



# Correct Me if I'm Wrong

The quarterly bulletin of the Global  
Community of Mission Information Workers

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## Research and Scripture Engagement

From time to time, our Editorial Team enjoys highlighting themes that deepen our understanding of how God's Word is encountered and lived out across diverse contexts. In this edition, we explore the dynamic relationship between research and Scripture engagement — from global studies like the Patmos Initiative, which examines how people interact with the Bible, to data-driven efforts such as the Bible Access List, and reflections on the role of Scripture in the age of artificial intelligence. Each contribution reveals that while access to the Bible has grown significantly, meaningful engagement requires thoughtful research, contextual awareness, and a commitment to making Scripture resonate in people's daily lives.

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### Seven Soils for One Seed: How the Patmos Initiative Helps Us Rethink Global Bible Engagement

By Richard Powney

The Bible has a lot to say about Bible engagement. Jesus' parable of the sower (Luke 8:4–15) offers a powerful metaphor: The same seed is sown, but the soil determines how it grows.



#### Bible access does not equal Bible engagement

For centuries, many people were unable to engage with the Bible simply because it was not available or accessible in their own language. Today, in most parts of the world, that barrier has largely been overcome. With smartphones and widespread digital access, the Bible is now more available than ever. And yet the challenge of Bible engagement remains: Having access alone does not guarantee lives shaped by Scripture.

#### The Patmos Initiative

At the heart of the Patmos Initiative (<https://patmos.bfbs.org>) lies a bold vision: that everyone, regardless of their context, would encounter the Bible, explore its message and experience its power to transform lives and communities. To move towards this vision, we must pay close attention to the nature of the different contexts around the world. The better we understand these contexts, the better equipped we will be to present the Bible to people in ways that encourage meaningful engagement.

In 2022, in collaboration with global research leader Gallup, we started work on The Patmos World Bible Attitudes Survey – reaching over 91,000 people across 85 countries and territories. It is the largest research project ever conducted on global Bible engagement.

We have since released two reports:

- *The Patmos World Bible Attitudes Survey*, which identifies how people across different contexts share similar attitudes and behaviours towards the Bible.
- *The Patmos Typology Report*, which sets out seven distinct missiological contexts – Patmos clusters – and explores their defining characteristics, including a one-page summary for each of the 85 countries where data was collected.

The seven clusters span a wide range of missiological contexts: Muslim majority clusters with differing socio-economic conditions, Christian-majority clusters with varying levels of warmth and interaction with the Bible, a more secular cluster with higher levels of indifference towards the Bible and a religiously diverse cluster where awareness of the Bible is low.

Our hope is that the Patmos research will help us reimagine how we help people discover, encounter and engage with the Bible. Access to the Bible is essential, but it is only the beginning. Enabling people to encounter and meaningfully engage with the Bible requires approaches that are contextually aware, theologically grounded and relationally driven.

From secular societies to majority-Muslim contexts, each Patmos cluster presents its own opportunities and challenges for Bible engagement. Yet across every context, we find a shared need: for Scripture to be made known in ways that speak to people's hearts, minds and lives.

You can find out more about our research and download both reports for free by going to our website ([patmos.bfbs.org](http://patmos.bfbs.org)) and registering to join the community on the Patmos Forum.

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## The Bible Access List:

### A tool to assess access restrictions and shortages of Bibles

*By Ken Bitgood, Digital Bible Society CEO and  
Martín González, Digital Bible Society Missions Director.*

The *Digital Bible Society* believes everyone should have access to the Bible in their heart language. Co-founded by Ken Bitgood, CEO of DBS, and Wybo Nicolai, the founder of



**BIBLE ACCESS INITIATIVE**

the World Watch List, the Bible Access Initiative utilizes collaborative research to supply trustworthy data that guides those working to bring God's Word to people who lack it most.

The [Bible Access List \(BAL\)](#) is a comprehensive framework designed to evaluate global Bible access and identify areas of shortage. Its mission is to present a research-based global view of Bible availability and Scripture need, enabling the Church to respond with wisdom, urgency, and meaningful impact.

Through extensive research, the Initiative pinpoints and ranks countries according to the level of Bible access limitations and shortage severity. This data-driven methodology equips partners to see where needs are greatest and how to direct resources effectively and unites Bible societies, mission agencies, and funding partners to align efforts, pool

resources, and achieve greater impact through coordinated action rather than isolated projects.

