



Jesus without Borders: What Planes, Trains, and Rickshaws Taught Me about Jesus

Chad Gibbs

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Chad Gibbs has lived his entire life in Alabama, the buckle of America's Bible Belt, where Christianity is a person's default setting. In Jesus Without Borders, Gibbs steps outside of his very comfortable existence, to learn what it is like to be a Christian anywhere else in the world.

Over the course of many months, Chad and his Alabama worldview spent time with believers from Beijing to Rio de Janeiro, worshiping with them and observing not only how their faith influences their daily lives but also how their daily lives influence their faith, in hopes of learning which parts of his faith have been compromised by the American Dream.

Reflecting on conversations and experiences, Gibbs wrestles with a wide range of questions from his conservative Christian background, including politics and patriotism in the church and how living in Alabama has shaped his views on pacifism, alcohol, and Christ himself. An attempt to extract and examine the biases in the author's own faith, Jesus Without Borders will have readers questioning if they believe certain things because they are a Christian, or because they are an American, as they meet believers from around the world with differing views on a variety of subjects.

Told with Gibbs trademark humor, Jesus Without Borders enlightens and entertains, introducing readers to believers around the world in hopes of eliminating prejudices and misconceptions, clearing away the parts of our culture that keep us from seeing a clearer picture of Christ, and living connected to the family of faith around the globe."

Jesus without Borders: What Planes, Trains, and Rickshaws Taught Me about Jesus **Details**

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From Reader Review Jesus without Borders: What Planes, Trains, and Rickshaws Taught Me about Jesus for online ebook

Georgia Herod says

Chad Gibbs had lived his entire life in Alabama, attending Friday night football (He is author of *God and Football: Faith and Fanaticism in the SEC.*) and Sunday morning church—both religiously. At some point he began to ask questions about what Christians and their lives were like in other countries. So he decides to board planes, catch trains, and ride in rickshaws, among other modes of travel to twelve countries. What he provides is hilarious “spiritual globetrotting”—as he encounters Christians in their native lands, their worship, music, challenges to his practices and views. In the process, he gains a clearer portrait of Christ and begins to see himself as part of the greater body of Christ.

In each of the twelve chapters, Gibbs introduces his readers into other cultures and the life of Christians in each. Lively writing; easy reading.

Sarah Theborge, author of *The Invisible Girls*, wrote, “Using humor, insight, and a well-stamped passport, Gibbs explores the lenses through which we look at our faith, and sparks our imagination to wonder what we might discover if we had the courage to look beyond our cultural biases and see Jesus with new eyes.”

Mallori Norris says

A thoughtful and fun book about one man's journey around the world encountering Christians that do not conform to the the Alabaman Bible Belt mold of Christianity he grew up with. Author Chad Gibbs briefly and humorously looks at how Christians in thirteen different countries are similar and different from American Christians and sometimes how American Christians are perceived by other countries, causing one to examine one's own faith and beliefs more closely. For anyone who has traveled to another country, and for those who have not, this book is definitely worth taking the time to read.

Shan says

Jesus Without Borders: What Planes, Trains, and Rickshaws Taught Me about Jesus is a chronicling of Chad Gibbs' travels to find out what life is like for believers around the world.

Gibbs writes with great honesty and humour and that makes this an enjoyable book. I was very impressed at the way he talked about his preconceptions, even if they were very silly and sometimes bordering on a bit offensive. He's very open about misconceptions that Americans can have and the way some view themselves compared to the rest of the world. And he's very real about how these ideas were challenged while on his trip and how he began to look at American Christianity in a different light.

For people who are interested in Christianity around the world and the different ways in which it is practiced, this is a good place to start, but by no means the only read (though Gibbs is very open about the book being that way.) Many of Gibbs' insights and observations made me laugh, and this was an enjoyable and easy

book to get through. It will definitely make people think about how different our faith is practiced around the world and the ways that God is working in the midst of Christians everywhere.

