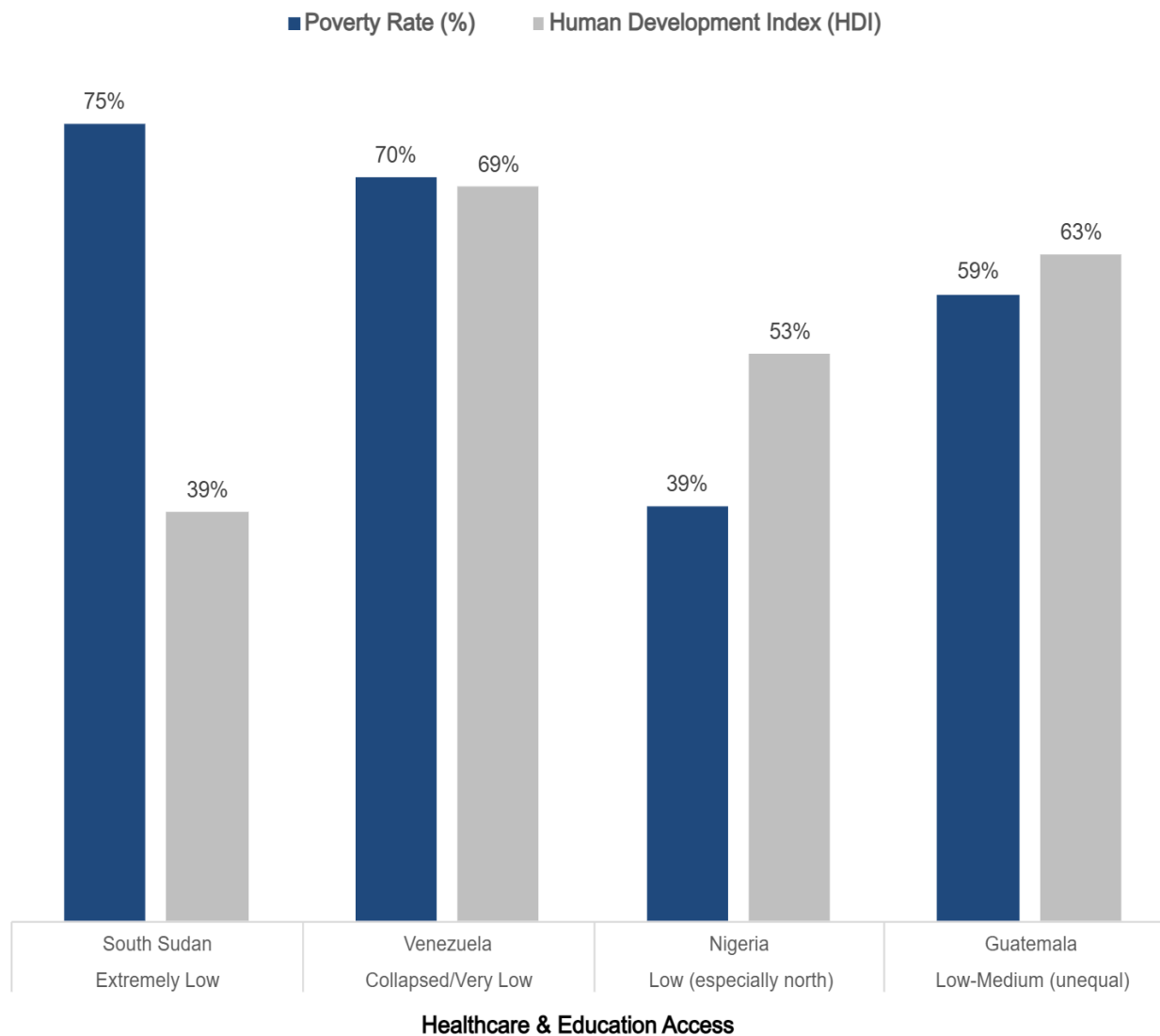


A classical painting depicting a religious scene, likely the healing of the man with the withered arm. Jesus, in a blue and red robe, stands centrally, reaching out to a man whose right arm is withered. The man is being held by another person. To the right, a group of men, including a prominent figure in a red and blue robe, look on. In the foreground, two men are seated, looking up at Jesus. The background shows a grand architectural setting with columns and a distant temple-like structure under a cloudy sky. The overall tone is dramatic and religious.

# Socio-Economic Need



**South Sudan was ranked last of 191 countries on the UN's Human Development Index ([BTI 2024 South Sudan Country Report: BTI 2024](#)).** Two-thirds of the population (8.9 million people) depend on humanitarian aid for basics like food, water, and medicine. ([BTI 2024 South Sudan Country Report: BTI 2024](#))

In 2023, an estimated **20 million Venezuelans (out of ~29 million)** required humanitarian assistance for food, health, or protection. Food scarcity affects 42%. ([Venezuela - European Commission](#)) In 2021, up to 40% of school-aged children were not attending classes regularly. ([Venezuela - European Commission](#))

Nigeria has the **world's second-largest population of people in extreme poverty**. Nigerian children born today are expected to achieve only 36% of their productive potential (on average) due to deficits in health and schooling. ([Nigeria Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank](#))

**Almost half of the country's children are chronically malnourished** ([Guatemala: Political and Socioeconomic Conditions and U.S. Relations - EveryCRSReport.com](#)). 79% of the indigenous Maya population in Guatemala lives in poverty ([Guatemala: Political and Socioeconomic Conditions and U.S. Relations - EveryCRSReport.com](#)).





