

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