Millions around the world still struggle to obtain God's Word because of legal restrictions, persecution, infrastructure challenges, economic barriers, and language gaps. The Bible Access Initiative presents different countries of the world in two lists with rankings:

First, countries are ranked by the intensity of Bible access limitations, looking at factors such as legal obstacles and societal hostility toward Christianity.

Second, countries are ranked by Bible shortage levels by combining expressed desire for Scripture, people who want a Bible but do not have one, with ownership statistics, translation status, distribution capacity, and economic accessibility.

Based on the 2025 rankings of the Bible Access List (BAL), launched in September, the countries where it is the hardest for a believer to obtain a Bible are Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen, North Korea and Mauritania. On the other hand, the countries where the highest numbers of existing Christians wanting a Bible but not being able to obtain one are Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and India.

During the 2025 BAL launch four misconceptions were challenged based on the results of the BAL research. Here we present them:

#### **Four Common Misconceptions about Bible Access Around the World**

##### *1) Bibles Are Available Everywhere*

Yes, but Bible import, printing, ownership and distribution is restricted in many countries. Also poverty, especially in rural areas, prohibits Bible access.

##### *2) Bibles Are Accessible to Anyone*

Not necessarily, there are severe penalties for Bible ownership for parts of the population in numerous countries. Furthermore, religious extremists prohibit safe Bible access in many countries.

##### *3) Digital Bibles Are the Global Solution*

We all praise God for the advantages of Internet and online Bibles. Nonetheless, Internet and smartphone access in rural and poor communities is limited. There are security and privacy concerns in numerous countries.

##### *4) A combination of Printed and Online Bibles Solve the Global Bible Shortage*

Both are part of the solution, but not sufficient. In many contexts, audio Bibles are also needed (oral communicators, blind, illiterate, etc.).

The **2026 Bible Access List** is set to be presented in the fall of 2026. For more information, please visit: [www.bibleaccesslist.org](http://www.bibleaccesslist.org).

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## **David and Goliath in the Era of Artificial Intelligence**

*By Stephen Jones, CEO of Ethnologue and Derivation.*

As the AI arms race gathers pace, the four largest hyperscalers alone (Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Meta) are expected to spend ~\$650 billion USD in 2026 on AI infrastructure. For context, \$650 billion USD is comparable to the entire yearly economic output of a country

like Argentina, Sweden or Austria. As the AI industry gears up to invest trillions in 2026, it is easy to assume future technology will be decided entirely by these new 'Goliaths'.

Yes, there's another side to the story because AI is dependent on good input data for training. Regardless of the scale of investment and the resulting compute power, the 'Garbage In, Garbage Out' principle still applies, meaning flawed, inaccurate, or poor-quality input data will inevitably produce faulty, useless, or garbage output, regardless of the system's, algorithm's, or model's sophistication.



But, many Bible translation organisations have been around for more than half a century, long before AI, smart phones, the Internet and even predating personal computing. So, where is the engagement point between cutting edge AI companies and 80 year old Bible translation organisations? The long-term mission of localising Scripture to reach different people groups in different languages is a massive undertaking where a single translation can take years of dedicated and detailed human effort. Accordingly, the Bible is the most translated book in existence and the combined corpus of translated audio and text is extremely 'good data'.

In simple terms, multilingual Bible translations act as a digital Rosetta stone, where Bible translations are often one of the very few resources available across large numbers of low-resource languages. So, the connection point between AI and the Bible is 'good data'. But, if Bible translation organizations can supply good data and AI companies demand good data, and there is engagement, why present this article as Bible translation organisations being '**digital Davids**' doing battle with powerful '**AI Goliaths**'? It all boils down to the rules of engagement of data usage, in terms of who defines them, who controls them and, most importantly, who obeys them.

To increase reach and impact, most Bible translation organisations freely publish their content for non-profit and mission purposes. But we live in an era where accessible digital content can be harvested at scale, using automated 'bots'. Suitable licenses are sometimes secured but, unfortunately, Bible content is sometimes harvested without permission from the original copyright owner. This creates some very complex legal, ethical and moral questions.

