AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

State of the Bible

USA 2025

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RESEARCH FROM AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Prepared by

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STATE OF THE BIBLE: USA 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

JENNIFER HOLLORAN, DSL
American Bible Society

Welcome to the 2025 *State of the Bible* report! Each year, we explore U.S. Bible engagement trends and cultural perceptions across a wide range of demographics. Our goal is not simply to report findings, but to inform, inspire, and encourage the Church to thoughtfully respond to the spiritual realities of our time.

This year, we're excited to include a new global dimension. In partnership with the British and Foreign Bible Society and their recent PATMOS global survey, we share insights into worldwide Bible engagement, broadening our understanding of the opportunity for Bible access and engagement worldwide.

Over the past few years, our research has revealed a concerning decline in U.S. Bible engagement. Yet in 2024, the U.S. saw a resurgence in Bible sales, a signal of renewed interest. The 2025 data suggest that this potential rebound may be taking root, especially among Millennials and men. Meanwhile, engagement among other groups—including Baby Boomers and women—remains steady.

Why this renewed curiosity about the Bible? One possible reason is the Bible's growing presence in public discourse. With such wide access to Scripture in the U.S., many are choosing to look past others' portrayals of the Bible and discover what the Bible actually says for themselves. The Church has a unique opportunity in this moment—to invite seekers into genuine encounters with the living Word of God. As Psalm 34:8 encourages, "Find out for yourself how good the Lord is."

But perhaps there is another factor at work. The 2025 *World Happiness Report*, a study conducted by the University of Oxford, Gallup, and the United Nations, revealed that U.S. happiness has dropped to a record low. In a world where many feel weary, anxious, or unsatisfied, Scripture offers an enduring message of hope. As Isaiah 40:31 reminds us, "But those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed …"

This year's *State of the Bible* report also explores themes of trust, identity, and church engagement—critical questions in a time when many are asking, *Who am I? Whom can I trust? Where do I belong?* These questions create an opening for Scripture to shape not just individual lives but our relationships and communities.

At American Bible Society, we believe every person is on a journey with God's Word. We want to do our part to equip the Church to respond to cultural shifts with wisdom and compassion, helping people take the next right step with the transforming power of the

Word of God. Together as the body of Christ, we can welcome those who are searching and point them toward the abundant life that comes from loving God and loving others (Matthew 22:37–38).

We hope the 2025 *State of the Bible* serves as a meaningful resource for you, your church, and your ministry as we join in that God-honoring work.

JENNIFER HOLLORAN, DSL

Jennifer Holloran serves as President and CEO at American Bible Society, sharing decades of experience in the global movement to expand Bible access and engagement. Before joining ABS, she served Wycliffe Bible Translators USA for more than 22 years, most recently as Chief Operating Officer. She holds a doctorate in strategic leadership from Regent University as well as a Master of Business Administration with a specialization in human resources from the University of Central Florida. Jennifer and her husband, Tim, live in Philadelphia, PA, with their daughters, Katherine and Penelope.

TIME FOR INNOVATION

JOHN FARQUHAR PLAKE, PH.D.
American Bible Society

State of the Bible: USA *2025* is the fifteenth edition of our annual study about Americans' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors toward the Bible, faith, and the church. Year after year, we've focused on the tremendously positive impact of Bible engagement and on critical opportunities for the gospel in America. Over this decade-and-a-half, our diligent inquiry has helped us better understand and love our neighbors.

In 2025, we document a new moment of opportunity, as more of our neighbors—especially among younger adults and men—are reaching for the Bible, searching its pages, and experiencing God's voice through it. As we look around, we see signs of hope, and we hope for spiritual renewal in our nation.

God is clearly at work in America, and we rejoice in this, but we also recognize the ongoing need for innovation in Bible ministry.

Thankfully, the church has always been innovative, leveraging new technologies to communicate the gospel, exploring language development through Bible translation, and even pioneering the discipline of cultural anthropology to ensure that the Bible isn't merely delivered everywhere but that God's Word has an opportunity to transform all people.

Christians innovate because *culture is always changing.* Our task is to meet the ever-changing challenges of each new generation with the unchanging Word of God. Second, we innovate because *we care deeply about our neighbors.* We know the life-changing power of the Scriptures. Evidence shows that engagement with the Bible and participation in a vibrant Christian community bring health, well-being, and purpose to millions of our neighbors. Because we care for all Americans—indeed for all people—we want all to be transformed by God's Word.

BEYOND THE BOOK

The *State of the Bible* research team has spent 14 years describing opportunities and obstacles to the Bible in America. Now, in our fifteenth year, we are offering more to help ministry leaders put these insights into practice.

State of the Bible: USA 2025 includes several new features. First, we're going multi-modal by adding audio and video components to each chapter. In 2024, we experimented with podcast-style interviews that accompanied some of our key chapters. This year, we plan to release at least one major ***State of the Bible Podcast*** episode per month, in both audio and video formats.

Second, we know that reading long-form reports like this digital and printed book can be daunting for church leaders with busy schedules. This year, we're launching ***Insights from State of the Bible***, a series of short videos, focusing on one important finding each week. With an investment of less than two minutes per week, you'll be able to zoom in on a single insight and start a discussion about how to take action in your church or community. This isn't just a way to make our research findings bite-sized, it's an invitation to join us in both conversation and innovation.

Third, we will be preparing a **Church Leader's Toolkit** for each chapter, featuring presentation slides including our key data visualizations and talking points in the notes. These visual resources can be used as sermon illustrations, conversation starters, and even prayer reminders for pastors and church leaders at all levels.

One more way we're innovating is through a growing partnership with faculty and staff at Christian colleges and universities. This year, we are offering **Innovation Grants** to educators who care about catalyzing Bible engagement in the next generation of American adults. These small grants—ranging from $5,000 to $15,000—will be directed to Christian scholars from across the church who are willing to test innovative approaches to Bible ministry that benefit young adults on their campuses and in their broader communities. You can learn more about them at stateofthebible.org/facultygrants.

These research grants, videos, podcasts, slide decks, and other resources are an invitation for you to join us in innovative Bible ministry and find the most effective ways to care for our neighbors.

STATE OF THE BIBLE: USA 2025

Throughout 2025, the *State of the Bible* research team will be presenting a new set of findings from our January 2025 national survey. We will release new chapters from April through December 2025, each focusing on key aspects of America's relationship with the Bible, faith, and the church. Here are a few of the stories we will be releasing in the coming months:

2025 **APR**

The Bible in America. Our first chapter tracks key metrics about Bible use and Scripture engagement in the United States. We also explore the preferences for formats and digital platforms of Bible users and examine changes in the perception of the Bible.

2025 **MAY**

The Bible Around the World. In May, we will compare perspectives about the Bible in the U.S. with global ones to identify similarities and differences in Bible access and engagement across cultures. We will see how Americans' views and practices regarding the Bible differ or align with people in other countries.

2025 **JUN**

Human Flourishing. In partnership with Human Flourishing researchers at Harvard University, we will continue our ongoing investigation of how the Bible, faith, and the church are connected to holistic well-being.

2025
JUL

Faith and Trust. In July, we will assess how much trust Americans place in other people and institutions. We'll explore the difference in the way Bible users place their trust compared to those who do not actively engage with the Bible.

2025
AUG

Engagement with the Church. In recent years, researchers have observed significant changes in Americans' church attendance and views on the church as an institution in society. We will explore both the positive and negative perceptions of the church.

2025
SEP

Gen Z—Searching for Identity. In this chapter, we'll look at how engaging with the Bible shapes the identity development of Gen Z as they navigate challenges and opportunities. We'll look at how individuals from Gen Z who actively engage with the Bible search for and discover their identity.

2025
OCT

Bible Engagement and Self-care. This chapter will focus on understanding stress, hope, and the self-care behaviors people engage in to manage their well-being, and how Bible users manage stress differently than other Americans.

2025
NOV

Loving God and Loving Our Neighbors. In previous years, our research on neighboring focused on people's intentions. This month, we will dig deeper and explore actual behaviors and actions. We'll look at how people are actually interacting with and caring for their friends and neighbors.

2025
DEC

Love in Action. Our final chapter looks at how Bible engagement goes beyond shaping religious beliefs and practices and extends into everyday actions, particularly when it comes to how individuals interact with others. We will examine how the Bible guides people in their relationships with others and how those interactions reflect biblical values of love and generosity.

Throughout this year's digital book, watch for the linked **extended content**. Our new podcast will feature interviews on subject-matter experts for every chapter. We are glad to serve you with ongoing innovative *State of the Bible* material at our website, StateoftheBible.org, as well as this traditional report. There's much more to come!

CONCLUSION

As you read our 2025 report, I pray that you are encouraged by the good news that Bible use is increasing across America, particularly among demographic groups that have traditionally been the least engaged. I invite you to prayerfully consider how God may use you during this time of growing openness to the Gospel. Do you have family, friends, co-workers or neighbors who may be more willing than ever to hear the Good News found in the pages of Scripture?

Ultimately, The *State of the Bible: USA* research project is more than just a snapshot of America's spiritual state in 2025. It is an invitation and a challenge to all of us who have been impacted by the good news of the Bible to share its treasures with those around us. ■

JOHN FARQUHAR PLAKE, PH.D.

Dr. John Plake is a researcher with a pastor's heart. He bridges the worlds of social science, business intelligence, and spiritual formation, helping Christian leaders understand how people grow in Christ.

Dr. Plake serves as Chief Innovation Officer at American Bible Society and is the editor-in-chief of the *State of the Bible* series. Over 35 years of full-time ministry, John has served as a pastor, missionary, professor, and researcher.

He is an ordained minister with a Ph.D. in intercultural studies. He lives with his family in Wilmington, Delaware.

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THE BIBLE IN AMERICA TODAY

After the success of "The Chosen," Amazon and Netflix are converting Bible stories into films and TV shows with "Game of Thrones"-style intrigue and romantic comedy elements.

The New York Times[1]

The story of Jesus, presented in the multi-season serial *The Chosen*, has become a smash hit in recent years. Now there are other Bible-based dramas in the works, covering the stories of Ruth, David, and Mary the mother of Jesus, with even more on the horizon. The *Times* article notes that "other studios are eager to adapt material that has zero copyright protection and billions of adherents."[2]

1 https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/02/arts/television/house-of-david-the-chosen-amazon-prime-netflix.html
2 Ibid.

For decades, religious companies have produced faith-based films that found churchgoing audiences. But *The Chosen* has pushed far beyond that. Its producing team "estimates that the show has been watched by more than 280 million unique viewers worldwide, *a third of whom it says are not religious*."[3]

This "not religious" audience intrigues us. That's 90 million-plus, in the U.S. and elsewhere, who presumably are not Bible readers, yet have tuned in to a creative, Bible-based account of the life and teachings of Jesus.

Whatever your opinion of *The Chosen*, its popularity raises a question for anyone interested in how Americans connect with the Bible. Could *The Chosen*—or other similar presentations in the future—have a significant effect on the people we call Bible Disengaged or non-Bible Users or Non-Practicing Christians?

America's relationship with the Bible took a serious downturn a few years ago, and it has wallowed in a statistical trough ever since. This year we see a slight uptick. Is this a reversal of a previous trend? Time will tell. Significantly, we see the greatest increases among Millennials and men, populations that have previously scored low in Bible Use and Scripture Engagement. There's also been a Bible boost in formerly resistant regions—the Northeast and West. Even adherents of non-Christian religions are turning to the Bible more often.

Can we credit a particular TV show or ad campaign with these increases? Our research does not directly address motivations, but it is clear that people are looking for answers . . . increasingly in visual

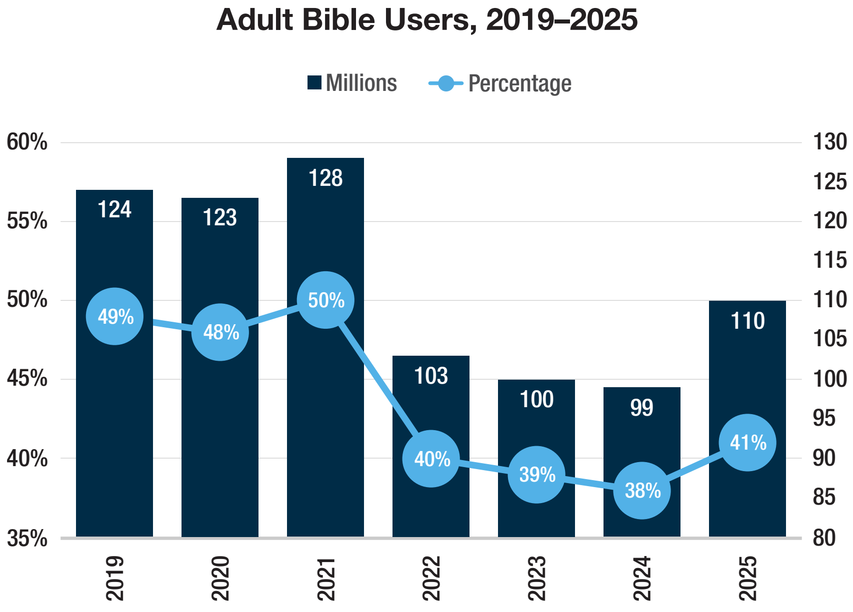
3 Ibid. Italics ours.

media. These sorts of public presentations reinforce the quietly faithful lives and creative outreach of millions of Christians eager to share with their neighbors the "greatest story ever told."

