



## Does Jesus Really Love Me?: A Gay Christian's Pilgrimage in Search of God in America

By Jeff Chu



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In this timely work—part memoir, part investigative analysis—a prize-winning writer explores the explosive and confusing intersection of faith, politics, and sexuality in Christian America.

When Jeff Chu came out to his parents as a gay man, his devout Christian mother cried. And cried. Every time she looked at him. For months. As a journalist and a believer, Chu knew that he had to get to the heart of a question that had been haunting him for years: Does Jesus really love me?

The quest to find an answer propels Chu on a remarkable cross-country journey to discover the God “forbidden to him” because of his sexuality. Surveying the breadth of the political and theological spectrum, from the most conservative viewpoints to the most liberal, he tries to distill what the diverse followers of Christ believe about homosexuality and to understand how these people who purportedly follow the same God and the same Scriptures have come to hold such a wide range of opinions. Why does Pastor A believe that God hates me, especially because of my gayness? Why does Person B believe that God loves me, gayness and all?

From Brooklyn to Nashville to California, from Westboro Baptist Church and their god hates fags protest signs to the pioneering Episcopal bishop Mary Glasspool, who proclaims a message of liberation and divine love, Chu captures spiritual snapshots of Christian America at a remarkable moment, when tensions between both sides in the culture wars have rarely been higher. Both funny and heartbreaking, perplexing and wise, *Does Jesus Really Love Me?* is an intellectual, emotional, and spiritual pilgrimage that reveals a portrait of a faith and a nation at odds.

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**Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Lifelong Evangelical Christian Chu well knows the answer to the familiar song. It's, "Yes, Jesus loves me!" But as a gay man, he's wanted reassurance—really loves me? He took to the road to see how and why other Evangelicals answer the question, specifically when it comes to being gay. As his warmly plain-speaking report of his travels discloses, he found vast reluctance to say that Jesus doesn't love gays, assurance from many churchmen and gay believers that he does, and cordiality even among those who scream, "God hates fags!"—yes, he visited Topeka's infamous Westboro Baptist Church. He also encountered past and present members of ex-gay ministries, straight couples who support gay marriage, intentional gay celibates, the founder of the social medium gaychristian.net, leaders of gay-welcoming Evangelical churches and of Metropolitan Community Church (the so-called—by others—gay Evangelical denomination), parents and friends of gays, and faithful young gays who remind him of himself. Though sometimes skeptical of his informants, Chu presents every one of them positively, which makes his book outstandingly personable and appealing. --Ray Olson

### Review

"Chu has written a fascinating, thoughtful, and important book. He captures the fractures and conflict at a moment when the issue of what to do with L.G.B.T. people is tearing Christian denominations apart. *Does Jesus Really Love Me?* deserves to be widely read." (Dan Savage, *New York Times Book Review* (cover))

"Jeff's own story makes me hopeful. It's one of grace." (Frank Bruni, *New York Times*)

"An essential survey description of homosexuality in U.S. churches today that should be read by church members and leaders, and people who care about how U.S. Christians engage with sexual minorities and related issues." (*Christianity Today*)

"Poignant, at times painful, and spiced with wry humor, this is a must-read for LGBT people on their own spiritual journeys or anyone interested in reconciling religion with sexuality." (*Library Journal* (starred review))

"The stories [Chu] relates are intriguing. . . . Revealing." (*Kirkus Reviews*)

"Outstandingly personable and appealing." (*Booklist*)

"Compassionate, engaging. . . . Resisting easy answers, Chu deftly portrays the lived experiences of Christians—mostly gay, though not all. . . . Overall, the book brings complexity and humanity to a discourse often lacking in both." (*Publishers Weekly* (starred review))

"In telling these stories—chief among them his own—Jeff has done an extraordinary thing, showing us all to the God who is big enough and loving enough and true enough to meet all of us exactly where we're at. This book is moving, inspiring, and much needed." (Rob Bell, author of *What We Talk About When We Talk About God* and *Love Wins*)

"Finally an examination of Christianity and homosexuality that refuses to demonize either side. A smart and deeply personal exploration of one of the great public questions of our time." (Stephen Prothero, author of

*The American Bible*)

“Jeff Chu has written a masterpiece about sexuality and spirituality in America. In this unforgettable blend of reportage and memoir, he doesn’t demonize, ridicule, or pander to an ideology. Instead, he explores—and inspires. This is the smartest, and most humane, book about Christianity and homosexuality that I’ve ever read.” (Benoit Denizet-Lewis, author of *America Anonymous* and *American Voyager*)

“People struggling to reconcile homosexuality and Christianity will find much that validates their experiences in Chu’s thoughtful book. Those confused why anyone would attempt to reconcile conservative Christian and gay identities will better understand the dilemmas gay Christians face after reading *Does Jesus Really Love Me*. (Bernadette Barton, author of *Pray the Gay Away: The Extraordinary Lives of Bible Belt Gays*)

“A beautiful, courageous, heartbreaking exploration. . . . *Does Jesus Really Love Me?* is both a moving personal memoir and a pivotal piece of reporting on what the deadlocked Christian fight over homosexuality is costing human beings, the churches, and our culture.” (David P. Gushee, Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics, Mercer University)

“This is a book for anyone who believes the church is unbroken, who feels they have no place in a world that disdains them, or who is looking for fellowship amongst courageous travelers striking their own path.” (Lauren Sandler, author of *Righteous: Dispatches from the Evangelical Youth Movement* and *One and Only: Why Having an Only Child, and Being One, is Better than You Think*)

“Jeff Chu is a smart and experienced guide through evangelical battles over homosexuality. . . . [He] leads us beyond the battlefields to unexpected scenes of hope. This is a sobering book, but above all a book of compassionate consolation.” (Mark D. Jordan, author of *Recruiting Young Love*)

“Jeff Chu’s pilgrimage across America to discover his own place as a gay man in the Christian church as well as attitudes about being gay and Christian across denominations is at once timely, smart, poignant, disturbing, inspiring, and maddening. . . . Essential reading for *everybody*.” (Donna Freitas, author of *The End of Sex* and *Sex and the Soul*)

“A comprehensive, important, illuminating book for anyone exploring these issues.” (Bookriot.com)

From the Back Cover

When Jeff Chu came out to his parents as a gay man, his devout Christian mother cried for months. As a journalist and a believer, Chu knew that he had to get to the heart of a question that had been haunting him for years: Does Jesus really love me? The quest to find an answer propels Chu on a remarkable cross-country journey to discover the God "forbidden to him" because of his sexuality. From Brooklyn to Nashville to California, from Westboro Baptist Church and their god hates fags protest signs to the pioneering Episcopal bishop Mary Glasspool, who proclaims a message of liberation and divine love, Chu captures spiritual snapshots of Christian America at a remarkable moment, when tensions between both sides in the culture wars have rarely been higher. Funny and heartbreaking, perplexing and wise, *Does Jesus Really Love Me?* is an intellectual, emotional, and spiritual pilgrimage that reveals a portrait of a faith and a nation at odds.

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**From reader reviews:**

**Geraldine Noll:**

What do you about book? It is not important along? Or just adding material when you need something to explain what you problem? How about your spare time? Or are you busy man or woman? If you don't have spare time to try and do others business, it is give you a sense of feeling bored faster. And you have extra time? What did you do? All people has many questions above. They have to answer that question simply because just their can do that. It said that about book. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is suitable. Because start from on guardería until university need this kind of Does Jesus Really Love Me?: A Gay Christian's Pilgrimage in Search of God in America to read.

**Ronda Hagerty:**

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**Raquel Black:**

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**Randolph Urban:**

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