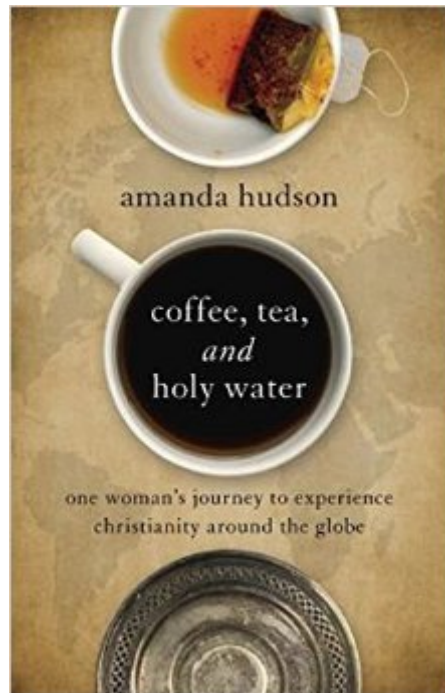


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Coffee, Tea, And Holy Water: One Woman's Journey To Experience Christianity Around The Globe



Synopsis

Coffee, Tea, and Holy Water takes the reader on an armchair tour of Christianity in our world, across borders and over continents. Author Amanda Hudson provides a personal touch with cultural curiosities, profound questions about the nature and practice of faith, as she travels to five countries: Brazil, Wales, Tanzania, China, and Honduras. Part reflection, part entertaining travelogue, Coffee Tea, and Holy Water explores everything from each culture's offer of hospitality to life in a Masai boma. "There are lessons to be learned from other countries that are not visible in our own culture," writes Hudson, "Questions that are not our questions. Struggles that are not our normal struggles. And yet, when we look around the throne one day at the nations assembled there, instead of marveling at the diversity, I think we will actually be fascinated by what we all had in common." This is a book about the places we meet, what we share, how we can learn to cross borders (geographical, cultural, personal), and learning that the steps to do so make all the difference. Honest, witty, and thought-provoking, these stories come from a young woman raised in the South, who found herself wondering what "normal" Christianity looked like in other countries.

Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Abingdon Press (March 3, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1426793138

ISBN-13: 978-1426793134

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (62 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #198,018 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in [Books > Travel > Specialty](#)

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Customer Reviews

This book reads like a personal "Field Notes" or travel journal of one woman's observations on Christianity around the globe. In reality, this is a breakdown of the interpretation of Christianity as we know it by various cultures. The parts about Christianity in China weren't so much shocking but a bit

surprising. Let's just say the many ways in which the gospel is interpreted and practiced in other cultures can vary from just slightly different to almost unrecognizable. As cultures differ, suffer more in some places than others, the meaning of Christianity seems to adapt to circumstances. The messages change as the locations change. In the end, however, beneath all of the various interpretations and practices is the core belief in Christ. For her research, the author traveled to five countries including the fascinating Christian culture in Brazil, which is not exactly as one might realize it to be considering the Brazil we know through media. She also traveled to the UK, Tanzania and Honduras, where Christian interpretations are aligned with the customs and challenges faced by the citizens of those countries. In America, we know Christianity as an organized, almost corporate-like institution. In other countries, where wealth and privileges are less available, Christianity plays a different role and manifests in various creative incarnations. Really fascinating and thought provoking for anyone looking to expand their knowledge on other cultures - not just for Christians or religious people but for anyone looking to understand something different than what things are in one place. I thoroughly enjoyed this and am sorry to say I wasn't expecting what I got out of this - a deeper understanding of humanity. Recommend.

I wasn't sure what to expect from this book. I guess I had anticipated more of a Theology-based discussion about Christianity around the world. I thought it would be deep, thought-provoking and maybe a bit controversial. It is not a deep Theological discussion, but it IS all of those other things. But most of all it's like a conversation with a close friend about faith and how we live it rubber to the road. It does read a bit like a travel journal. We follow Amanda and listen closely as she shares her excitement, concerns, questions, discomfort and a bit of culture shock. In many ways, you feel as though you are taking the journey with her. As she encounters Christ-followers on many continents, she learns that there are both striking similarities AND differences in the way we "live the Gospel" culturally. Yet, at the heart it seems to be very much the same gospel. We experience a taste of Christianity against the backdrop of "Spiritism" in Brasil. We share an intimate conversation in a small group in England about the decline of church attendance. We travel rough roads in Tanzania and weigh the pros and cons of American benevolence on African culture. Finally, we travel to China where Christianity is stripped of any "prosperity" pretense and the Gospel is a message of hope with the promise of imprisonment, torture, banishment or worse. Then there are conflicts within the "church" about whether registering with the Government is a compromise to the message of Christ. Fascinating. This is a book I will not soon forget. It has gently, subtly provoked a new line of thinking for this girl who spends a great deal of time having her perspective challenged. And as far as heavy

or light reading, it's somewhere in the middle. Asking some hard questions but not leaving you with the feeling of frustration or hopelessness. She doesn't attempt to answer the questions for us, but leaves us with the questions. And the tone of the stories moves fluidly from one chapter to the next. I read most of the book in one evening before going to bed for the night. If you want a bigger "world view" of Christianity, this is wonderful. If you want Theology, this is Theology light. Not necessarily a bad thing, though.

There are a lot of really great books out today from authors trying to call American Christians back from materialism, false idols and malaise - the American church - but this book takes us one step further by putting our version of Christianity in its place in the big picture. Not all Christianity is the same. Not all issues are the same. Not all methods are the same. But Christ is the same. Amanda Hudson decided to visit five different countries to find out what Christianity was like on the ground and in the homes of the believers in those countries. What she finds is eye opening. Brazil, for instance, is extremely superstitious and much less materialistic and the challenges of spreading the Gospel are specific to their culture. Wales suffers from apathy and a post-Christian mindset. Tanzania, China and Honduras all have their own customs, their own challenges, their own versions of worship. Every new place she visits works to shed light on what American Christianity struggles with and ideas for overcoming those struggles. This is part travelogue, part diary and part challenge to overcome American Christian issues, this book is a must read. As someone who has been on short term trips to other countries I can attest to the need for Americans to think outside the borders of our narrow, very rich lives, and see the world and Christianity in the big picture. When we see how others live in abject poverty but demonstrate limitless generosity we are humbled. When we see actual idols - small statues! - next to statues of Christ, the Bible takes on a very real, very timely message for those who barely crack it open because of its otherness. In my opinion, every Christian in America should visit Christians in other countries on short term trips, but if they can't then books like this one are a must read. Christ is there in every culture, and finding Christ in the midst of all the different cultures in this book help readers cut out all the excess and see the beauty of a refined and purified Gospel.

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