BIBLE USE

We define Bible Users as those who connect with Scripture on their own at least three times a year, "not including times when you are at a large church service or Mass." This is a low bar, but it does reflect a personal decision to interact, at least occasionally, with the Bible.

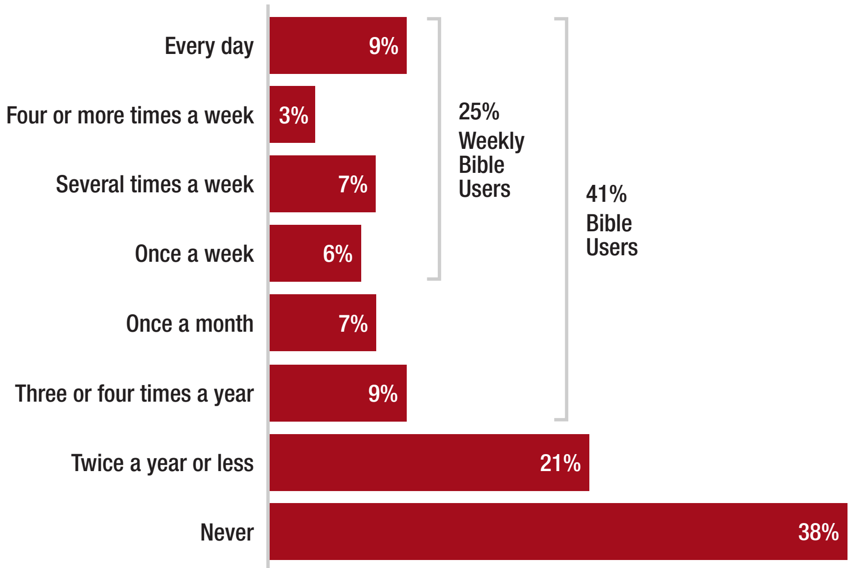
From 2011 to 2021, nearly half of all Americans qualified as Bible Users, with little change from year to year. In 2022, Bible Use fell dramatically (from 50% to 40%), and it kept sliding. Our 2024 survey found only 38 percent of American adults were Bible Users, falling below even those who said they "never use the Bible" (40%).



But this year there's better news: 10 million *more* American adults are Bible Users. The total amount of 110 million represents 41 percent of the adult population. This is the highest total since our 2021 report.[4]

Frequency of Bible Use

How often do you use the Bible?



GENERATION AND GENDER

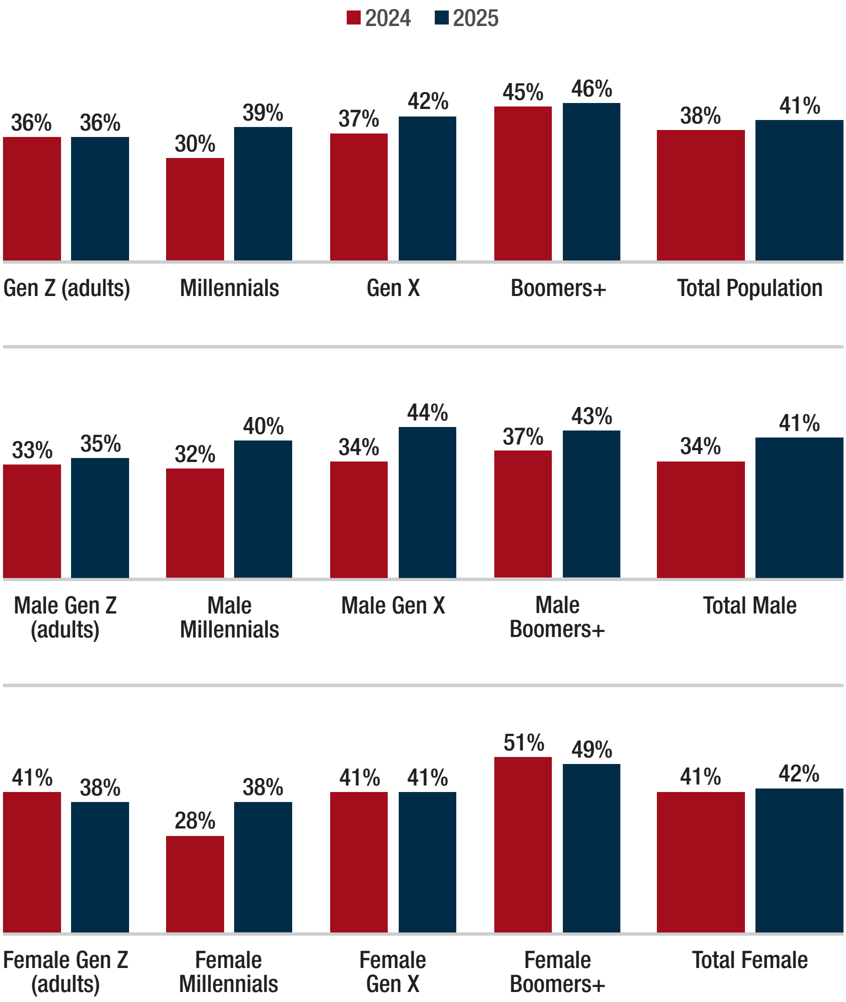
This might surprise you. **Millennials** are leading the way in this move toward greater Bible Use, and in every generation **men** are using the Bible more.

In the 2024 report, Millennials trailed all other generations, with only three in ten (30%) qualifying as Bible Users. This year they've

4 The *State of the Bible* survey is conducted in January, so many of its findings reflect situations from the previous year.

jumped to nearly four in ten (39%), surpassing their younger siblings in Generation Z. Both male and female Millennials have seen a substantial year-to-year increase.

Bible Users 2024–2025 by Generation[5] and Gender

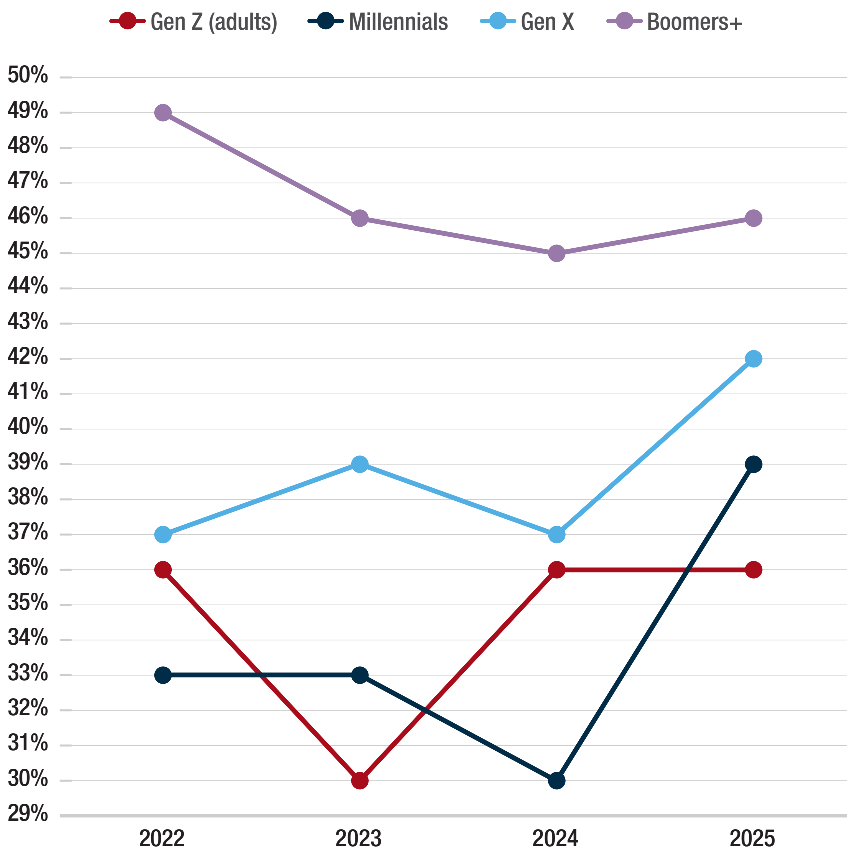


5 See the Definitions section for the current ages of each generation. Note that the Boomers+ now also includes the group previously known as Elders.

In all other generations, women have held steady or decreased slightly in their Bible Use, while men had substantial gains. In Gen X, men had a ten-point rise in percentage of Bible Users, while women in that generation saw no increase at all. In that age group, men forged ahead of women in Bible Use (now 44% to 41%).

Overall, in the past year, men have nearly closed the gender gap in Bible Use, turning a seven-point gulf (41% to 34% in 2024) to a slim one-point deficit (42% to 41%).

Bible Users by Generation, 2022–2025

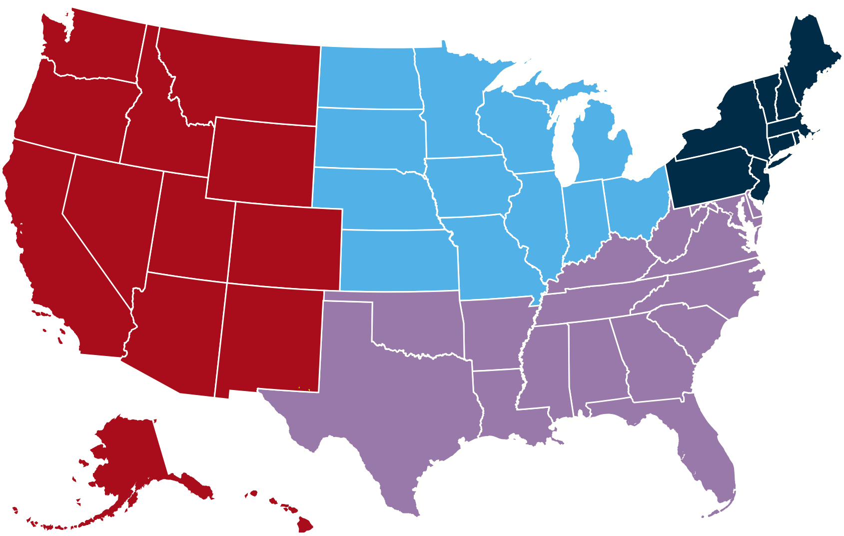


REGION, RACE, RELIGION

The Southern U.S. consistently leads the way in measures of Bible Use and Scripture Engagement. In 2025 the South once again boasts the highest percentage of Bible Users (48%), with a very slight increase over 2024, but its lead is shrinking. *Every other region in the U.S. has increased its share of Bible Users by five or six points in the last year*, even the often-resistant Northeast.

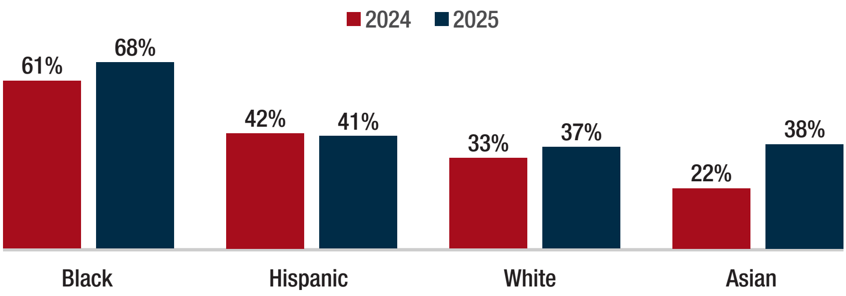
Bible Users by Region, 2024–2025

West		Midwest		South		Northeast	
2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
33%	39%	34%	39%	47%	48%	28%	33%



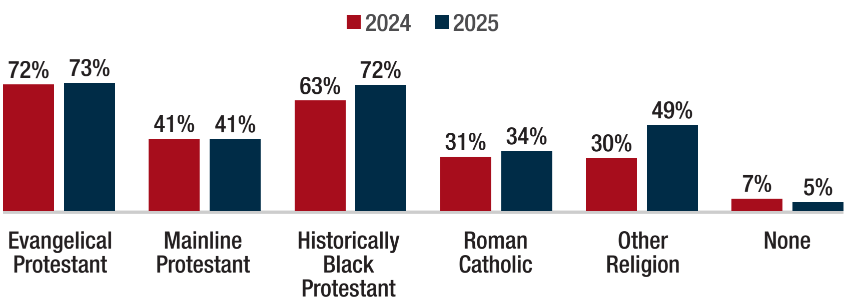
Two out of three Black Americans (68%) are Bible Users, by far the highest proportion of any ethnic group in our survey. Every group except Hispanics shows a substantial increase in Bible Users in the past year.