You can read my full review [here](#)

Heather Truett says

This title caught my eye on the library website and I borrowed it for Kindle. I spent Christmas reading it straight through, which is something I rarely do with nonfiction. The author is from Alabama and decided to explore Christianity in other modern cultures. What is it like to be a Christian growing up and living in China? Spain? Uganda? Australia? The result is a book that combines a few of my favorite things: interesting facts, travel stories, and broadening spiritual horizons. Travel always gives me new meat to chew when it comes to my faith. I cannot tell you how our Holy Land trip opened my eyes to realities about Israel and Palestine and made me dig deep into my opinions on the whole situation. I wish everyone could travel there and to other places around the world. I wish everyone had the chance to step outside of their own life and experience someone else's. Empathy. Empathy is what keeps us from being selfish and unloving. We need more of it.

Grace P. says

Mostly a travel memoir about how other cultures practice Christianity, this book was told with humor and historical facts and I enjoyed it.

Brenda says

It was a very interesting and witty book. It was good to see the different ways people worship and have church in different countries. Very informative. Good book.

Megan Franks says

LOVED this book! Consisting of part humorous travel writing (food, lodging, sites, soccer!) and part observation of Christian culture around the world, the author shares his experiences of visiting 13 international locations. This book resonated with me because I, like Gibbs, have grown up in the southern U.S. in the same Christian denomination, and it wasn't until I began to travel did I begin to understand how varied (and beautiful) the body of Christ is around the world.

I recommend this book for people, like myself, who have been bitten by the travel bug. Reading it will either satisfy those desires for a time or cause you to break open a piggy bank and book a flight.

I also recommend it to American Christians who have the "God-blessed-the-USA-so-why-would-I-want-to-go-anywhere-else" syndrome. I find that way too many Christians have a narrow or misunderstood view of the world outside our borders.

Additionally, I recommend it for wannabe travelers who struggle with fear, especially in these uncertain times. Gibbs has some great quotes on this. "In all seriousness, Christ didn't call us to live a life of fear, and fear shouldn't keep you from traveling. Yes, it's easy to sit at home because you've been told there are people out there that hate you, but it's far more rewarding to go meet those people and realize they don't." (I realize that's a broad overstatement. Clearly, there are some who hate Americans, but I think his point still stands with the majority of the world's population.)

Karen Roettger says

I was pleasantly surprised that I really enjoyed this book. I liked Chad's sense of humor about various situations and the in depth descriptions of the many places he visited. I learned a lot about Christianity around the world & how others view Christians in America. There seem to many misconceptions about religions & people because we refuse to be open minded & willing to accept the fact that Christians in other countries may not be like we are. I enjoyed the comment from the little woman in Japan who said that if America was not a dangerous place why did Chad's friend need three guns for protection. I liked his statement that there are things other denominations can learn from us but there are things we can learn from them too. I would recommend reading this book to everyone!

Theodene says

For those of us who rarely travel abroad or have the desire to visit the far corners of the earth, Jesus without Borders is a fantastically written story summarizing various trips the author took on his quest to learn more about Christianity, Christian lifestyles, and how Christians are treated in their country. It is beneficial to know people who live in these other countries or to travel with a dear friend. Overall, I enjoyed this book as it took me to places I don't foresee myself ever visiting. Visit my review: [Becoming a Bookworm | Freebies and book reviews](https://becomingabookworm.wordpress.com/)
<https://becomingabookworm.wordpress.com/>

Sandi says

A book about how Christianity is practiced in different countries or how it's not practiced at all

Michelle Kidwell says

Jesus Without Borders
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In 2011 Chad and his wife Tricia travel to Brazil where they attend a newly formed Protestant church called The River Church and

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they learn that in Brazil Protestants are the minority. They also learn that a high number of Protestants in Brazil classify themselves as unchurched.

In 2012 they go to Spain where though a large number of the population is Catholic many do not believe in God at all. Catholicism is more of a family heritage than a religion they practice for many in Spain.

After Visiting Spain Chad and his wife Tricia travel to England. The Church in England during the past century has become less popular because many there believe that Christians are hypocrites. Those who do attend church in England often attend not out of duty but out of desire. There is no benefit to just going with the motions according to one woman. Though Christianity isn't booming in England there are pockets of genuine and thriving Christian communities.

In June 2012 Chad goes to Russia where a belief in God seems to be growing. He learns that Russians though not as open as those from Alabama like himself may not seem as friendly in fact they might seem distant.

