

The Shack Exposed

2 Timothy 2:15, 16 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness."

Ephesians 4:14 "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"

If ever there was truth, it is in the verses above. A book like *The Shack* by William P. Young will succeed only in increasing ungodliness because it has no truth in it concerning God the Father, the Trinity, or the Christian life and no where will you find a salvation message. What a missed opportunity if ever there was one. In my opinion it is a fiction that in key places, tugs at the heart strings and creates a web of emotion in which the reader is caught and drawn into a world of deception and lies. Those who know little or nothing about the true nature of God trying to decide what they believe and are at a fork in the road will undoubtedly follow the wrong road. A large crowd going in the same direction does not mean they are going the right way.

Matthew 7:13, 14 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

It speaks volumes to the apostasy we live in by the endorsements of this book and the reviews given at Christian Book Distributors website, that though it is labeled fiction, people are not seeing it as such and in fact accept it as teaching them about God. (*more material at the end of this review*) The author is being lauded as an authority on the person(s) of God as well as having the answers to the toughest questions concerning the spiritual realm venerating him and his Gnostic teachings. This book not only profanes God the Father and His deity but blasphemes with almost every word.

Aside from attempting political correctness by the mention of several ethnic descriptions of the trinity, the author is seemingly trying to appease everyone ecumenically as well. Being raised as a child of missionaries I would think the author would know the lines he crossed through blatant contradictions to God's word. One has to wonder if he was more influenced by the Eastern religions he was raised around in his youth and wrote this book out of bitterness, rebellion and lack of discernment as a result of his "great loss as a child and young adult" described on the back cover. I'm also curious to know what William Young means by "wastefulness of grace" that he enjoys with his family. If God sees fit to show grace toward us, wasteful would not be a word I would use.

Ephesians 4:7 "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

Young not only used his imagination writing this book but borrowed from other cultures and religions which is exactly why this book should not be taken seriously. Reading this book, I got the impression that Mr. Young, through the various uses of other religions and occult practices, doesn't know what he believes; maybe that explains why he pushes love and relationships so hard, not that there is anything wrong with either if in accordance to God's principals. Mr. Young's god is clearly from his own imagination and contrary to a quote you'll see later, our imagination does not "...make us so like them" (i.e. the trinity).

The Shack is a story centering on a man named Mack, who four years earlier, lost his youngest child Missy to murder. One day Mack checks the mail and pulls out a note written by God– signed Papa– telling him to come back to the shack where Missy's bloody dress was found. Once there, Mack eventually falls asleep, weary with grief and shivering from the winter cold. Next thing he knows he's meeting Papa, Jesus and Sarayu. They take turns helping him through his emotional rollercoaster ride. Mack is then given the choice to stay with them and his beloved Missy or return to his life with his wife and remaining two children. Mack chooses to go back and is awakened to find himself where he originally laid on the floor (by the blood stain that was his daughter's). Mack gets in an accident on the way home and is nearly killed. Ironically, Mack's wife Nan, the spiritually strong one in the family, is initially skeptical of Mack's experience at

the shack but their love and relationship get them through and they live happily ever after.

Because there are numerous things in contradiction to God's word and Christianity as a whole, this will be an attempt to focus on the most obvious errors.

This is just a partial list of errors and blasphemies:

Young introduces his version of the trinity with a variety of ethnic descriptions as well as two of the three being female pg 82-84, "...a large African-American woman..." (Papa God the Father), "...a small distinctively Asian woman... virtually transparent and hard to see...", (Sarayu Holy Spirit), a man "...appeared Middle Eastern and dressed like a laborer complete with tool belt and gloves...(Jesus as a carpenter).

Nowhere in the Bible is God or any part of the Trinity described as female, creating an unholy trinity. Young, assigned them names stemming from Eastern religion and Greek mythology; Papa and Elousia (God), Jesus' name is the same but certain aspects of his character are not scriptural, Sarayu (Holy Spirit), Sophia (a personification of God's wisdom).