Bible Users by Race/Ethnicity,[6] 2024–2025



Nearly three-quarters of those attending Evangelical Protestant (73%) or Historically Black Protestant churches (72%) are Bible Users. Every denominational group has an increase in Bible Users over 2024, most notably the Historically Black Protestants moving up nine points from 63 percent in 2024. The most surprising finding is that nearly half of those in “other religions” (that is, non-Christian religions) qualify as Bible Users, interacting with the Bible at least three times in the previous year.

Bible Users by Religion,[7] 2024–2025



6 A number of ethnic designations are excluded in this analysis because the sample sizes are too small to provide reliable data.

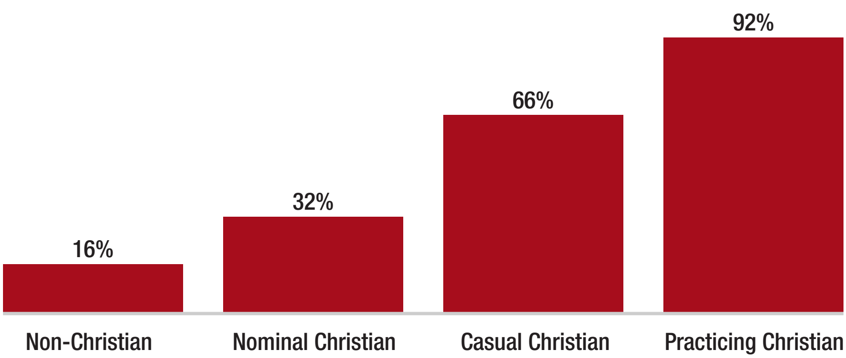
7 An additional category, “Other Christian and Orthodox Christian,” had too few respondents to assemble reliable data. “Other Religion” includes non-Christian religions like Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism.

In addition to denominational connection, we look at how deeply people interact with their churches. For several years, we have used the designation Practicing Christians for those who (1) say they're Christian, (2) attend church (in person or online) at least once a month, and (3) consider their faith "very important" to them. About a fifth of Americans are Practicing Christians.

Last year we used these same factors to identify two other groups of people. Nominal Christians call themselves Christian but don't attend church even monthly. Casual Christians attend, but they don't consider their faith "very important." And a substantial group of Non-Christians (34% of the population) does not claim to be Christian and generally doesn't participate in a church. These categories combine within a measure we call Faith Participation.

How many at each of these levels qualify as Bible Users? The percentages are starkly different. One in six (16%) Non-Christians are Bible Users, as well as nearly a third of Nominal Christians (32%). About two-thirds of Casual Christians (66%) are Bible Users, along with nearly all (92%) Practicing Christians.

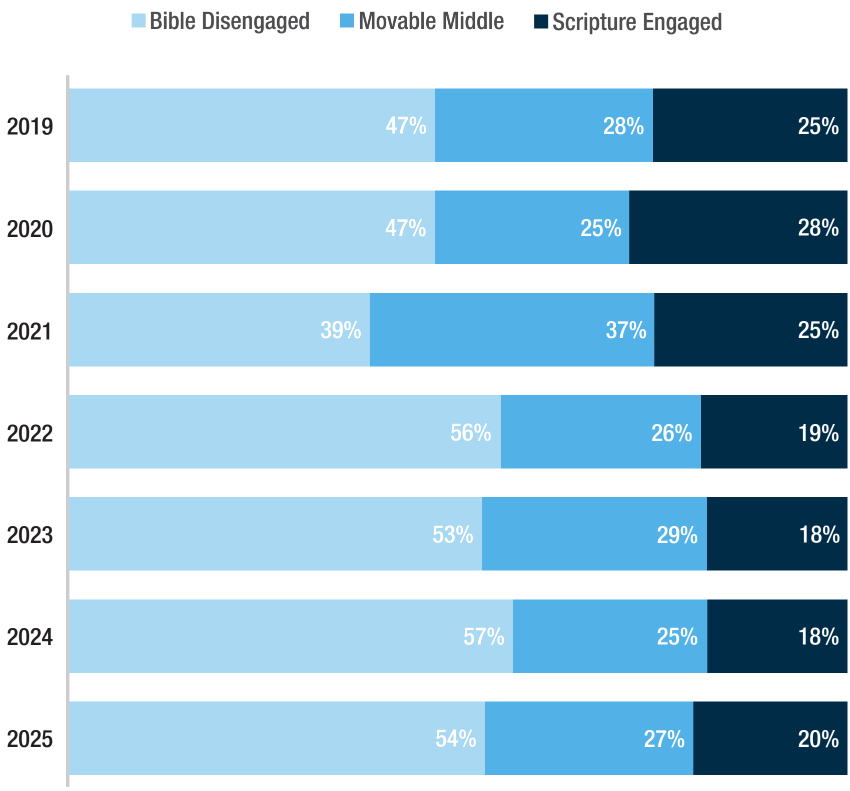
Bible Users by Faith Participation Segments



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

Where Bible Use represents a rather low commitment, as little as three readings a year, Scripture Engagement is a far more robust category. It merges frequency of Bible reading with other measures of the Bible's role in people's lives. We look at the *centrality* of the Bible in people's decision-making and its *impact* on people's relationships with God and others. Responses to fourteen questions on these matters create a score, which then qualifies a respondent as Scripture Engaged, Movable Middle, or Bible Disengaged.

Scripture Engagement, 2019–2025



In recent years, Scripture Engagement has been in the same statistical trough as Bible Use. The survey taken in January 2022 showed a major spike in the number of Bible Disengaged, and both the Movable Middle and Scripture Engaged suffered big losses. The next two surveys showed no improvement.

This year, however, there's a glimmer of good news. The percentage of Scripture Engaged has edged upward (to 20%)—still not back to 2021 levels, but moving in the right direction. Last year, 47 million Americans qualified as Scripture Engaged; this year there are more than 52 million.

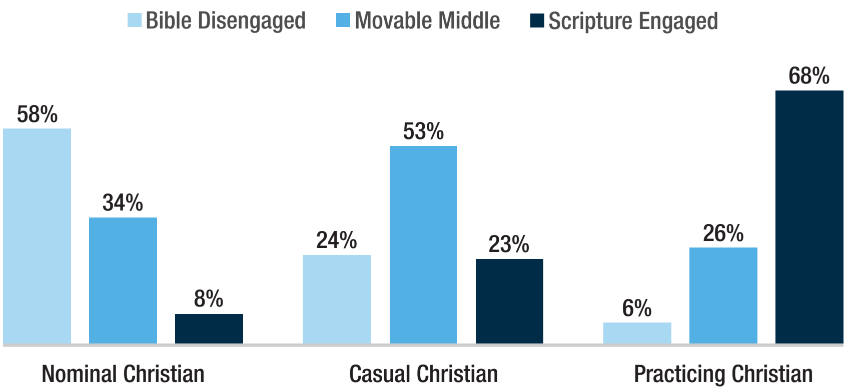
SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT AND THE CHURCH

The Bible repeatedly touts the value of the community of faith, urging us not to "give up the habit of meeting together" (Hebrews 10:25). While it's possible for someone to be Scripture Engaged and not go to church, it's rather rare. Only one in eight of the Scripture Engaged (12%) are unchurched.

Earlier in this chapter, we reviewed Faith Participation segments, including the categories of Nominal Christians (the 57% of self-identified Christians who seldom attend church) and Casual Christians (the 16% of Christians who attend but don't consider their faith "very important"). The connection between Scripture Engagement and church involvement becomes even clearer when we examine these categories.

More than two of three (68%) Practicing Christians are also Scripture Engaged, with about a quarter (26%) in the Movable Middle and very few (6%) Disengaged. Nominal Christians show the reverse, with the great majority Bible Disengaged. What's most fascinating is how the Movable Middle (53%) owns the Casual Christian category, and that makes sense. These people are in church, but their faith is not very important to them. In the same way, they may read the Bible occasionally, but they seem to hold its teachings at arm's length, not fully committing.

Faith Participation Segment by Scripture Engagement



EXAMINING KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Where does the 2025 rise in Scripture Engagement come from? The two youngest generations. While they are still the least-engaged age groups, both have increased by about a third over last year (11% to 15% for Gen Z and 12% to 17% for Millennials).

While Generation X shows a minor decrease in Scripture Engagement (21% to 20%), there seems to be a major relocation in that group from the Disengaged to the Movable Middle.

Black Americans were already leading the way in Scripture Engagement by a large margin, yet they had a major rise in that category (from 27% to 36%). Their percentage of Scripture Engaged is now twice that of any other major ethnic group (36% to 18% for Whites and Hispanics). Asian-Americans had a major shift from the Bible Disengaged up to the Movable Middle, and a substantial rise in the Scripture Engaged. White Americans also had gains in the Scripture Engaged and Movable Middle, with a corresponding drop in the Bible Disengaged.

ACCESS, APPROACHES, AND ATTITUDES

How do people interact with Scripture, and why? The *State of the Bible* survey includes questions about technology, reading habits, and beliefs about the Bible.

More than three in four Americans say they own a Bible (77%, up from 74% last year), and virtually all of these people say it's "in a language and format they understand." For most of its history, American Bible Society has focused on making sure people had Bibles, but the digital revolution has changed that playing field.[8] Now, if you have a smartphone or computer, you essentially own a Bible.

But are people using that technology? Increasingly, yes. Two thirds of Bible Users (66%) say they access the Bible digitally at least some of the time, with higher numbers among younger generations.

8 American Bible Society is now at the heart of digital Bible use around the world through its stewardship of the Digital Bible Library.

These days people have three broad choices when accessing information or entertainment . . . or the Bible. We can read it as text, we can listen to audio content, or we can watch video. Our survey asked how often people access the Bible in these three general formats.

We're especially interested in the Movable Middle, because this is where future growth in Scripture Engagement will come from. We're also curious about the media preferences of different generations.

You won't be surprised that Gen Z, our youngest group, shows the greatest preference for video content, with nearly three of five (59%) in the Movable Middle accessing such content at least monthly. Guess which generation leads in the monthly reading of Bible text. Millennials, at 70 percent.

As we seek to draw more of the Movable Middle into Scripture Engagement, especially in these low-engaging age groups, Bible communicators might consider two courses of action. First, provide more Bible content on video to meet the clear preferences of Gen Z. Second, let Millennials know that quality Bible content also exists in video and audio formats.

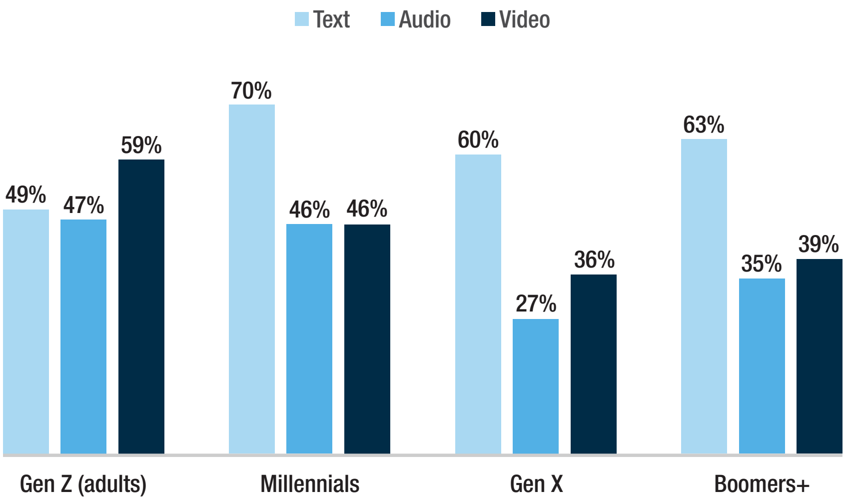
When people of all these generations access Bible content online, what platforms do they use? (We're not just including those in the Movable Middle now, but all those who say they use the Bible online at least some of the time.) Three out of five digital Bible Users (62%) say they click on "Bible apps" (such as YouVersion). The next most popular options, a "Bible-based website" and YouTube, get about half that traffic (30% and 27% respectively).

Generations have distinctive platform preferences. While every age group seems to like Bible apps, those in our oldest generation, Boomers+, specialize in what we might consider classic technology—not only TV and radio, but websites and Facebook. Those in Gen X often find their Bible content on YouTube; Millennials on Instagram. While it's no surprise that TikTok reaches our youngest generation far more than our oldest (24% to 1%), Gen Z also enjoys Bible content on podcasts—in fact it's their second most favored option (at 33%, with 59% using Bible apps).

