

U.S. jumps to top of charity index

by [Lauren Markoe](#)

December 20, 2011

c. 2011 Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS) Americans: the most generous people in the world. In this season of giving, that's no idle gloat.

According to a new study, the United States tops a massive global charity survey, rising from fifth place in 2010.

The "World Giving Index," based on 150,000 interviews with citizens of 153 nations, ranks the U.S. highest on a scale that weighed monetary donations, volunteer work, and willingness to help out a stranger.

"In spite of economic hardships and uncertainty in the future, the American spirit is caring and strong, as these survey findings clearly show," said David Venne, interim CEO of CAFAmerica, the Virginia-based charities consultant that released the results of the index.

Ireland placed second, followed by Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Canada, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Laos.

At the bottom of the list: China, Russia and India.

The survey relied on data from the Gallup polling organization, and asked whether people had donated money (two-thirds of Americans), volunteered their time (43 percent) or helped a stranger in the preceding month (73 percent).

The survey's authors noted that charitable behavior is not correlated with wealth. Of the 20 countries that the World Bank ranks richest by gross domestic product, only five made it into the top 20 of the index.

This is the second year the index has been published by British-based Charities Aid Foundation. Compared to 2010, monetary donations fell, but more people reported volunteering and helping strangers.