



Bible Access List

Where Bible access is most difficult, and Bible shortage is greatest

Cambodia

Bible Restrictions Rank: **72**
MINIMAL ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible Shortage Rank: **42**
Bible needs estimate between fifty and one hundred thousand



An Overview of Bible access in Cambodia

Cambodia is home to over 17 million people, with a small Christian community of nearly half a million believers, approximately 2.8% of the population. Among these believers, less than half have access to a Bible. While there are minimal legal restrictions when it comes to accessing Scripture, the need remains great due to other contributing factors.

Unlike some nations where Bibles are outright restricted, Cambodia allows the import, storage, and personal ownership of Scripture. However, Bible printing is limited to the Bible Society, and public distribution requires government approval to maintain public order. While these restrictions are relatively low, they can still create logistical challenges that slow down access to Bibles.

Many Cambodian believers, especially those in rural areas, also face economic barriers, making it difficult to afford a Bible, even if they want one. In addition, while internet access is growing, many believers lack the digital literacy or stable connection needed to use online Bibles effectively.

Amidst these challenges, the need for Bibles in Cambodia is significant. With a slowly growing Christian population and many seeking to learn about the faith, ensuring access to Scripture is essential for discipleship, evangelism, and spiritual growth.

Before we continue, would you take a pause to pray for Cambodia?

How can I pray for Cambodia?

- **Provision of Bibles.** Pray that Cambodian believers, especially those in rural areas, will receive Bibles in the format they need, whether print, audio, or digital.
- **Church Growth & Discipleship.** Ask God to strengthen and equip Cambodian Christians with His Word, so they can grow in faith and share the gospel.
- **Freedom & Accessibility.** Pray that Bible access will continue to remain open and that more opportunities will arise to distribute Scripture without restrictions.

After praying for Cambodia, continue reading on the next page to learn more.

Bible Access Restrictions



Minimal Access Restrictions



Print restrictions



Distribution restrictions

Other Limiting Factors



Considerable Other Factors



Poor



Poor infrastructure

Bible Shortages Among Believers



Bible ownership is low, **estimated** Bible need is between 50 and 100 thousand

Main religion: Buddhism

Country population: 17,122,000

Christian population:



483,000, 2.82% of total population

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN CAMBODIA?

A Minority Faith in a Buddhist Nation

Christianity in Cambodia has existed for over a century, yet it remains a small minority in a country where Buddhism is deeply embedded in national identity. While the constitution provides for religious freedom, Christianity is often viewed as a foreign or outsider faith, making it difficult for believers to fully integrate into Cambodian society. In rural areas, where most Cambodian Christians live, their minority status can lead to social exclusion, discouraging open faith practice and Bible ownership.

Religious tolerance has improved in recent years, but challenges persist. For some Cambodians, leaving Buddhism for Christianity is seen as a betrayal of Khmer culture, creating tension within families and communities. This social pressure can lead to hesitancy in seeking out Bibles, as many new believers fear backlash from their neighbors or even their own relatives.

Economic Barriers: A Bible That Costs Too Much

For many Cambodian Christians, owning a Bible is not simply a matter of availability, it's a matter of affordability. The cost of a single Bible can equal up to three days' wages for the average worker, making it a luxury that most cannot afford. With poverty still affecting large portions of the population, especially in rural areas, the priority for many families is daily survival, not purchasing a Bible.

Although there are organizations working to provide subsidized or free Bibles, the demand still far outweighs the supply. As one ministry described it:

"The Bible need for new believers in Cambodia is critical. We are unable to meet the demanded number of Bibles since so many people are coming to faith in Jesus Christ."

The growing number of believers is outpacing Bible distribution efforts, leaving thousands of Cambodian Christians without access to the Word of God.

Public Distribution: Restricted but Not Prohibited

Unlike in some countries where distributing Bibles is illegal, Cambodia does allow Bible distribution, but with some restrictions. Large public gatherings for evangelism or Bible distribution require prior government approval, as authorities seek to prevent any activity that might disrupt public order.