It's worth remembering that our survey only includes adults over 18 years of age, so a third of Gen Z is not included here . . . yet. In the coming years we expect their preferred media to rise in these rankings.

Bible Access by Media Format and Generation

"How often do you interact with Bible content in the following formats?"



Base = Movable Middle digital Bible Users reporting using one of these formats at least monthly

Digital Bible Platform Preferences

On which of the following platforms do you most often interact with Bible content?

	Overall Percentage	Leading generation	Lowest generation
Bible app	62%	Millennials (67%)	Gen Z (59%)
Bible-based website	30%	Boomers (40%)	Millennials (25%)
YouTube	27%	Gen X (31%)	Boomers+ (20%)
Podcast/Webcast	21%	Gen Z (33%)	Boomers+ (14%)
Facebook	16%	Gen X (19%)	Gen Z (8%)
TV/Radio	14%	Boomers+ (22%)	Gen Z (8%)
Instagram	8%	Millennials (15%)	Boomers+ (3%)
TikTok	8%	Gen Z (24%)	Boomers+ (1%)

Note: Respondents could choose multiple options
Base: Bible Users who use digital platforms

METHODS OF BIBLE READING

For a few years now, we have asked people about their Bible reading practices—not just frequency but details of how they conduct their time with Scripture.

I do it at about the same time of the day.

I participate in a Bible study group.

I read one or more chapters or a complete story.

I follow a reading guide, schedule, plan, or program.

I read a few verses at a time.

I select Bible passages based on my mood at the time.

Those who are less Scripture engaged choose the last two statements more than the first four. We characterize the first four as "disciplined" Bible reading—requiring commitment to a group, a schedule, a plan, or a longer text. We call the last two options "casual" Bible reading. While the Bible benefits committed and casual readers alike, those who are most transformed by Scripture tend to go beyond grabbing a few mood-appropriate verses.

The 2025 survey has confirmed this pattern, with Scripture Engaged people generally doubling up on the Movable Middle on those first four statements.

For years we've noticed a recurring anomaly. When we ask whether people's Bible reading increased or decreased in the previous year, more people say they've increased (usually 15% claiming increase with 10% admitting decrease). This has occurred consistently, even in years when Bible reading was dropping. But this year it's not just wishful thinking: Bible Use has actually increased.

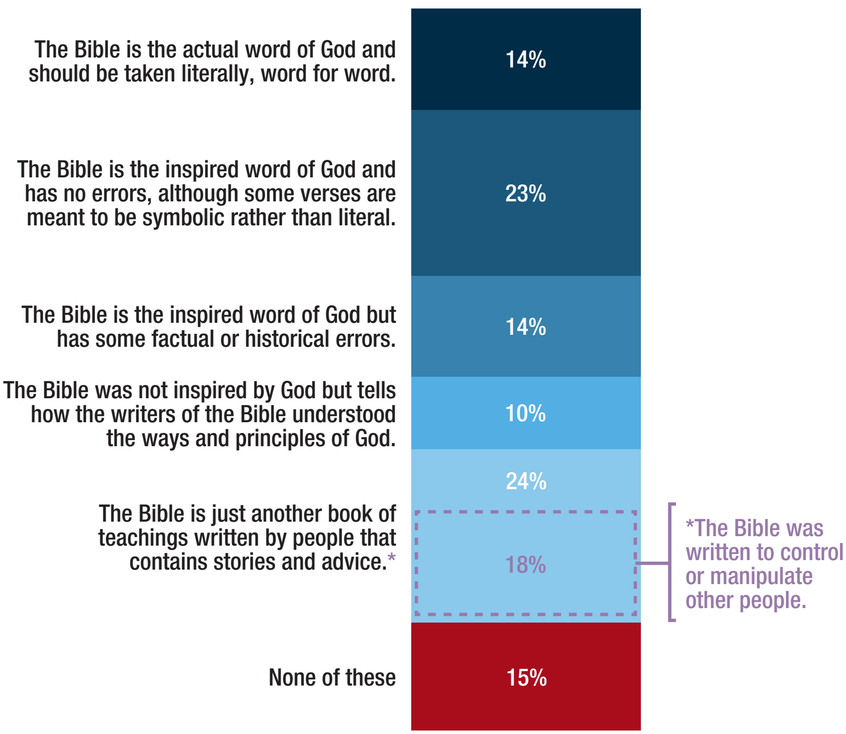
Speaking of wishful thinking, we also ask respondents, "Do you wish you read the Bible more?" Just over half of all Americans (51%) say yes (a couple of ticks down from last year's 53%). As you might expect, the Scripture Engaged can't get enough of God's Word. Seven of eight (88%) say they wish they read it more. Only a quarter of the Bible Disengaged (26%) have this wish; it's just not that important to most of them. But that Movable Middle group (80%) comes close to the Engaged in their desire for more Bible reading. To be sure, there can be many obstacles between wish and reality, but this is a positive factor. It's what makes this group movable.

ABOUT THE BIBLE

Besides all the data on formats and practices in Bible use, we also want to know what people believe *about* the Bible. We present five statements in random order and ask participants which comes closest to their view. For those who say the Bible is "just another book of teachings," we ask if they agree with another, more negative, statement: *The Bible was written to control or manipulate other people.*

Taken together, these responses give us a sense of the terrain of American attitudes toward the Bible, from traditional to modernist and even antagonistic.

Attitudes about the Bible, 2025



CONCLUSION

More than half of Americans (56%) say they are curious about the Bible and/or Jesus. Even among the youngest generations, Gen Z and Millennials, half of them say they're curious. Among the Movable Middle, that neutral group brimming with possibility, more than four out of five (82%) confess curiosity about the Bible or Jesus or both.

What can we do about that?

You might be afraid that people don't want to hear the good news. You might assume that everyone in your community is part of that 18 percent who are sure that the Bible was written to control and manipulate. It's a shame that those people think that, and maybe someday we can convince them otherwise, but three times as many people are longing to know more. How will we satisfy that desire? We see in this year's data a move toward Scripture, especially in previously resistant groups. For Christian leaders, communicators, artists, and servants, this is a time to talk about the deep wonder we find in the Bible, to live out its teachings with compassion and wholeness, and to welcome others into its rich wisdom. ■

ARE MORE PEOPLE USING THE BIBLE?

Our first interview of 2025 is with **Jennifer Holloran**, President and CEO of American Bible Society, talking about why Bible use might be on the rise. Click on or follow the QR code to listen now, and subscribe to this new podcast series to hear future conversations about the State of the Bible in America.

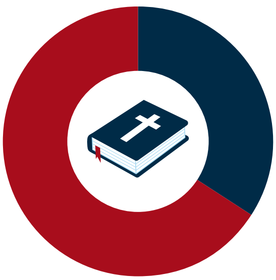
State of the Bible
USA 2025

CHAPTER 1
HIGHLIGHTS

Bible Use

29% increase in Bible use among Millennials

19% increase in Bible use among Men



66% of Bible users access the Bible digitally

34% of Bible users access the Bible only in print

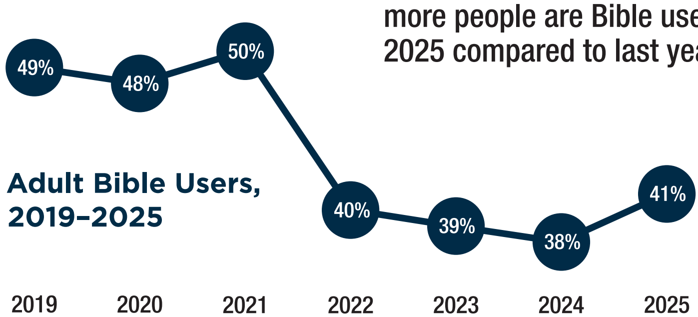
TOP 3 Platforms of Digital Bible Users

62% Bible App

30% Bible Website

27% YouTube

10 MILLION more people are Bible users in 2025 compared to last year



DEFINITION

Bible Users are individuals who interact with the Bible on their own at least three times a year.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLE AROUND THE WORLD

"We must be global Christians with a global vision because our God is a global God."

John Stott [1]

At various moments in history, Christians have pushed harder toward a global vision. You might look to the Moravian outreach beginning in the 1720s or William Carey's challenge to the British church in the 1790s or the 1806 Haystack Prayer Meeting that launched an American missionary movement.

Half a century ago, the Lausanne Conference of 1974 brought together 2,700 Christian leaders from 150 different nations to discuss world evangelization. Billy Graham used his worldwide fame to convene the crowd, and British pastor and theologian John Stott also emerged as a leader. Yet the groundbreaking feature of the event was

1 Stott (1921–2011), an Anglican priest, reportedly said this often. Cited in Christopher J. H. Wright, "John Stott's Global God," *Christianity Today*, January/February 2022.

the active involvement of hundreds of international church leaders. The Lausanne Conference didn't just inspire Western Christians to carry the gospel to unreached peoples; it affirmed the work that local churches and evangelists were already doing all over the world. It was a vision-changer then, and the movement continues to shape a global vision for the church today.

This *State of the Bible* report usually focuses on statistics from the U.S. After all, we work for the American Bible Society, with a mission to promote Scripture engagement in our own country. But we also belong to the United Bible Societies (UBS), a fellowship that is active in more than 240 nations of the world. This past year, we had the opportunity to participate with our colleagues from the British and Foreign Bible Society in a global project called the Patmos Initiative. In partnership with UBS, and with the expertise of the Gallup organization, the *Patmos World Bible Attitudes Survey* polled 91,000 people in 85 countries on Bible attitudes and practices. In this chapter, we compare Bible use, attitudes, and interest in the U.S. to the rest of the world, with a focus on other countries in "the Secular West," to gain a better picture of how God is working around the world, as well as continuing needs and opportunities for Bible access and engagement.[2]

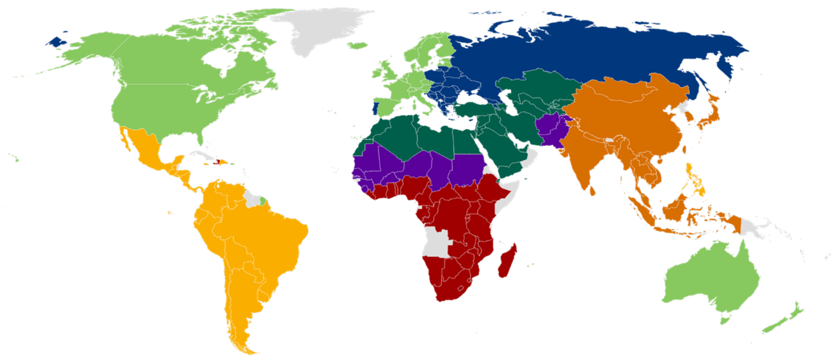
CLUSTERS

In the last book of the Bible, John writes from exile on the isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:9) to seven churches of Asia Minor, each with a distinct profile and unique challenges (Revelation 2—3). Drawing

2 Data in this chapter are taken by permission from *The Patmos World Bible Attitudes Survey* (2025). Gallup is the source research agency for *The Patmos World Bible Attitudes Survey*. Fieldwork details for all countries can be read in the methodology chapter of *The Patmos Survey* report: patmos.bfbs.org.

inspiration from this, the Patmos Initiative identifies seven "clusters" of countries. Each cluster shares a distinct profile and unique challenges with regard to the Bible and Christian faith.

Seven Clusters of the Patmos Initiative



	Geography	Religion
Cluster 1	West Africa, Chad, Sudan, Pakistan, Afghanistan	Majority Muslim
Cluster 2	Russia, Eastern Europe, Portugal	Majority Christian
Cluster 3	North Africa, Middle East, Turkey, Central Asia	Majority Muslim
Cluster 4	Latin America, Caribbean, Philippines	Majority Christian
Cluster 5	USA, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand	"The Secular West"
Cluster 6	India, China, Indonesia, Japan	Religiously diverse
Cluster 7	Sub-Saharan Africa	Majority Christian

Map Credit: The Patmos Initiative

Clusters 1 and 3 spread across the Sahel, North Africa, and the Middle East, up into Central Asia. The Muslim faith dominates these areas, with strong commitment to that religion and, generally, resistance to Christianity. Countries in Cluster 1 face significant poverty. Cluster 3 is marked by political authoritarianism. The Patmos pollsters couldn't even ask about the Bible in many of these countries, yet they found openness to explore new ideas among two groups: secular Muslims (especially in central Asia) and Muslims practicing their own faith but curious about other religions.

Cluster 2 (Russia, Eastern Europe, and Portugal) has a strong historical connection to Orthodox Christianity, but this doesn't always mean active personal commitment.