On one hand, the Bible is helping to advance AI technologies, which is not undesirable, but large corporations and elite universities are creating value for themselves, without value flowing to small donor-funded Bible organisations that created the content. This mismatch feels like a modern example of David (small Bible translation organisations with Bible content) facing Goliath (large AI organisations with financial power) on a digital battlefield (content licensing). But, in the Bible, David didn't defeat Goliath with traditional tactics (sword and shield); instead, he used a mix of faith, skill and a slingshot.

In simplistic terms, this is where [Derivation](#) fits into the equation, working alongside Bible organisations to navigate the complexities of data usage in the era of AI Goliaths. In other words, our role is to be 'the slingshot' that levels the odds, ensuring ethical licensing, responsible usage, and fair value exchanges on behalf of Bible organisations.

# Moving Towards the Great Completion

By Rev. Dr. John A. Mayer

Moving  
Towards  
the Great  
Completion

New Insights for the  
Strategic Fulfillment of  
the Great Commission  
Here, Near, and Far



Forewords by Master Mathaope and Ray Kintz

JOHN A. MAYER

After ten years of research and writing, *Moving Towards the Great Completion* provides one of the most comprehensive collections of up-to-date global Christian data available today. Drawing from churches, church planting movements, and mission efforts across the United States and around the world, the book helps readers see the emerging “*new mission field*” in their own cities and nations.

More than 260 pages of original maps, charts, and graphics equip pastors, mission leaders, and researchers with tools they can use in sermons, strategy sessions, and training environments. A PowerPoint slide version of the graphics is also available.

Rev. Dr. Mayer wrote this book to help the Church think more strategically about fulfilling the Great Commission here, near, and far.



Available in print and eBook at:  
<https://cityvisiontc.org/new-book>

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## Mission Information Workers' Virtual Conference 2026

The Mission Information Workers' Virtual Conference 2026 aims to accelerate the development of the mission information community and mission information resources for the global church. The conference is an initiative of the Community of Mission Information Workers (CMIW), Lausanne Research & Strategic Information Network, and Harvest Information Standards (HIS).

We encourage you to attend if you would like to

- deepen your understanding of the Biblical basis for research,
- learn practical research skills,
- hear about recent significant research projects, and
- meet others from around the world with a passion for using information to further Christ's Kingdom.

The **2026 MIW Virtual Conference** is scheduled for **June 8 to 10** from 1300-1500 each day Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)! **The registration form may be found [HERE](https://lausanne.zoom.us/meeting/register/1AOSCeAcSUW04O0kcN3Qow).** (<https://lausanne.zoom.us/meeting/register/1AOSCeAcSUW04O0kcN3Qow>)

**We are accepting proposals for presentations** on the topics listed above. If interested in presenting, please see additional information [HERE](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oncFx1PYdnC7k5CvdSctIcteBzPzMAH1/edit?usp=sharing&oid=116539166371082918616&rtpof=true&sd=true).

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oncFx1PYdnC7k5CvdSctIcteBzPzMAH1/edit?usp=sharing&oid=116539166371082918616&rtpof=true&sd=true>).

If you have any questions, please email [miwvcon@gmail.com](mailto:miwvcon@gmail.com).

Blessings! The CMIW Conference Planning Team

## ***Special Profile: REV. DR. JOHN A. MAYER***

### **1) [CMIW] Please tell us about yourself and your family.**

I grew up in Richfield, MN, a suburb of Minneapolis/St. Paul (Twin Cities), MN. My next-door neighbor was my best friend, Alex Garcia from Cuba, and my other best friend growing up was Hisanao Kasahara from Japan. So, from age five until college I was living cross-culturally and didn't know it. I thought everyone had these experiences growing up. My parents neglected me, and so my two honor/shame friends honored me every day and brought me their leftover food each night after supper to feed me. God used them to teach me their values, and so I tell people that Elijah got fed by the ravens God provided and I got fed by the Japanese and Cubans God provided. So, God took care of me even when my parents neglected me.



Once I graduated from high school, I worked for 15.5 years at a bank in the most diverse neighborhood in America in Minneapolis with over 100 languages spoken there. Again, living and working in the most diverse neighborhood for 15 years shaped my worldview and hunger for missions work with the many cross-cultural conversations I had on a daily basis. I was very poor going to college, and so I lived in a condemned apartment building and slept in my car when I was homeless at times. The neighborhood was also very poor and a high crime area, and so at the bank I was robbed six times.