After leaving Russia Chad and his wife head over to Uganda in July of 2012 where they discover that around 85 percent of Ugandans identify themselves as Christians. But since gaining its Independence in 1961 Uganda is also one of the World's Most War Torn Countries. We also learn that Muslims make up 12 percent of Uganda's population. While in Uganda Chad and Tricia visit different Christian churches.

In October of 2012 Chad visits Italy this time bringing his parents with him because his wife is pregnant. In Italy only 1.3 percent of the population are protestant and half of them are Assemblies of God. He also learns from a friend that it is impossible to be a practicing Protestant in Italy unless you live in a major city.

In January of 2013 Chad travels to Japan where 70 to 80 percent of the population consider themselves Buddhist and many Japanese view Christianity as fragmented. Christians in Japan make up only 1 to 2 percent of the population.

Chad made another trip this time to the Netherlands in February of 2013. Amsterdam is one of Europe's major air hubs. In the Netherlands Chad learns you cannot confront the Dutch with their sins because the Dutch are proud of their opinions. In one area called Maastricht only three percent of the population attend church.

October of 2013 Chad goes to Australia where though many classify themselves as Atheist Christianity is socially acceptable. Chad points out that it would be easy for us to be thinking of Christianity in Australia beginning and ending with Hillsong but that would be a mistake Hillsong is associated with the Assemblies of God in Australia which makes up only 1.7 percent of the Christian population in Australia.

After visiting Australia Chad heads over to China where he learns of both the churches and the illegal house churches. He also sees that God is at work in China.

In November of 2013 Chad travels to Israel. In Israel 75 percent of the population is Jewish but there are also a large number of Arabs living in Israel about 1.4 million. Christians only make up about 2 percent of

the population and a large number of those Christians are Arabs.

After visiting Israel for a few days Chad heads over to India. In India the majority of the population practices Hinduism with a large Muslim minority. Christians make up 2.3 percent of India's population but two small states in the Northeast Mizoram and Nagaland have a Christian population of 90 percent. Christian missionaries have been visiting India since the time of Thomas.

In January of 2014 Chad visits Turkey. In Turkey about 99 percent of the population is registered as Muslim. While visiting Turkey Chad attends Nations church an interdenominational church in Northern Istanbul. Chad points out how Christianity feels different when you're in the minority.

In Jesus Without Borders you will have a vivid picture of Christianity in several different countries making you feel as if you are journeying with Chad.

I would definitely recommend this book.

Five out of five Stars.

Happy Reading

Becky says

Jesus Without Borders is a travel narrative written from the perspective of a football-and-soccer loving Southerner (Alabaman) who grew up as an evangelical in the Bible Belt. It is light on the theology, heavy on superficial jesting. A lot of the humor, unfortunately for me, didn't work. I wouldn't say that I always rolled my eyes every time he tried to be funny or witty. But I never laughed either.

It was also very predictable. After the first chapter or two, readers know exactly what to expect: complaining about the plane ride there, complaining about transportation while there, complaining about traffic and road conditions, complaining about bad driving, mentioning the stereotypes he has grown up with about the country he's in, going to a church or bible study that he "discovered" online in his research, complaining about food, mentioning his lack of note-taking, mentioning sports, reporting his conversations with two to three people he met while there, drawing conclusions about a whole country based on the conversations he had with two to three people. Each chapter was supposed to include his insights about faith and God and what he learned--how he expanded his mind and his heart--by traveling. I would say these are light and it's not that they're completely absent from the text it's just that they're not very substantive and memorable.

The premise of the book was great. He is a writer who has had Christian books published. He loves to travel. He decides that it would be great fun to combine the two. To go on twelve to thirteen working vacations. His work would have him going to church in thirteen countries and talking to at least thirteen people about their faith and what it means to "be a Christian" in their various countries. The narrative style is casual, bordering on embarrassingly full of jokes that don't quite work. (I guess readers would have had to been there to 'get' the joke.) At least for me. His half-jesting style may prove quite delightful for other readers. (For example, Lenin's statue is reading The Hunger Games.)

With travel books, sometimes it's more who's doing the narrating...unless the travel writing is really good, really focused, really descriptive. Which his travel writing isn't.