Cluster 5, including the U.S., Western Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, earns the moniker "the Secular West." Growing secularization has eroded the region's historical commitment to Christianity. Young people are less likely to identify as Christian, but when they do, they tend to practice it faithfully—more than most older adults who identify with Christianity more but practice it less. (Later in this chapter, we'll compare the U.S. with other countries in Cluster 5.)

Cluster 6, in eastern Asia, groups together the most populous nations on earth. Several of the world's large religions are prevalent here—including Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. Only 6 percent say they are interested in learning about the Christian Bible. This might be because three quarters of those in this cluster (76%) say they know nothing about the Bible and more than half (56%) have never even heard of it.

Cluster 4 (mostly Latin America) with its strong Roman Catholic heritage, shows high appreciation for and interaction with the Bible, though we see growing secularism among the younger generations. Cluster 7, most of sub-Saharan Africa, shows high interest in the Bible. Nine of ten are interested in learning more about it, and Bible use is high.

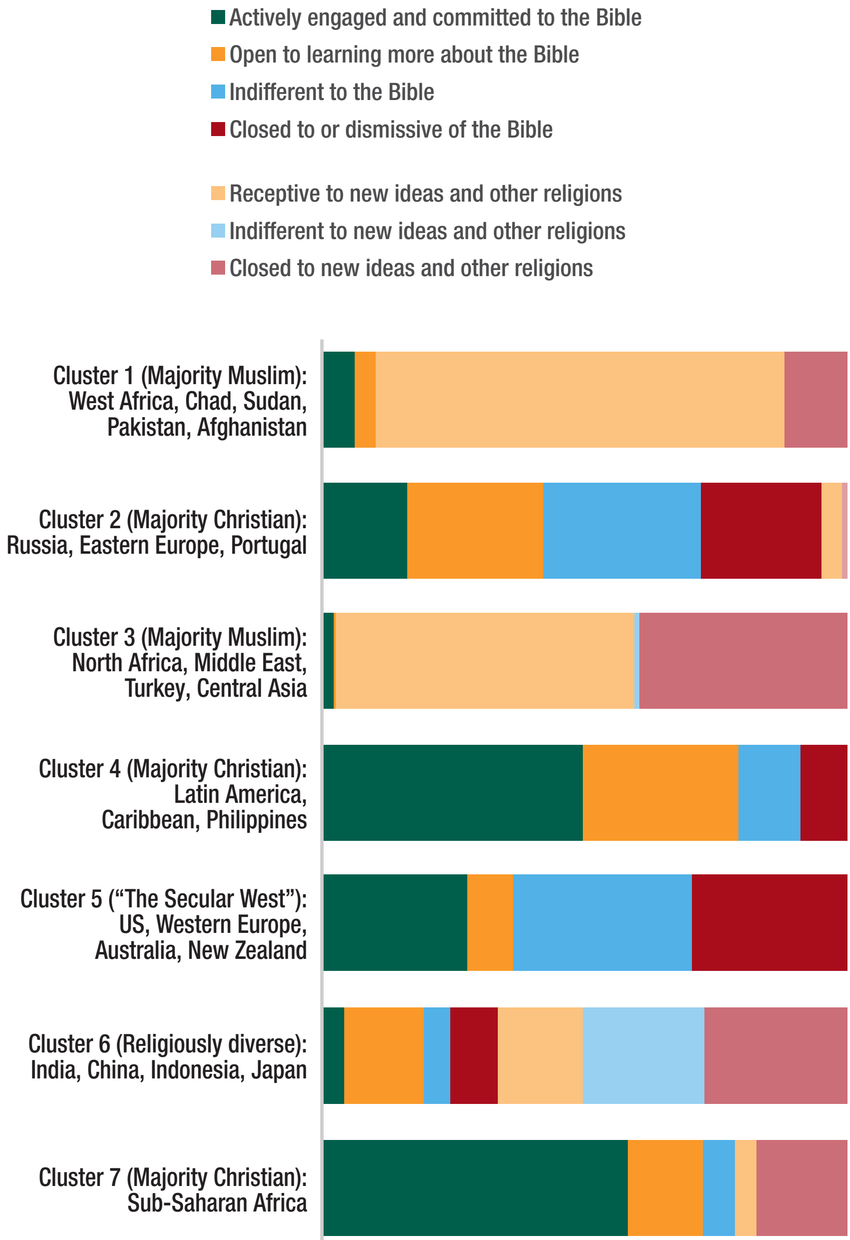
AUDIENCE GROUPS IN ALL CLUSTERS

Besides identifying clusters of countries with similar profiles, the Patmos Initiative also evaluates the populations of those clusters in terms of their openness to the Bible or to new religious ideas (other than the dominant religion). Based on survey responses, seven "audience groups" emerge.

- Actively engaged and committed to the Bible
- Open to learning more about the Bible
- Indifferent to the Bible
- Closed to the Bible
- Receptive to new ideas or other religions
- Indifferent to new ideas or other religions
- Closed to new ideas or other religions

Each cluster has a unique configuration of these seven audience groups. Appreciating the contexts in which they work can allow church leaders and Bible organizations to tailor their ministry more effectively. For instance, in areas where nearly everyone follows a religion other than Christianity, many know nothing about the Bible. This makes "openness to the Bible" a moot point. But even in those cultures there might be openness to new religious ideas, such as Christianity.

Audience Groups by Cluster

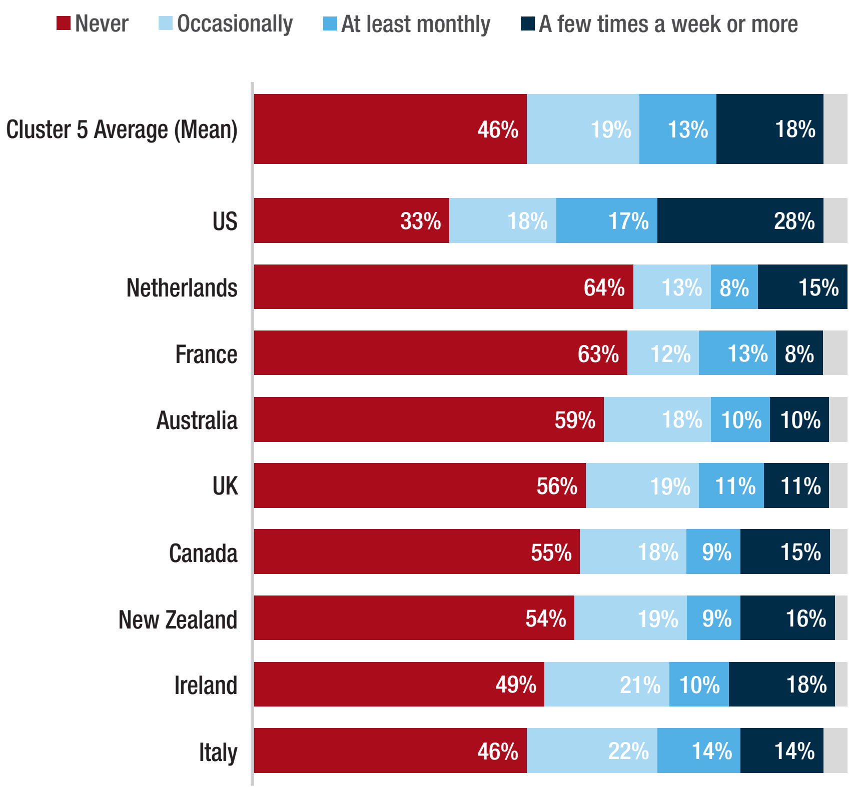


BIBLE AND CHURCH IN THE SECULAR WEST

We now focus on Cluster 5, the Secular West, which includes the U.S. and Western Europe, as well as other English-speaking nations (Canada, Australia, New Zealand). How do all these countries stack up in their Bible Use and church attendance? What Bible formats do they prefer? Later we'll also examine a range of attitudes about the Bible.

Bible Use by Country (selected countries in Cluster 5)[3]

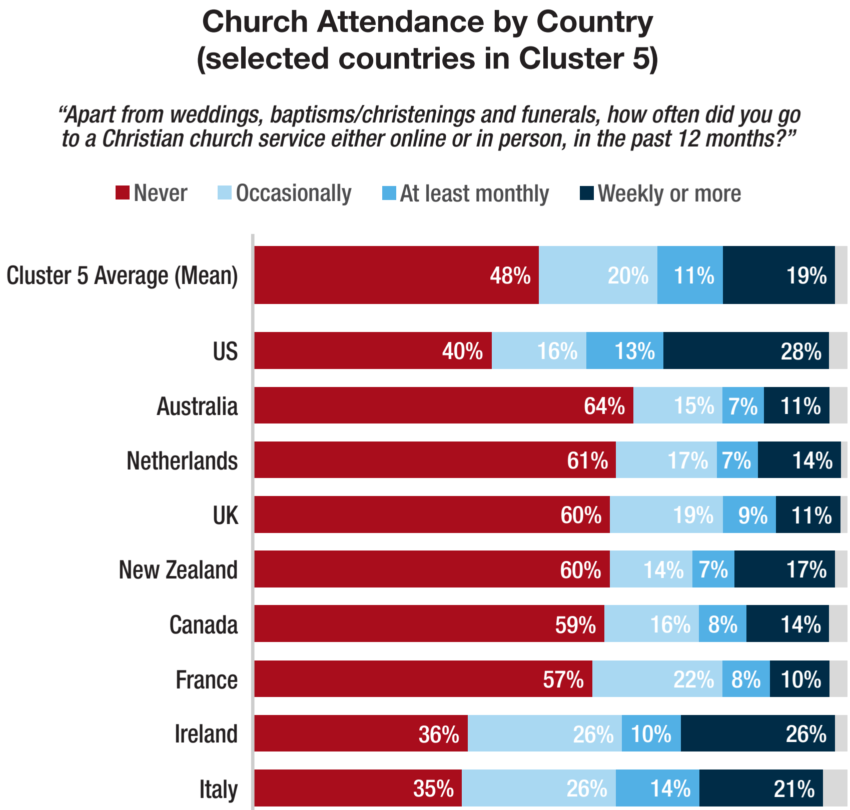
"How often do you use the Bible?"



3 Does not include the 1–4% who replied, "Prefer not to say."

Bible Use is far more prevalent in the U.S. than in any other nation in the Secular West. More than half of those in every other Cluster 5 country say they never use the Bible (except for Italy and Ireland, with 46% and 49%). But only one in three Americans say they never use the Bible (33%), with more than a quarter (28%) interacting with it at least a few times a week.

France (only 8% turning to the Bible weekly) and the Netherlands (64% with no Bible use) are among the least Bible-connected countries. Sweden (63% "never") and Norway (only 5% a few times a week or more) also score low on this question.



It’s no surprise that Bible Use tracks closely with church attendance. People who make a point of gathering with people of faith in the worship of God also tend to connect with God in Scripture on a regular basis. Our statistics confirm that.

Once again, church attendance in the U.S. (28% weekly, a total of 41% attending at least monthly) far exceeds the average for the Secular West nations (19% weekly, 30% total monthly). But notice that Italy and Ireland, two nations with a strong Roman Catholic heritage, have strong numbers in church attendance, far greater than their Bible Use. In fact, those two countries have the lowest percentage of people saying they “never” attend church.

BIBLE FORMATS

Some might expect that the general cultural shift to digital media and audiovisual content would be seen first in the developed nations of the Secular West, but throughout this cluster, people who use the Bible at least once or twice a year still prefer to read the Bible on paper or screens (68%) rather than listening to it (17%) or watching videos (12%). The Netherlands (75%) and New Zealand (74%) are most likely to prefer text, with Sweden (55%) least likely. Belgium has the highest percentage in this cluster who prefer to interact with the Bible in an audio format (28%). The lowest percentage belongs to Italy, where only one in ten (10%) prefer audio. When it comes to video, those in the United Kingdom are most likely to prefer that format (22%), with Belgium and Ireland the least likely (9%).

Preferences do not always match up with actions. The Patmos Survey also asked about the frequency of use among specific formats. How often do people consult Bible material on a phone, tablet, or computer? How many Bible readers make this a regular habit? How many watch video content about the Bible at least a few times a week?

Once again, the U.S. is slightly ahead of the average for Cluster 5 in both these media formats, but there are a number of countries ahead and behind. Ireland leads the way with digital Bible reading plans (40%), just ahead of Sweden and Belgium (37%). Italy (15%) lags behind.

Preferred Bible Formats

"How do you most prefer to access the Bible?"

	Cluster 5 Average (Mean)	US	Highest	Second	Lowest
Text	68%	70%	Netherlands, 75%	New Zealand, 74%	Sweden, 55%
Audio	17%	18%	Belgium, 28%	Sweden, 25%	Italy, 10%
Video	12%	11%	UK, 22%	Norway, 20%	Belgium, Ireland, 9%

Base: Those who use the Bible at least once or twice a year

With regard to video watching, Belgium (39%) leads the way in regular viewing of Bible content. And even though Norwegians expressed the second highest level of *preference* for video content (see above), their regular *use* of such content was the lowest in the cluster (13%).

