



Bible Access List

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

Zimbabwe

BWL Access Rank: **81**
MINIMAL ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

BWL Shortage Rank: **12**
Bible needs estimate between one and three million



An Overview of Bible access in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's Christian population makes up around 82% of its 17 million people, numbering nearly 14 million believers. Despite this strong majority and no legal restrictions, only about half of them have access to a Bible. That means millions of Christians across Zimbabwe are still without the Word of God in their hands.

While Zimbabwe is one of the open countries in the region in terms of religious freedom, reporting no restrictions on owning, storing, printing, or distributing Bibles, practical barriers remain. Widespread poverty, rural isolation, and limited access to affordable Scripture continue to keep the Bible out of reach for far too many. Even in areas where Christianity is vibrant, entire congregations may share just a few printed Bibles between them.

In remote rural areas, access is even more limited. Literacy challenges, lack of infrastructure, and the cost of Bibles contribute to the gap, especially among young believers and older adults. While digital access is safe and unrestricted, connectivity and electricity can be unreliable, leaving many without viable alternatives to printed Scripture.

Before we continue, would you take a moment to pause and pray for Zimbabwe?

Bible Access Restrictions

No Access Restrictions

Other Limiting Factors

Considerable Other Factor



Very poor



Poor internet access



Poor infrastructure



50-70% of population access to electricity

Bible Shortages Among Believers



Bible ownership is over 50%, **estimated** Bible need is between 1 and 3 million

Main religion: Christianity

Country population: 17,020,000

Christian population:



13,955,000, 81.99% of total population

How can I pray for Zimbabwe?

- **Provision of Bibles.** Pray that the millions who still don't have a Bible would receive one—in print, audio, or digital form—especially in rural communities.
- **Strengthening the Church.** Ask God to equip pastors, leaders, and churches with the tools and resources to disciple believers through Scripture.
- **Open Doors and Partnerships.** Pray for continued freedom for Bible distribution in Zimbabwe and for partnerships that can mobilize resources where they're needed most.

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

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN ZIMBABWE?

Poverty, Politics, and a Polarized Church

On the surface, Zimbabwe offers few legal obstacles to Bible access. There are no official restrictions on owning, printing, distributing, or importing Bibles. Religious freedom is constitutionally protected, and the internet remains safe and accessible for digital Bible use. But despite these freedoms, millions of Christians still go without personal access to Scripture.

So, what's really standing in the way?

The barriers are less about regulation and more about reality. Zimbabwe's long-standing economic crisis, marked by hyperinflation, widespread unemployment, and collapsing infrastructure, makes it difficult for many families to afford even basic necessities—let alone a personal Bible. For countless believers, purchasing a Bible is simply out of reach.

The Fallout of the Scripture Union Ban

In 2016, the government banned the Scripture Union from schools after 70 years of activity. While not a direct legal restriction on Bible access, this decision dealt a major blow to faith formation among youth. Scripture Union had played a vital role in introducing students to the Bible through after-school clubs and weekly gatherings. Without these programs, a generation of young Zimbabweans is growing up with less exposure to Scripture in their formative years—a quiet but significant erosion of access.

Church-State Tensions and a Divided Voice

Zimbabwe's political landscape complicates the mission of the church. While some church leaders have been co-opted by political powers—rewarded with land, vehicles, and influence—others have faced backlash or surveillance for speaking out against injustice. This divide weakens the church's unified ability to distribute Bibles, disciple believers, and reach underserved regions. Ministries perceived as politically neutral or critical may face indirect pressures that limit their operations.

Rural Inequities and Infrastructure Gaps

Urban churches may have better access to resources, but Zimbabwe's vast rural regions face a different reality. Limited transportation networks, unreliable electricity, and fewer Christian bookstores or ministries make Bible distribution harder. While digital tools are growing in popularity, many rural households lack stable internet or mobile data, making printed and audio Bibles even more essential.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN ZIMBABWE

Against a backdrop of economic instability, generational spiritual gaps, and unequal access across urban and rural regions, Bible access in Zimbabwe remains critically low. To meet the spiritual needs of believers nationwide, research estimates that between 1 and 3 million Bibles are needed to bridge the gap.

A Declining Church In Need of the God’s Word

Although the number of professing Christians remains high, the church in Zimbabwe has experienced a decline over the last few years. This drop signals a growing spiritual disengagement, making the Bible needs of the country more urgent. When access to God’s Word is limited, faith can become vulnerable to distortion, disillusionment, or decline. Increasing the country’s access to Scripture is critical to reignite discipleship and preserve the faith of future generations.

Bible Formats for Unique Needs

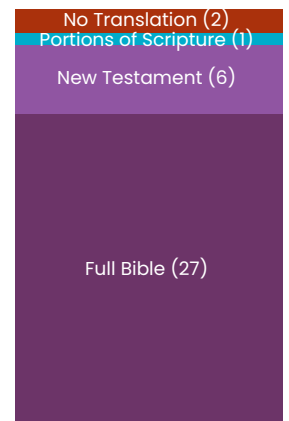
Printed Bibles remain the most urgent need, especially in rural and impoverished communities where digital access is inconsistent or unavailable. **Audio Bibles** also play a vital role, particularly for the elderly, the visually impaired, or those with limited literacy. These formats allow Scripture to reach hearts and homes where traditional teaching may fall short.

The Translation Gap

Language diversity adds another layer to this challenge. Zimbabwean Christians speak at least 36 different languages. Of these languages:

- Only **27** have full translation of the Bible
- **6** more languages have only the New Testament
- **1** has only a portion of Scripture translated
- **2 languages still have no translation at all**

For thousands of believers, the Bible remains either incomplete or completely inaccessible in their heart language.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Zimbabwe

THE CLARION CALL

The need for Bibles in Zimbabwe is not just a statistic; it's a mission for the international Christian community. Now is the time for the global Church to respond. To close the translation gaps. To deliver Bibles to those waiting. To prioritize the forgotten corners of Zimbabwe where the Word of God is needed most.

Through prayer, provision, and partnership, we can ensure that every believer has access to the truth that sets them free.



-1.0%
Annual Church
Growth



Bibles needed for both
**Believers
& Seekers**



1-3 million
Bible needs estimate



**Printed
Bible**
Preferred Format



**Audio
Bible**
Format 2nd Priority