Then in seminary, I took the Perspectives class (*Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*) and felt called to missions, but I was very poor at languages. I got three Cs in college, all in Spanish. So, in the Perspectives Class I wrote my Unreached People Group Paper on International Students in the U.S. For the paper, I interviewed my friend at my church who was an international student from Indonesia. He invited me to come to his Bible study they had recently started with four other Indonesians. I interviewed them for my paper, and I ended up staying in that Bible study for another 10 years with my new Indonesian best friends Rinto Dasuki and Ongky Tejaidi. We grew our Bible study for Indonesians into a movement called ICF (Indonesian Christian Fellowship), and we started them on about a dozen campuses around the U.S. Our own ICF MN grew to about 50 people weekly with many becoming Christian from Muslim, Buddhist, and other backgrounds.

Also, during seminary, I began interning with my home church, Wooddale Church, (since 1986) and helped them do research and strategy work for where to plant new churches. They planted over 10 new churches in 10 years with two even for other denominations, and so I learned about Kingdom values. My pastor, Leith Anderson, was also the leader of the NAE (National Association of Evangelicals). So, my pastor would hire me to do church planting and strategy work for other groups and cities around the U.S. I learned to exegete cities around the U.S. Over time, this became my informal part-time ministry work starting in 1988.

Then in 1995, I formally founded a non-profit Christian ministry organization, called [City Vision](#), to exegete and research cities strategically for outreach, church planting and City Reaching. Since that time, we've worked with over 1,900 churches/ministries worldwide from 82 denominations.

## 2) [CMIW] What is your current ministry?

City Vision, headquartered in the Twin Cities, MN, is where I've currently worked full-time in ministry as the Executive Director since 1995. We try to maintain a balanced intentional focus in our ministry work geographically, working about 34% locally in our Twin Cities Metro Area, 33% across the U.S., and 33% across the world (Here, Near, and Far). We've felt it important to connect our outreach and church planting work with the diaspora immigrants also back to their home nations. Since 2019, I've split my time working about 35 hours per week with City Vision and also about 35 hours per week working with Deo Volente, also working on research and strategy work for evangelism and church planting on a team with Dr. Lee Holcombe and Phil Hannam.

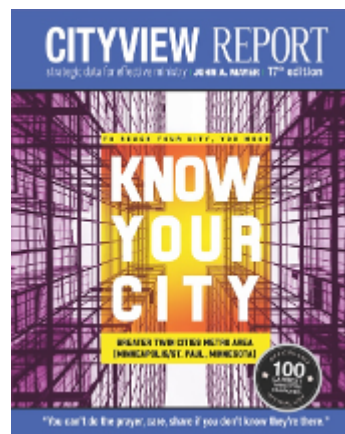
## 3) [CMIW] What are the contributions you have made to world missions that have brought you the greatest satisfaction?

My greatest overall satisfaction in contributing to world missions comes from opening up people's eyes to see the mission fields of the world (Here, Near, and Far), giving them eyes to see and ears to hear. This is done in a variety of research and strategy methods we've done over the years. I developed a saying at City Vision, "You can't do the prayer, care, share, unless you know they are there." (You can rap to it too if you want). But how do you pray for, care for, and share the gospel with people unless you see them where they are, as many are hidden in plain sight?

We've taken over 29,000 people on a Discover Your City Tour in several cities around the U.S., and we learn about the unreached people and others in diaspora. We talk to them and learn how to have a conversation with them and pray for them. Many churches have been planted from these tours.

We've participated personally in hundreds of new church plants, including the first Somali church plant in the U.S. in Minneapolis from 1999-2008. All this came about from our research, networks, hosting two consultations and prayer groups weekly, and then bringing it all together into a church plant. Mohamed Mohamed, our first Somali believer, is still on my board to this day.

After 9/11, I organized the largest prayer meeting in the U.S. just five days after 9/11 happened, and we had 35,000 people praying at the Metrodome where the Minnesota Vikings National Football League (NFL) team plays in Downtown Minneapolis. No pre-planning, no budget and five days of hard work and networking. The first day I worked 24 hours straight on it. The second day I worked 20 hours straight. No one paid me to do it. God told me to do it, and I ignored it at first. But I told some others. and they said, "Let's do it." Everyone told me, "You have to speak at the event." I said, "No, God just told me to organize it, not to speak at it." It was really great to pray for our city and nation five days after 9/11 and feel the presence of God and have God get all the glory for organizing this sacred assembly.