Actual Digital Bible Use by Format

"How often have you read from a Bible reading plan on a phone, tablet, or computer?"

"How often have you watched a Bible-oriented program on a television, phone, tablet, or computer?"

Responding "a few times a week" or more

	Cluster 5 Average (Mean)	US	Highest	Second	Lowest
Read from a plan	28%	30%	Ireland, 41%	Sweden, Belgium, 37%	Italy, 14%
Watched a program	26%	28%	Belgium, 39%	Ireland, 36%	Norway, 13%

Base: Those who use the Bible at least once or twice a year

ATTITUDES

One of the reasons we can define our cluster as the *Secular* West is a steady erosion of appreciation for the Bible and Christian tradition over the last century. Historically, this is the territory of Francis of Assisi, of Luther, Calvin, and Wesley. Christianity grew and thrived on these acres, but lately there's a different story being played out.

Has the church lost the hearts and minds of the people? Or is there still some appreciation for the old Scriptures, perhaps some curiosity? To find out, the Patmos Survey included various questions about people's attitudes toward the Bible and faith, both positive and negative.

What are the two major reasons why you use the Bible? This was asked of those who indicated some level of Bible use. Respondents could choose two answers from thirteen listed, or they could say "other" or opt out entirely. The top three answers from the U.S. matched those from all of Cluster 5:

- *To deepen my relationship with God* (U.S. 24%; Cluster 21%)
- *To guide me with everyday issues* (U.S. 15%; Cluster 12%)
- *To develop my spiritual life* (U.S. 14%; Cluster 13%)

American respondents were the most likely to choose the first two answers, with Norwegians being the least likely (9% and 6%). Canadians were the most likely to choose the "spiritual life" response (17%), with Switzerland least likely (4%).

Another option was: *To understand ancient cultures.* The U.S. and Canada were the least likely to choose this (4%), under the Cluster average (6%). Slovenians (15%) and Norwegians (12%) were the most likely to select this reason to read the Bible.

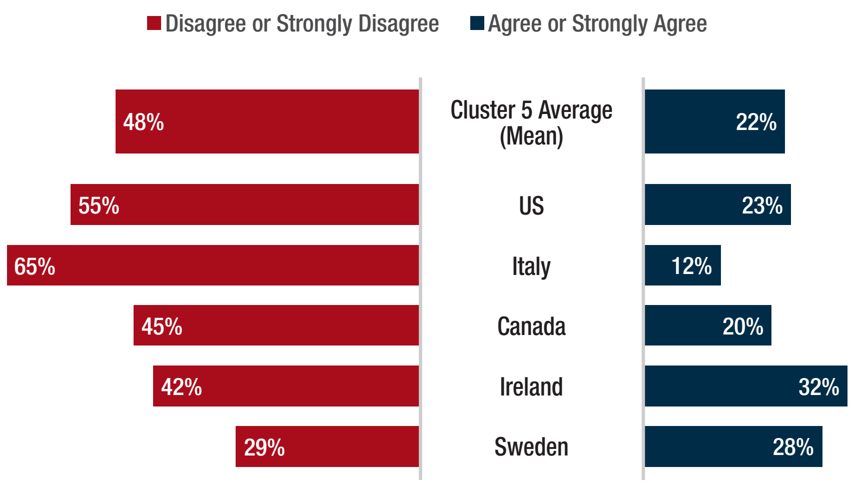
Is religion an important part of your daily life? Across Cluster 5, four out of ten (40%) said yes. Americans seem to be most religious (53% saying yes, with Italians close behind at 50%). The least religious country appears to be Norway (17%).

Those who answered no on the religion question received a follow-up: *Why not?* Across the board, nearly a third (31%) said they didn't believe in "any divine beings/higher powers." A fifth (20%) of the non-religionists in Cluster 5 chose as their reason "I do not think religion can be relevant to my life." Among the less popular answers was: *I have had a bad experience with religion* (6% overall, but 9% in the U.S.).

Agree or Disagree: The Bible is a source of harm in the world. Less than a quarter of the Secular West cluster (22%) agrees or strongly agrees with this, almost matching the U.S. results. But Americans seem more eager to resist this notion, far exceeding the cluster average "strongly disagreeing" (37% U.S. to 28% in the cluster). Nearly two of three Italians disagree or strongly disagree on the Bible doing harm (65%). Notably, Ireland—a very religious nation that has experienced some religion-based troubles—showed more agreement (ten points over the mean) and less disagreement (six points under the mean) regarding the harm the Bible could cause.

The Bible as a "Source of Harm," Selected Countries

"The Bible is a source of harm in the world."

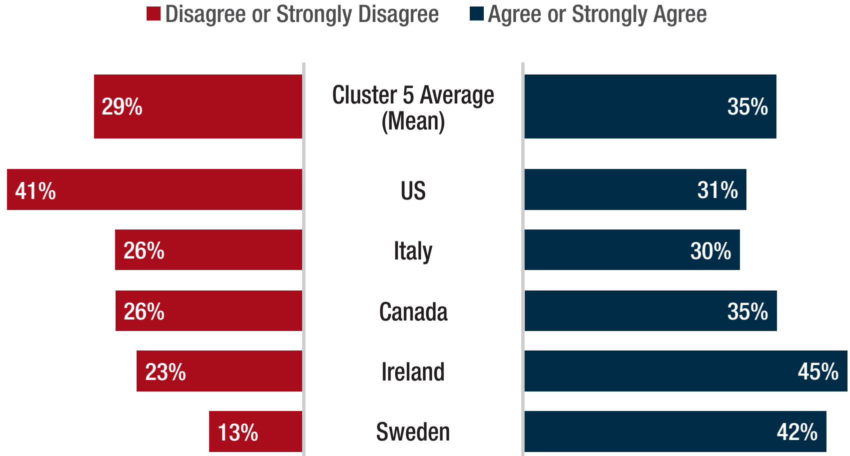


Agree or Disagree: It's difficult to trust the Bible because it clashes with the scientific worldview. Consider this statement for yourself. It has several components, doesn't it? In order to agree, you need to acknowledge that there is a "scientific worldview" inconsistent with the Bible's teaching. This makes it "difficult" to trust the Bible. If you disagree, are you saying the Bible is consistent with science or that there's no difficulty because each has its own domain? Or do you trust the Bible as a corrective to an overly scientific outlook? This question is especially important in the context of Western Europe with its rich history in scientific discovery and centuries of interaction between faith and science.

The U.S. is the only nation in this group with more disagreement (41%) than agreement (31%)—more who say it's *not* difficult to trust the Bible. The level of "strong" disagreement in the U.S. (23%) more than doubles that of nearly every other nation in the cluster.

The Bible and Science, Selected Countries

"It's difficult to trust the Bible because it clashes with the scientific worldview."



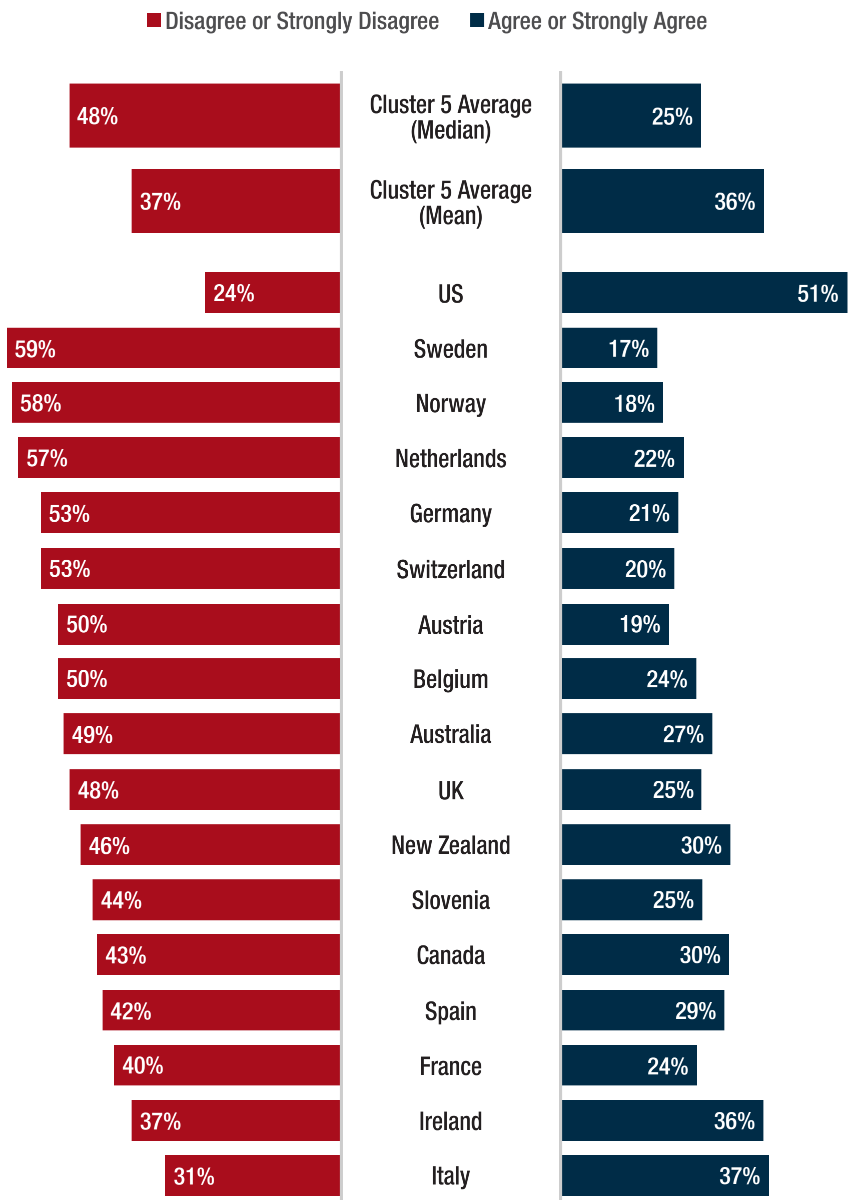
Agree or Disagree: The Bible is relevant to me personally. Seldom do we find such a basic question with such devastating results. This is the crux of Bible ministry, is it not? We offer the Bible, not merely as a historical artifact, but as the wisdom of our Maker, deeply connected to the situations of our lives.

At first glance, the numbers don't look too bad. Across the cluster, a nearly equal number agree and disagree (36% and 37% mean), but those numbers are heavily influenced by strong figures from the U.S., where more than half (51%) affirm the relevance of Scripture and less than a quarter (24%) disagree. The median average for the cluster tilts strongly toward disagreement.

Clearly, Americans are outliers on this question. Italy is the only other country with more agreement (37%) than disagreement (31%). Every other country is more likely to disagree on the Bible's relevance, most by a wide margin. Sweden (59%) and Norway (58%) have the highest levels of disagreement, but we find similar numbers from the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Belgium. In all those countries, at least half of the people say the Bible is irrelevant to their lives, and less than a quarter say it's relevant.

The Bible's Relevance, Selected Countries

"The Bible is relevant to me personally."



LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP

Are people in the Secular West interested in learning more about the Bible? If so, how do they prefer to learn, and how can church leaders help?

Overall, the survey respondents form four rather equal quadrants: very interested in learning more, somewhat interested, not very interested, and not at all interested. Each group includes between 22 and 27 percent of the population. The highest levels of interest appear in the U.S., the lowest in Sweden and Norway. (Italians also show more interest in the Bible.)

Interest in Learning About the Bible

"How interested, if at all, are you in learning more about the Bible?"

	Cluster 5 Average (Mean)	Highest	Second	Lowest
Not at all interested	27%	Sweden, 43%	Australia, 41%	Italy, 16%
Somewhat OR Very interested	45%	US, 59%	Italy, 49%	Sweden, 24%
Very interested	22%	US, 34%	Ireland, 19%	Sweden, Norway, 8%

The Patmos Survey followed up with questions about why people were or weren't interested in learning more. The top reasons for a lack of interest were: "I'm not religious" (23%) and "It's not relevant to me" (22%).

Why did others want to learn more? The top reason was "To help me grow spiritually" (19%). This was followed by "To help me know God better" (16%) and "To help me answer life's big questions" (15%). The fourth most-chosen response was especially interesting in this region of changing cultures: "To help me understand what Christians believe" (13%). This was the top answer selected in France (22%).

All who said they were "very" or "somewhat" interested in learning more about the Bible got two more questions, zeroing in on methods of learning that are desirable and effective.