Allison says

This is travel writing... with bonus Christianity. Chad Gibbs examines Christian culture in 13 different countries, comparing them to his base experience of protestant/evangelical Christianity in the "bible belt" southern US. I had expected this to be a book chronicling his own struggle to incorporate new information into his own belief system, and of his own growth as a Christian. It was not that. However, it is an excellent introduction to the nuances of worldwide Christianity for readers who haven't yet had a chance to travel to these countries and see for themselves.

Gibbs writes honestly and openly about his life and experiences, and becomes increasingly self-aware and more analytical as his travels progress. He is someone who never really traveled in his younger years, and then caught the travel bug, and started writing this book partially so that he could visit many different countries. He is a huge football fan, and not a foodie at all (he ate a LOT of fast food during his travels), but has some surprisingly insightful comments about Christianity worldwide, especially in the later chapters (and especially in the chapters about Africa).

Gibbs focuses a lot on the difference between his own experience where being protestant evangelical Christian was normal (and everything else is abnormal, even being Catholic) and the more prevalent experience of evangelical Christians worldwide as being a somewhat-misunderstood minority population. He does a good job describing the experience of minority Christians in other cultures, and as the book progresses, he becomes increasingly aware of how far his own life experience is from that of the early Christians in the Bible who were prosecuted for their beliefs. Personally, though, as someone from the northern US who went to school with more Hindus, Muslims, Jewish people, and agnostics than Christians, his descriptions of his own home experience seemed even more "foreign" to me than those of Christians abroad.

Initially, I found his writing style a bit difficult to deal with. Having visited 11 of the 13 countries he described, I found his descriptions somewhat superficial. Some of his jokes, and his folksy "I'm just a southerner abroad" passages also chafed. For example:

"...people of all races and nationalities were... conversing in various languages and accents, some of which I'm pretty sure are illegal in Alabama."

"It's just that I wasn't really expecting to meet a girl who looks very Korean, yet talks very much like Nicole Kidman."

"statue of Vladimir Lenin sitting in a chair,... holding a book (probably The Hunger Games)."

Granted, after the third quote, he comments that it was odd sitting between a statue of Lenin and a church, being that Lenin believed that religion was used for the "exploitation and stupefaction of the working class." The history lesson and reflection about the contradictions present in modern-day Russia? Interesting. Jokes about Lenin holding the Hunger Games? Not for me. Us vs. them, otherizing comments about accents and languages, and wondering if the primary function of Japanese TV is "to bewilder foreigners"? Definitely not for me.

That said, in the later chapters, (I imagine, after he has done quite a bit of traveling and has greater

perspective), I really enjoyed his insights. While in Uganda, he said some wonderful things about the role of missionaries, the inherent problem of missionary work in Africa and giving in Africa, and his own guilt-ridden impulses. These are things that everyone has felt while traveling, and he did a good job of putting them in a Christian context, while also acknowledging the limitations of his knowledge/expertise, and refusing to fall back on Christian platitudes. I loved that.

This was a solid 2.5 for me. For Christians (or those who are interested in comparative religious studies) who haven't yet had the chance to travel abroad a lot, I would say that this is a must read. For those who have travelled a lot, you might find, as I did, that you were looking for a greater depth of analysis than what Gibbs gives us.

Charity Andrews says

Traveling all over the world so you can “research how people worship” is very clever. Well played, Chad! Well played.

This book had me hooked from the beginning. It is always interesting to see how other cultures worship God and live their lives. In America, for some reason, we always think we are the professionals of everything. However, Christianity has been practiced for years in other countries long before the good ol’ U.S. of A. ever existed.

Chad’s witty humor (yes, actually laughing out loud while reading a book is not very cool...I know), honesty and writing style have you “whipping through” this book. You’ll enjoy flipping the pages as well as learning a lot of new things about the world around us** (**Yes, there is a world outside of the Bible Belt of America).

5 Solid Stars! Pick it up for that friend of yours that loves travel, culture and a good laugh here and there. (Link is in the pic above). Thanks, netgalley and Chad Gibbs, for a copy of this book! As always, this is my honest opinion. Here’s to many more!!

Cara says

Entertaining story of author's travels to different countries, but not a whole lot of 'meat'. Still, a fun, quick read.