While distributing Bibles within churches or Christian events is allowed, this requirement for official approval means that mass distribution efforts are slowed down by bureaucratic processes. This can make it challenging to get Bibles into the hands of those who need them most, particularly in remote villages where formal Christian gatherings are rare.

Limited Printing Capabilities

Cambodia allows the legal printing of Bibles, but only through the Bible Society. While this is not a severe restriction, it does limit who can print and how many Bibles can be produced. Special Bible paper must be imported from Spain, adding to the cost and logistical complexity of production.

The Literacy Challenge: Owning a Bible vs. Reading It

Even when Cambodian Christians receive a Bible, many struggle to read it. A significant portion of believers, especially in rural areas, are illiterate or semi-literate, making printed Bibles difficult to use. Many Christians in Cambodia work as farmers, spending long hours in the fields, leaving them with little time for Bible study or learning to read Scripture.

For these communities, audio Bibles and oral storytelling are crucial alternatives. However, access to technology remains a challenge, as not all rural communities have reliable electricity or internet access to support digital Bible formats.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN CAMBODIA

With Christians already being a minority, only less than half of them have access to a Bible. Research estimates that to adequately meet the current demand, between **50,000 to 100,000 Bibles** are needed. Additionally, with many seekers coming to faith, additional Bibles are recommended to support those exploring Christianity and ensure they have access to God's Word.

While the Cambodian church is adding new believers, this growth still presents a challenge. How do we disciple new believers if they have no access to Scripture? Without Bibles, Christians lack the foundation they need to mature in their faith, share the gospel, and withstand the pressures of living as a religious minority. The demand for Bibles is not just about filling a gap; it is about strengthening and sustaining the church for generations to come.

Bible Formats for Unique Needs

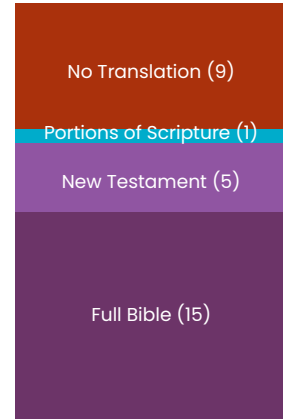
In terms of Bible formats, **printed Bibles** remain the top priority. Many Cambodian Christians live in rural areas with limited internet access, making physical copies of Scripture essential. However, as digital literacy and internet connectivity expand, **online Bibles** and resources provide a secondary yet valuable means of reaching believers, especially younger generations.

The Translation Gap

Translation is another barrier. While Khmer-language Bibles exist, many ethnic minority groups in Cambodia do not yet have full Bible translations in their native tongue. A recent milestone was achieved with the Krung New Testament, completed in February 2024 after nearly two decades of work. However, this highlights the time-intensive nature of translation efforts, leaving many ethnic communities waiting years for a Bible they can fully understand.

Further, Christians in Cambodia speak at least 30 languages, yet:

- only **15** languages have a full Bible translation
- **5** languages have only the New Testament
- **1** language has just a portion of Scripture
- And **9** languages still have no translation at all.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Cambodia

For these communities, the Bible remains out of reach; not just physically, but linguistically. Continued efforts in translation work are critical to ensuring every believer can encounter God’s Word in their heart language.

THE CLARION CALL

The call to provide Bibles in Cambodia is urgent. It is more than a logistical challenge, it is a mission for Christians to answer. Without Scripture, how can believers be discipled, pastors be equipped, and seekers come to know Christ?

This is a defining moment for the global church to step in, respond, and meet the need. By investing in Bible distribution, translation, and accessibility, we can ensure that every Cambodian Christian—every seeker, every new believer, every church leader—has access to the Word of God. The fields in Cambodia are ripe for harvest, and now is the time to act. Will we answer the call?



The Bible Access List (BAL) and the Country Profile utilizes data from various primary and secondary sources. Key resources include the survey data, World Christian Database, Open Doors’ World Watch List files, World Bank development indicators, and Bible translation data from multiple organizations. For a complete list of data sources and links, please refer to the BAL Methodology available at Bibleaccesslist.org.