Methods of Learning About the Bible

"How would you most prefer to learn about the Bible?" (top responses)

	Cluster 5 Average (Mean)	US	Highest	Second	Lowest
Online materials I can read on my own	27%	27%	Ireland, 41%	Australia, Canada, Belgium, UK, 30%	France, Germany, 21%
Attending a Christian church service	17%	21%	US, 21%	Switzerland, 19%	Belgium, 6%
Meeting in person with a group of people	15%	13%	Italy, 21%	France, 20%	Switzerland, 10%
Watching videos about the Bible, either online or in some other way	11%	10%	Italy, 17%	Sweden, Norway, Slovenia, 13%	Ireland, 6%

Respondents showed a strong preference (27%) for "Online materials I can read on my own," especially in Ireland (41%). That was the most-selected method in every country. Americans were the most likely people to choose "Attending a Christian church service" as a method of learning about the Bible.

The survey also asked this group, "What would most help you learn more about the Bible?" Eleven options were offered, and we saw fairly even distribution among the responses. The top six were:

- Something that helps relate the Bible to everyday life (14%)
- Talking with Christians (13%)
- Short reflections about the Bible (11%)
- Talking to Bible experts (10%)
- Something that breaks the Bible down into manageable pieces (10%)
- Talking with like-minded people (10%)

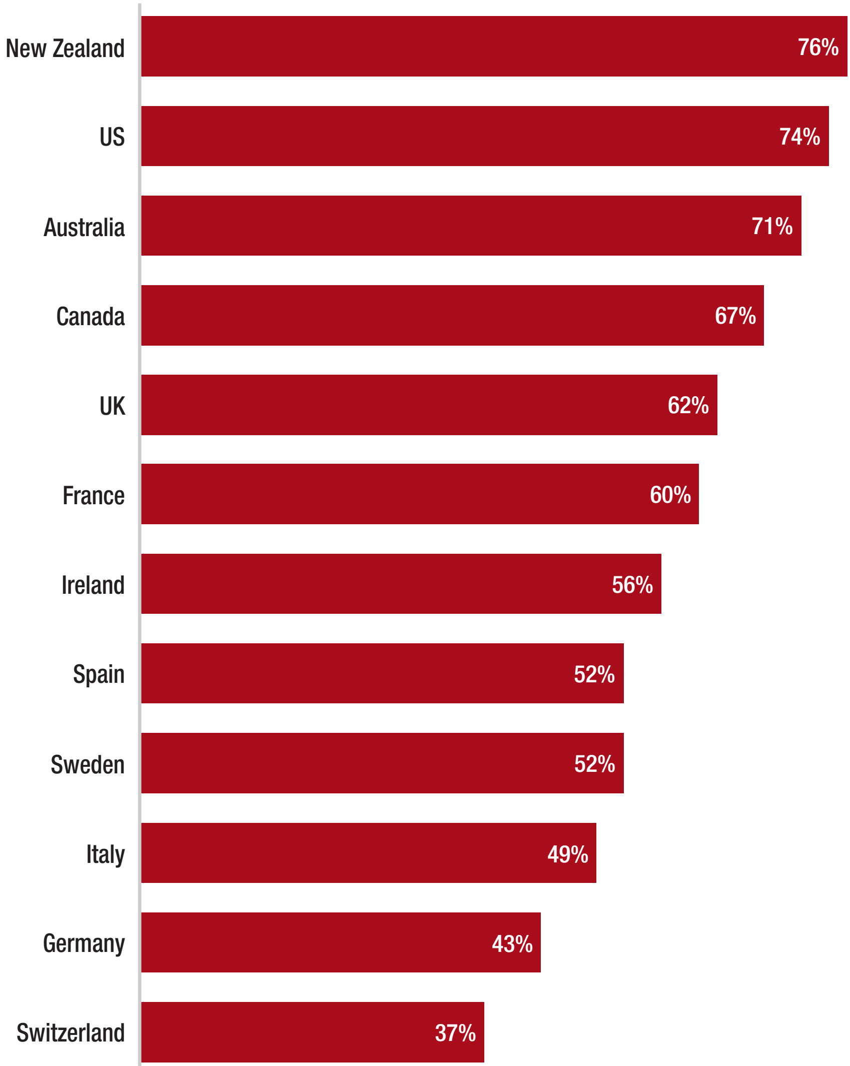
Of course there are many helpful ways a person can learn about the Bible. Leadership is an important part of that process. Are church leaders throughout the Secular West helping people connect with the Bible? Are leaders helping people "relate the Bible to everyday life"? The Patmos Survey asked those questions and found the majority of church attenders throughout this cluster feel that their church leaders are both making the Bible relevant and encouraging people to read it for themselves.

That same group of church attenders was asked whether they agreed that "Church leaders often make the Bible relevant to my life." In most countries, the percentages of those agreeing run a few ticks higher. The average (mean) level of agreement is 67 percent.

Church Leaders Encouraging Bible Reading

"Church leaders encourage me to read the Bible"

Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing



Base: Those attending church at least a few times a year.

GAPS AND GLIMPSES

There are many possible takeaways from a wide-ranging survey like this. Here are a few.

In many countries of the world, people have little or no familiarity with the Bible. This is especially true in places dominated, socially and/or politically, by non-Christian religions. Yet even in these areas, we see curiosity bubbling up. This report has focused on the Secular West, where the U.S. resides, historically and culturally. Here we find many people who have access to the Bible without any understanding of its value for their modern lives. Though the U.S. remains remarkably curious about both the Bible and Jesus, other Western nations seem to have lost the cultural ability and personal interest in discovering the timeless value of God's Word.

We're seeing a relevance gap. Yes, we know that sounds like a theme from a twentieth-century youth group, but the reality is crying out to us from these statistics. Outside of the U.S., when asked if the Bible is relevant to their lives, people are twice as likely to say no than yes. Those who want to learn about the Bible want help in relating the Bible to everyday life. A significant number said, "I do not think religion can be relevant to my life." Some church leaders "make the Bible relevant," but far from all. The relevance of Scripture will be established not with trendy buzzwords but by showing how God speaks into the issues of people's lives.

Americans are more committed to the Bible and Christian faith than others in the Secular West. To be sure, secularism is doing the same eroding in the U.S. as elsewhere, but that process seems further along in the other countries of Cluster 5. Here's a crucial question: Are the statistics from the rest of the Secular West a glimpse of America's future or a cautionary tale of decline that can be avoided? Also, how can American Christians advocate for the Bible at home and around the world, particularly helping others in our cluster of nations to re-engage with Scripture?

If we aspire to be "global Christians," spreading the message of Jesus to "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), these data points will fuel our prayers and our ministry. The Patmos Initiative has given the world-wide church a great gift of information. We gain a greater understanding of the people we share this planet with—and in particular how open or closed they are to God's invitation in Scripture.

PODCAST IN MAY: THE REBIRTH OF BELIEF

To better understand the state of the Bible around the world, we interviewed two guests for the *State of the Bible Podcast.*

First, **Justin Brierley**, based in the United Kingdom and author of *The Surprising Rebirth of Belief in God*, shares his perspective on what is happening in the Secular West.

Second, **Rhiannon McAleer**, Director of Research and Impact at the British and Foreign Bible Society, shares key takeaways from the *Patmos World Bible Attitudes Survey.*

State of the Bible USA 2025

CHAPTER 2 HIGHLIGHTS

The Bible Around the World

5 BILLION+

copies of the Bible have been distributed worldwide

LA BIBLIA

translated into

2,000

languages

35%

of people around the world are interested in learning more about the Bible

7 in 10

(71%) agree it's good for children to know stories from the Bible

Opportunity

76%

of people in Asia say they know nothing about the Bible and

56%

have never even heard of it

Fewer than

4 in 10

residents (37%) in the "Secular West" countries believe the Bible is personally relevant to them

BIBLE

42% of Christians use the Bible weekly or more

37% use it less regularly

21% of Christians never use it

In partnership with the British and Foreign Bible Society and United Bible Societies, and with the expertise of the Gallup organization, the *Patmos World Bible Attitudes Survey* polled 91,000 people in 85 countries on Bible attitudes and practices.

METHODOLOGY

In 2025, the *State of the Bible* research team at American Bible Society collaborated with NORC at the University of Chicago to design and field a nationally representative survey of American adults on topics related to the Bible, faith, and the church. The study was conducted in English and was presented both online and via telephone to NORC's AmeriSpeak® Panel, using a 19-minute questionnaire. The study produced 2,656 responses from a representative sample of adults 18 and older within all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data were collected from January 2–21, 2025. The margin of error for a sample of this size is ±2.47 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

QUALITY AT A GLANCE

Following are key survey quality indicators, excerpted from a report card prepared by NORC at the University of Chicago in compliance with the American Association for Public Opinion Research

(AAPOR) Transparency Initiative. The full report is available upon request by emailing pr@americanbible.org.

SURVEY OVERVIEW

- **Study Population:** General Population Age 18+
- **Sample Units:** 13,156
- **Completed Units:** 2,656
- **Margin of Error:** ±2.47%
- **Average Design Effect:** 1.69
- **Survey Field Period:** January 2–21, 2025
- **Median Duration:** 19 minutes

PANEL OUTCOMES

- **Weighted Household Recruitment Rate:**[1] 27.4%
- **Weighted Household Retention Rate:** 77.2%

SURVEY OUTCOMES

- **Survey Completion Rate:**[2] 20.2%
- **Weighted Cumulative Response Rate:**[3] 4.3%

1 The weighted AAPOR RR III for the AmeriSpeak panel recruitment corresponding to the recruitment cohorts sampled for the study. A recruited household is a household where at least one adult successfully completed the recruitment survey and joined the panel.

2 The percent of eligible sample members who completed the survey interview.

3 The overall survey response rate that accounts for survey outcomes in all response stages including panel recruitment rate, panel retention rate, and survey completion rate. It is weighted to account for the sample design and differential inclusion probabilities of sample members.

THE AMERISPEAK® PANEL

Funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago, AmeriSpeak® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. Randomly selected U.S. households are sampled using area probability and address-based sampling, with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame. These sampled households are then contacted by U.S. mail, telephone, and field interviewers (face to face).

The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97 percent of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with PO Box addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

While most AmeriSpeak households participate in surveys by web, non-internet households can participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by telephone. Households without conventional internet access but having web access via smartphones are allowed to participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by web. AmeriSpeak panelists participate in NORC studies or studies conducted by NORC on behalf of governmental agencies, academic researchers, and media and commercial organizations.

For more information, email AmeriSpeak-BD@norc.org or visit AmeriSpeak.norc.org.

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge. Please visit www.norc.org for more information.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are used in this and other *State of the Bible* reports to group respondents by demographics, beliefs, and practices.

Bible Skeptic: Individuals who believe the Bible is just another book written by people that contains stories and advice.

Bible User: Individuals who read, listen to, or pray with the Bible on their own at least 3–4 times a year, outside of a church service or church event.

Church Engagement: We measure the level of commitment and connection a person might experience in their church using five items inspired by the Gallup Q12® questions for employee engagement.[1]

1. At church. I have the opportunity to use my giftings.
2. My pastor, or other church leaders, seem to care about me as a person.
3. There is someone in my church who encourages my spiritual development.

1 Buckingham, M, & Harter, J. (1999). *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently.* Gallup Press.

4. I have a best friend at church.
5. In the past year I have had opportunities to learn and grow in my faith.

Churched: Individuals who have attended a Christian church service in the past six months for any reason other than a special occasion, such as a wedding or funeral.

Consolidated Identity: The extent to which an individual has developed a coherent, grounded, and positive sense of self. We measure it using three items from the Consolidated Identity scale of the Self-Concept and Identity Measure.[2]

1. I know who I am.
2. I always have a good sense about what is important to me.
3. I know what I believe or value.

Correlation: In statistics, the strength of a linear relationship between two variables is often expressed as a numerical value preceded by the italicized letter *r*. We report correlations only when they are statistically significant ($p < .05$) and when the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.2 or greater. We use these rules of thumb for interpreting the qualitative magnitude of a correlation:

- Very Weak (r = 0.00—0.19)
- Weak (r = 0.20—0.39)
- Moderate (r = 0.40—0.59)
- Strong (r = 0.60—0.79)
- Very Strong (r = 0.80—1.00)

2 Kaufman, E. A., Puzia, M. E., Crowell, S. E., & Price, C. J. (2019). Replication of the Self-Concept and Identity Measure (SCIM) Among a Treatment-Seeking Sample. *Identity, 19* (1), 18–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2019.1566068

Division: The U.S. Census Bureau divides the United States into nine geographic divisions, which are groupings of multiple states. These divisions and their population characteristics are used to ensure that survey responses are demographically representative of the United States as a whole.