I also taught 32 different college and graduate courses for several colleges and universities over a 24-year period, and I always had students coming to know and accept Jesus, even

at Christian schools. I trained many YWAM students on evangelism and outreach as well, and in 2012 I taught in 13 different Perspectives classes in one month in three states. That was really fun.

I created 17 editions of the CityView Report book. This is a 212-page book on the Harvest Field and the Harvest Force (all 3,700+ churches) of the Twin Cities. It lists over 1 million immigrants from over 100 nations with only 11% going to church. Many pastors and ministries buy and use this book on a regular basis for prayer, outreach, evangelism, and church planting. We've also exegeted a couple dozen metro areas around the U.S., helping them create their own version of the CityView Report for their own metro area.

Finally, I have just spent the last 10.5 years researching and writing the book, *Moving Towards the Great Completion: New Insights for the Strategic Fulfillment of the Great Commission Here, Near, and Far*. The book is over 90,000 words and contains over 260 full-color maps, charts, and graphs with most of the data never seen in any other source. The book was printed in November 2025. To date we have readers in 13 countries and 24 U.S. states, and so it's beginning to gain traction. The book looks at the last fifty years of missions progress for every country and region of the world, the current state of the mission field, and the next 30 years into the future. We also put all 260 of the maps, charts, and graphs into PowerPoint slides so others can use them in their own presentations at their church and organization. See the ad above on how to order your own copy for you and your church or organization.

#### **4) [CMIW] What dreams do you have for your next ten years of ministry?**

I would like to help start another Somali church plant in our Twin Cities Metro Area since we have the most Somalis of any city in America. About 25% of all Somalis in the U.S. live in the Twin Cities. Also, I want this Somali church plant to be part of a Somali church planting movement reaching Somalis in America, Canada, Europe, and Africa.

Second, I'd like to help create a series of Christian Research and Strategy Centers for the seven major regions of the world and then also have each country have their own permanent Christian Research and Strategy Center functions. Also, I would like some of the major metro areas of the world, especially the current 46 megacities of 10 million+, to create a Christian Research and Strategy Center and then tie them all together working together with each other for the Kingdom. I've dreamed and thought of this since 1988 and really want to make this a reality.

Third, I want to train more Christian researchers how to exegete and research their cities and countries. This would tie in with the Christian Research and Strategy Centers creation I discussed above. Through this process I could also transfer all that I've learned over my life and ministry work so others don't have to reinvent the wheel, and it can be passed on to future generations and help speed up the Great Completion Here, Near, and Far.

#### **5) [CMIW] Is there some way you'd be willing to help the CMIW community?**

I think I could help the CMIW community by connecting those who are currently working around the world in their country, region, or city into this vision of permanent Christian Research and Strategy Centers all working together. If they want to do so, please have them contact me. This would greatly advance all the work of the CMIW over time and really move it up to the next level. Contact (<https://cityvisiontc.org/contact-us>)

# Information From the Word

*By Stephanie Kraft*

None of us would ever wish to destroy our friends. We all desire salvation, for ourselves and others. What is an agent of deliverance? Proverbs 11:9, ostensibly a proverb of Solomon, identifies "knowledge" as a rescuer for the righteous:

*"With their words, the godless destroy their friends,  
but knowledge will rescue the righteous." (NLT)*

What kind of knowledge?

Missiological researchers point to biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, contextual theology, and other theological approaches as useful sources of understanding. We remember that the Bible is foundational to the whole missiological enterprise. We can praise God for initiatives like Patmos, Derivation, Bible Access, and others that continually draw us back to the centrality of the Scriptures for righteous living and ministry.

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## Note

CMIW bulletins include links to important websites related to the bulletin content. The CMIW Editorial Team is vigilant about security concerns. While most hyperlinks are spelled out, extremely long links are embedded in the text. We encourage readers to always examine embedded links before clicking as a habit of secure electronic reading.

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## Final Details:

- With the help of God, this bulletin is now produced quarterly in English, Portuguese and Spanish.
- The editorial team comprises Bert Hickman, Jennifer Poling, Larry Kraft, Rodrigo Tinoco and Stephanie Kraft.
- Please send any comments, suggestions or ideas to us at [info@globalcmiw.org](mailto:info@globalcmiw.org).
- Back issues can be found at [www.globalcmiw.org/cmiwbulletin](http://www.globalcmiw.org/cmiwbulletin).