



Madagascar

Bible Restrictions Rank: **62**
MINIMAL ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible Shortage Rank: **10**
Bible needs estimate between one and three million



An Overview of Bible access in Madagascar

Madagascar's Christian population makes up nearly 60% of the country's 31 million people—an estimated 18 million believers. Yet despite this large Christian presence and minimal legal restrictions, less than half of them have access to a Bible. The situation leaves millions of Malagasy Christians without a personal copy of God's Word.

While there are no outright bans on Bible ownership or use in Madagascar, practical access remains limited. Importing and printing Bibles require government permits, which currently only the Bible Society of Madagascar is authorized to obtain. This creates a bottleneck, slowing down supply and limiting the distribution of Bibles across the island nation.

Meanwhile, storage, ownership, and distribution are not restricted, and access to digital Bibles through the internet remains relatively open despite occasional government monitoring. However, internet connectivity is only available to just over a fifth of the country, further limiting online Bible access strategies.

So, even with minimal legal barriers, the challenges persist. Widespread poverty across Madagascar means many believers simply cannot afford a Bible. In rural areas—where infrastructure is limited and literacy rates are lower—the need for affordable, printed, and audio Bibles is especially urgent.

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

How can I pray for Madagascar?

- **Expanded Bible Access.** Pray that God would open doors for more organizations to legally import and print Bibles in Madagascar, breaking through red tape that restricts supply.
- **Provision for the Poor.** Ask God to make a way for believers—especially in rural and impoverished areas—to receive Bibles in formats they can access and understand.
- **Spiritual Renewal.** Pray for a movement of discipleship and gospel growth across Madagascar as more believers gain access to God's Word.

Bible Access Restrictions

Minimal Access Restrictions

- Import restrictions
- Print restrictions

Other Limiting Factors

Extreme Other Factors

- Extremely Poor
- Very Poor access to internet
- Extremely poor infrastructure
- <50% of population access to electricity

Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bible ownership is low, **estimated Bible need is between 1 and 3 million**

Main religion: Christianity

Country population: 31,057,000

Christian population:

18,189,000, 58.57% of total population

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN MADAGASCAR?

Despite being a Christian-majority nation with constitutional protections for religious freedom, Madagascar presents a complex web of structural and economic barriers that hinder Bible access for millions of believers. The challenges are not rooted in overt persecution—but in the harsh realities of poverty, limited infrastructure, and bureaucratic restrictions that slow or prevent the spread of God's Word.

Legal Permission But Limited Access

On paper, Madagascar grants freedom of religion and places no official bans on Bible ownership, distribution, or online access. However, the regulatory environment imposes real limitations. To legally import or print Bibles, a permit is required—one currently held only by the Bible Society of Madagascar. This requirement slows down the free flow of Bibles into the country and restricts other ministries or local churches from participating in large-scale distribution.

Although there are no restrictions on owning, storing, or distributing Bibles once they are inside the country, the supply chain itself remains constrained.

Bureaucratic and Financial Roadblocks

Importing Bibles into Madagascar involves not only regulatory approval but also steep import duties—roughly 46% of cost and freight. For churches and Christian organizations already stretched thin financially, these costs create a substantial burden.

Domestic printing faces similar obstacles, as economic instability and infrastructure deficits make local production slow and costly. Without strategic support and reform, these barriers will continue to limit the flow of Scripture into the hands of believers.

Economic Hardship and the Cost of a Bible

Poverty remains one of the most pressing obstacles to Bible access. Over three-quarters of the population lives below the poverty line, and for many families, even a low-cost Bible—priced around \$5 USD—is out of reach.

Churches across the country report that economic hardship severely limits their ability to provide Bibles to their congregations, especially in rural regions where incomes are even lower. In areas hit hardest by food insecurity, clean water shortages, and unemployment, purchasing Scripture becomes a distant priority.

Rural Isolation and Infrastructure Challenges

Madagascar's vast rural landscape and poor infrastructure compound these difficulties. Many believers live in remote areas, disconnected from roads or regular transportation routes. These conditions make Bible distribution logistically challenging.

Limited access to electricity—available to only a little over a third of the population—further complicates the use of digital or audio Bible formats. In regions where electricity is nearly nonexistent, and internet access unreliable, printed Bibles remain the primary viable format, but they remain hard to deliver.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN MADAGASCAR

Against the backdrop of economic hardship and logistical barriers, Bible access in Madagascar remains critically low. To bridge the gap, **up to 3 million Bibles** will make a huge difference in supplying and equipping the church for growth and discipleship.

A Growing Church, A Growing Demand

The urgency is compounded by the growth of the Church itself. Over the past five years, Madagascar has been expanding slowly, adding hundreds of thousands of new believers.

This presents an opportunity but also places increased pressure on the Church to disciple and equip new followers of Christ. Without Bibles, these believers cannot grow in their faith or anchor their lives in biblical truth.

Bible Formats For Diverse Needs

Given the challenges in infrastructure and literacy, it is vital to offer Bibles in multiple formats. **Print remains the highest priority**, especially in areas without electricity or stable internet connections. However, **audio Bibles are increasingly essential**, particularly for communities with limited literacy or elderly populations who can no longer read.

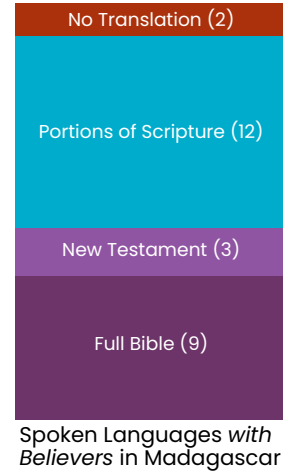
Together, print and audio formats can ensure that God's Word reaches every corner of the island, in forms that people can use and understand.

The Translation Gap

Language remains one of the most overlooked barriers. Christians in Madagascar speak at least 26 languages. Of these languages:

- Only **9** of these have a complete Bible translation.
- **3** more languages have only the New Testament.
- **12** have only partial Scripture translated.
- **2 languages still have no Bible translation at all**

While encouraging progress has been made—such as the recent dedication of the Sihanaka Bible in 2024—two more languages still await even partial translations.



THE CLARION CALL

The need in Madagascar is real, urgent, and solvable, but not without the response of the global Body of Christ. This is not simply a call to provide books. It is a call to fuel transformation, restore hope, and equip a rising generation with the eternal Word of God.

We must act with boldness and compassion, supporting translation, distribution, and Bible engagement efforts until every believer in Madagascar—no matter their income, location, or language—can hold the Scriptures in their hands and hide them in their hearts.

Now is the time. Let's answer the call.



2.4%

Annual Church Growth



Bibles needed for both

Believers & Seekers



1-3 million

Bible needs estimate



Printed Bible

Preferred Format



Audio Bible

Format 2nd Priority