Generations:

- **Generation Z (1997–2012):** Ages 13 to 28 in 2025. This study includes adults (18–28) in Generation Z.
- **Millennials (1981–1996):** Ages 29 to 44 in 2025.
- **Generation X (1965–1980):** Ages 45 to 60 in 2025.
- **Baby Boomers (1946–1964):** Ages 61 to 79 in 2025.
- **Elders (1928–1945):** This study places considers any respondent 80 years old or older to be in the Elders generation. Due to sampling limitations for people of this age, this small group is combined with the Baby Boomer group and listed in the report as **Boomers+.**

Hope Agency: This is a measure of an individual's perceived capacity for initiating and maintaining the actions necessary to reach a goal. It is measured with three items. Scores range from 3–24.[3]

1. At the present, I am energetically pursuing my life plan.
2. Right now, I can see myself as being pretty successful in navigating life.
3. At this time, I am meeting the life goals that I have set for myself.

3 Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J. R., Holleran, S. A., Irving, L. M., Sigmon, S. T, Yoshinobu, L., Gibb, J., Langelle, C., & Hamey, P. (1991). The will and the ways: Development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60,* 570–585.

Human Flourishing Index: While healthcare often focuses on pathology—what's wrong—this is an effort to see health in a positive way. The Human Flourishing Index emerged at Harvard University's T. H. Chan School of Public Health in 2017.[4] It has been used (with permission) in the *State of the Bible* since 2020. Researchers focus on six areas of the human experience ("domains"), asking two questions about each.

1. Happiness & Life Satisfaction
2. Mental & Physical Health
3. Meaning & Purpose
4. Character & Virtue
5. Close Social Relationships
6. Financial & Material Stability

The results yield two composite scores on a 0 to 10 scale: the *Human Flourishing Index* (which leaves out the financial domain) and the *Secure Flourishing Index* (which includes it).

Loneliness: We measure loneliness using five items from the UCLA Loneliness Scale.[5]

- How often do you feel alone?
- How often do you feel that you are no longer close to anyone?
- How often do you feel left out?
- How often do you feel that no one really knows you well?
- How often do you feel that people are around you but not with you?

4 VanderWeele, T. J. (2017). On the promotion of human flourishing. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 114*(31), 8148–56.

5 Russell, D. (1996). UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3): Reliability, validity, and factor structure. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 66,* 20–40.

Loneliness scores range from 5–20. We have grouped them into three levels.

- Low: 5–9
- Moderate: 10–15
- High: 16–20

No faith/Other faith: Individuals who do not consider themselves Christian (including atheists, agnostics, and other faiths). Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are also included, even if they describe themselves as Christian.

Non-Christian: Individuals who consider themselves to be anything other than Christians. This includes those of other faiths (see above) as well as the **Nones,** who do not identify with any religion at all.

Non-Practicing Christian: Self-identified Christians who are not Practicing Christians as defined below. Two subsets of this group are **Nominals,** who identify as Christians but do not attend church at least monthly, and **Casuals,** who identify and attend but do not "strongly agree" that their faith is very important in their lives.

Practicing Christian: Individuals who meet all three of the following criteria:

- Self-identify as Christian, adhering to a historically biblical tradition
- Attend a religious service at least once a month
- Say their faith is very important in their lives

Pathway of Scripture Engagement: American Bible Society's theory of change: a ten-step logic model describing how individuals with access to the Bible receive it, interact with it, and ultimately are changed by it. See *Appendix 3: Pathway of Scripture Engagement* for further detail.

Region: The U.S. Census Bureau divides the United States into four geographic regions, which are groupings of multiple divisions. These regions and their population characteristics are used to ensure that survey responses are demographically representative of the United States as a whole.

Scripture engaged: Anyone who scores 100 or higher on the Scripture Engagement Scale.

Scripture unengaged: Anyone who scores below 100 on the Scripture Engagement Scale.

Scripture Engagement Scale: Based on responses to 14 survey items about the frequency of Bible use and the impact and centrality of its message, this scale provides a high-fidelity, numerical measure of holistic Scripture engagement among U.S. Bible Users. The Scripture Engagement Scale is centered on 100, meaning that approximately one half of U.S. Bible Users score above 100, and the other half score below 100. The scale's standard deviation is 15.

Scripture Engagement Segments (Full): The Scripture engagement of individuals and groups can be described using the following five segments based on Scripture Engagement Scale scores.

1. **Bible Centered** Score = 115 or higher.
2. **Bible Engaged** Score = 100–114.
3. **Bible Friendly** Score = 85–99.
4. **Bible Neutral** Score = 70–84.
5. **Bible Disengaged** Score = Less than 70.

Scripture Engagement Segments (Simplified): The Scripture engagement of individuals and groups can also be described using the following three segments based on Scripture Engagement Scale scores.

1. **Scripture Engaged:** Score = 100 or higher. Includes both the Bible Centered and the Bible Engaged.
2. **Movable Middle:** Score = 70–99. Includes both the Bible Friendly and Bible Neutral categories.
3. **Bible Disengaged:** Score = Less than 70. Same as Bible Disengaged in the Full Scripture Engagement segmentation.

Self-Identified Religion: Respondents are asked, "do you consider yourself any of the following religious faiths?" Their response is their self-identified religion, regardless of their current involvement with any religious organization.

Spiritual Vitality Gauge (SVG): From answers to nine concise questions focusing on beliefs, spiritual practices, and faith in action, the SVG yields a score between 0 and 100 as a reliable measure of spiritual health. The questions are asked only of self-identifying Christians. The SVG is used by permission of Renovo.

Spiritual Vitality Segments: We place self-identifying Christian respondents into one of four descriptive groups based on their SVG scores:

1. **Ailing** Score = 0–50
2. **Unhealthy** Score = 51–70
3. **Healthy** Score = 71–90
4. **Thriving** Score = 91–100

Trauma Impact: Respondents who have experienced at least one traumatic event are asked, "Does the trauma you experienced or witnessed still affect you today? *Select one*." Response options are:

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Never

Trauma Incidence: Respondents are asked, "Have you ever experienced physical, psychological, or emotional trauma? That is, extreme violence, abuse, or a near-death experience that produces a response of intense fear, helplessness, or horror? *Check all that apply.*" Response options are:

- You personally experienced a trauma
- You witnessed a trauma
- None of these apply to me

Respondents who select *any option except* "none of these apply to me" are counted as having experienced trauma.

Trauma Severity: Respondents who experience the impact of trauma at least "sometimes" are asked, "Please rate the **severity** of the trauma effects you are experiencing on the scale below." The numerical response scale has a range of 1–10 with the following qualitative anchors:

- 0 = None
- 5 = Moderate
- 10 = Overwhelming

Trust: We measure interpersonal trust using five items from the General Trust Scale.[6]

1. Most people are basically honest.
2. Most people are trustworthy.
3. I am trusting of others.
4. Most people are sincere and well-intentioned.
5. People will usually keep their promises if they make them.

Unchurched: Individuals who have not attended a Christian church service in the past six months for any reason other than a special occasion, such as a wedding or funeral. ■

6 Yamagishi, T. & Yamagishi, M. (1994). Trust and commitment in the United States and Japan. *Motivation and Emotion, 18* (2), 129–166.

PATHWAY OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

The Pathway of Scripture Engagement (PSE) is American Bible Society's theory of change: a ten-step logic model describing how individuals with access to the Bible receive it, interact with it, and ultimately are changed by it. The PSE is the foundation of our empirical research, which shows that consistent interaction with the Bible shapes people's choices and transforms their relationships with God, self, and others.

PURPOSE OF THE PATHWAY

The PSE marks out a set of waypoints along a journey of spiritual formation. When the Bible is made available through translation and distribution, pilgrims may enter the Pathway and begin their journey toward reconciliation with God and others.

The journey along the Pathway brings its own benefits, including wisdom for daily living, increased awareness of God's presence and voice, and generosity of spirit and action. However, what makes the Pathway uniquely valuable is its destination: spiritual health and vitality marked by deeply rooted love for God and healthy relationships with others, particularly those in the community of faith.

The PSE is like a ladder with ten rungs. Users might climb one rung at a time or even skip a rung. They may climb slowly or quickly. It's even possible to climb part of the way up the ladder and then retreat a few steps. As users climb the ladder, their perspective changes with altitude and as distant objects draw nearer. Still, the most important thing about a ladder is that it's leaning against the right building. Similarly, the most important thing about Scripture Engagement is that it is leaning against the building of holistic spiritual vitality marked by love for God and others. According to Jesus, loving God and others are the two great commandments for all his followers (Matthew 22:37–39).

PROGRESS ALONG THE PATHWAY

The Pathway of Scripture Engagement is also like an old-school map that marks out a journey from beginning to end. The PSE is for anyone who has access to the Bible in their own language because the Bible is the primary vehicle that carries people toward spiritual health.

The PSE shows the landscape and key waypoints, but it doesn't do two important things. First, it doesn't have a YOU ARE HERE marker. Second, it doesn't measure progress toward spiritual vitality. For

The Pathway of Scripture Engagement

What is Scripture Engagement?

Scripture engagement is consistent interaction with the Bible that shapes people's choices and transforms their relationships with God, self, and others.

- **External Milestone**
- **Internal Milestone**

those tasks, we use the Scripture Engagement Survey to locate an individual on the Scripture Engagement Scale (SES).

The SES is designed to plot an individual's current location on the Pathway and—with repeated measurement—their progress (growth) toward spiritual health. Using a brief survey, individuals and groups can be located on the Pathway[1] and matched to transformative, Bible-based ministry interventions that catalyze movement toward spiritual health.

By translating the Pathway's basic map into an accurate GPS, the Scripture Engagement Scale can guide individuals to the next step in their spiritual journey. It can also help ministry leaders design and deploy discipleship tools that are appropriate to people at every stage of the spiritual formation journey. ■

1 Based on our research, a score of 100 on the Scripture Engagement Scale corresponds approximately to step 6 on the Pathway of Scripture Engagement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Since 2011, American Bible Society has sponsored the annual *State of the Bible* research study in an effort to listen carefully to America's voice regarding the Bible, faith, and the church. Today, the science of listening is a main focus of the Insights & Innovation team at American Bible Society.

This book is the effort of a small army of gifted individuals who combine their skills and perspectives to produce what you hold in your hand or view on your screen. In this fifteenth consecutive year of the *State of the Bible*, we pause to express our gratitude to those who have contributed most to this work.

The *State of the Bible* research team is led by American Bible Society's Chief Innovation Officer, Dr. John Plake, who joined the team for the 2018 study. Since that time, Dr. Plake has helped to expand American Bible Society's research capabilities, making it possible for us to lead the *State of the Bible* research and produce this report. Dr. Plake serves as the editor-in-chief of this report and oversees the ongoing *State of the Bible* series.

Dr. Jeff Fulks serves as Senior Research Fellow, where he brings deep insight from the world of behavioral science research and serves as the lead analyst for the *State of the Bible* research. He skillfully incorporates research-proven measures into our work, and leverages years of research experience to uncover the story behind the numbers.

Sandra Siggins serves as Research and Evaluation Manager, performing countless statistical tests and preparing reams of data for our writing and data visualization specialists. She coordinates interviews with our subject matter experts and helps keep the reporting organized and on schedule.

Randy Petersen of Petersen Creative Enterprises serves as *State of the Bible's* managing editor and lead writer. Randy served for nearly four years as American Bible Society's Director of Scripture Engagement Content. During his tenure at ABS, Randy helped the team write about research and data. He has a gift for parsimony: bringing clarity to complexity without sacrificing truth.

Josh Thomassen of Thomassen Collective handles data visualizations, graphic design, and typesetting. He joined the *State of the Bible* team in 2023 and is bringing a fresh look to our data visualizations and graphics.

Peter Edman is our editorial and quality assurance lead, helping all of us produce a more consistent, high-quality report. We also have regular input from Elisabeth Trefsgar and Bran Van Deinse in assuring sensitivity to the many SOTB audiences.

STATE OF THE BIBLE: USA 2025

In 2011, American Bible Society launched a landmark annual study of the State of the Bible in America. This is our fifteenth consecutive year of listening and learning how *consistent interaction with the Bible shapes people's choices and transforms their relationships.*

In 2025 we've found reasons for hope! More people opened the Bible last year than in any of the previous three years, with 110 million Americans now qualifying as Bible users and new interest from unexpected audiences.

We measure Bible use and Scripture engagement along with other topics related to the Bible, several of them new to this year's report:

- Digital Bible Use
- The Bible Around the World
- Bible Engagement and Human Flourishing
- Trust, Faith, and the Bible
- Identity Formation and Emerging Adulthood
- Church Engagement
- Bible Engagement and Self-Care
- Loving God and Loving our Neighbor
- Purpose, Calling, and Giving

People are reconsidering the Bible and their faith. How can your church or ministry prepare to invite, welcome, and walk alongside them? New chapters released each month from April through December dig deeper with actionable insights for your ministry.

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