# Religious Context

## South Sudan

Among the Christian majority, church leaders note a deep need for discipleship and healing. The Bishop of Rumbek observed in 2022 that “more than half the population of South Sudan is Christian... however, we live in a country where Christianity is often no more than skin deep; it hasn’t grown roots in the life of the population.” ([Religion in South Sudan - Wikipedia](#)) Material desperation and trauma have hindered the development of a robust, lived faith for many South Sudanese. Many communities have no stable pastors, and clergy and aid workers have been targets of violence ([\[PDF\] South Sudan Full Country Dossier - March 2024 - Open Doors](#)). Missionary organizations are critically needed both to provide humanitarian relief and to minister spiritually.

Christian, 60%

Millions have not yet been reached by Christian missionaries, and many others are recent converts or nominal Christians. ([Religion in South Sudan - Wikipedia](#)) between 2013 and 2020, an estimated 383,000 people died in the civil war and 2.2 million were internally displaced ([BTI 2024 South Sudan Country Report: BTI 2024](#)). Missionaries can help with trauma counseling, education, and rebuilding social structures, while also spreading the Gospel to unreached ethnic groups.

Indigenous , 33%

Muslim, 6%

Other,  
1%

Religion by population %

## Venezuela

Enrique Alí González, a sociologist who compared the university's data with his field work, estimates that the current religious affiliation would be as follows: Catholics 82%-84%, Evangelicals 10%-12%, Santeria believers 1.5%-2% and atheists 1%. Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, Bahá'í and other minorities would make up the remaining percentage. Churches and faith-based charities inside Venezuela struggle with dwindling resources even as their communities' needs skyrocket. Many clergy and lay leaders have heroically stepped up – providing soup kitchens, medical clinics, and spiritual comfort – but they face intimidation under the authoritarian government. Venezuelan authorities have harassed clergy (both Catholic and evangelical) who speak out about human rights and the humanitarian crisis, pressuring them to stay quiet ([As Venezuela heads for July 28 presidential election, what does the religious landscape look like? | National Catholic Reporter](#)). Mission organizations can bolster the local church's capacity to serve by bringing in food, medicine, and education programs, while also offering spiritual hope. Venezuela's economic destitution, social breakdown, and a populace emotionally and spiritually drained by years of turmoil create an environment where missionary work – both humanitarian and evangelistic – is critically needed.

Christian, 85%

Other, 15%

Religion by population %

## Nigeria

A Nigerian human rights report in 2023 found that at least 52,250 Christians have been murdered by Islamist militants since 2009 in Nigeria. Entire Christian villages have been massacred, and over 18,000 churches have been burned in this period by Boko Haram or armed Fulani extremist militias ([Over 50,000 Christians killed in Nigeria by Islamist extremists - Vatican News](#)). The persistent inter-religious conflict has bred mistrust and trauma – peacemaking and reconciliation efforts are urgently needed. Moreover, parts of Nigeria remain under-evangelized: some ethnic groups in the north and among the Muslim Hausa/Fulani have little contact with the Gospel, due to the danger and restrictions in those areas.

Muslim, 47%

In the troubled northern and central regions, many communities have no access to Bibles or stable pastoral leadership because ongoing violence has driven missionaries and priests away. ([BTI 2024 Nigeria Country Report: BTI 2024](#)) Missionaries in Nigeria can play a crucial role in healing divisions, as well as providing social services that the government fails to deliver. Christian missions already run many schools, clinics, and orphanages, but demand far outstrips supply, especially in conflict zones. Missionary work in Nigeria is therefore twofold: humanitarian relief and evangelistic outreach and discipleship. Given Nigeria's size and the intensity of its struggles, the impact of missionary aid here could be enormous – helping millions who face daily physical and spiritual peril.

Christian, 46%

Other, 7%

Religion by population %



## Guatemala

In 1970, Guatemala was predominantly Roman Catholic; today, only around 40% of Guatemalans identify as Catholic, while roughly 40-45% are Protestant (mostly evangelical/Pentecostal), and 15–20% profess no religious affiliation ([Religion in Guatemala - Wikipedia](#)). This evangelical revival has brought new energy to Christianity in Guatemala – many Protestant churches are active in social outreach. However, the rise in those reporting “no religion” (up to one-fifth of the population in some surveys) suggests growing secularization, especially among urban youth. Moreover, nominal Christianity is common; some who identify as Catholic or evangelical may only loosely practice. The country’s deep social problems (violence, drug addiction, broken families, and trauma from a 36-year civil war) present a huge mission field for compassionate ministry. Missionaries in Guatemala can assist by providing education, vocational training, and healthcare in impoverished communities – services that bolster people’s futures and demonstrate Christian love. There is also a need for violence prevention and rehabilitation programs rooted in the Gospel: for example, outreach to gang-prone youth offering alternatives and inner-city ministries to address alcoholism and abuse. Churches in Guatemala enjoy freedom of worship, so the door is open for missionaries to partner with local congregations. Given that Guatemala still has many remote villages with indigenous languages, there is work for missionaries in Bible translation and contextualized evangelism as well.

Christian, 87.5%

Other, 12.5%

Religion by population %



Sourcing



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