Pg 171 Sophia is named and defined as, "...a personification of Papa's wisdom," and "She's part of the mystery surrounding of Sarayu." The conversation between Mack and Jesus concerning Sophia is as follows with a few inconsequential details left out (such as Mack stopping to tie his shoes): Mack asks if she is God too, making four of them. Jesus says no, there are only three of us. "Sophia is a personification of God's wisdom." Mack says, "Oh, like in Proverbs, where wisdom is pictured as a woman calling out in the streets, trying to find anyone who'll listen to her?" Jesus: "That's her." Mack: "But...she seemed so real." Jesus: "Oh, she's quite real." "She's part of the mystery surrounding of Sarayu."

Which is it? Is she the personification of God's wisdom or is she a mystery surrounding Sarayu? What is she to Jesus? Young's three persons of the trinity are all God equally yet Sophia is only something to two of them.

Pg 152 Mack describes Sophia as, "...a tall, beautiful, olive-skinned woman with chiseled Hispanic features..."and continues on 153 with Mack thinking she is "Everything that sensuality strives to be, but falls painfully short."

Webster's dictionary defines sensuality as, "The quality or state of being sensual; devotedness to the gratification of the bodily appetites; free indulgence in carnal or sensual pleasures; luxuriousness; voluptuousness; lewdness." Why is it necessary to sensualize wisdom? First of all, wisdom is not referred to as a literal woman in the passage in Proverbs that Young has Mack remember but rather metaphorically speaking and it was a proverb or analogy Solomon was depicting between a wise man hearing and increasing learning and understanding, whereas fools despise wisdom and instruction. Young's fixation on the woman smacks more of a pagan love goddess not wisdom!

Pg 92 Papa is telling Mack,

Honey, there's no easy answer that will take your pain away. Believe me, if I had one, I'd use it now. I have no magic wand to wave over you and make it all better. Life takes a bit of time and a lot of relationship. [Bold emphasis mine]

This is bringing God down to human level. Young's god can't take the pain away and doesn't have an answer except that time and relationships is all that's needed to heal the hurt he is feeling. This is what you get in a false god.

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Pg 95 Papa bears the same scars of the cross that Jesus does. "...Mack noticed the scars in her wrists, like those he now assumed Jesus also had on his." Again, nowhere is this found in scripture.

Pg 96 Papa: *"Don't ever think that what my son chose to do didn't cost us dearly. Love always leaves a significant mark," she stated softly and gently. "We were there together."* Mack: *"At the cross? Now wait, I thought you left him—you know—'My God, my god, why hast thou forsaken me?'"* Papa: *"You misunderstand the mystery there. Regardless of what he felt at that moment, I never left him." "...When all you can see is your pain, perhaps then you lose sight of me?"*

With this piece Young denies the finished work of the cross! Without God the Father turning His back on Jesus, sin remains and there is no Biblical forgiveness. God the Father allowed this to happen for a divine purpose and Jesus knew it. Jesus had to die in the manner He did on the cross for sin to be crucified with Him. This is the worse sort of blasphemy rejecting Christ's finished work thereby denying the Jesus of the Bible. John 19:28, "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." Jesus knew this truth, God the Father turned away that the scriptures be fulfilled. The Father turned away from His Son when He bore the sins of the whole world. Holiness does not look upon unholiness. Young completely distorted part of the foundational message of the Gospel of Christ and created another god!

Pg 141 Jesus tells Mack, *"You imagine. Such a powerful ability, the imagination! That power alone makes you so like us. But without wisdom, imagination is a cruel taskmaster."*

This power of imagination is not that of a simple child's game, but more like today's New Age practices: Transcendental meditation, spirit guides, certain forms of yoga, all of which come from Eastern religions. Much like the ones Young grew up around.

Romans 1:18-23 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse;

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man..." [Bold emphasis mine]

Pg 148 Mack asks Jesus the question,

But you came in the form of a man. Doesn't that say something?" "Yes, but not what many have assumed. I came as a man to complete a wonderful picture in how we made you. From the first day we hid the woman within the man, so that at the right time we could remove her from within him. We didn't create man to live alone; she was purposed from the beginning. By taking her out of him, he birthed her in a sense. We created a circle of relationship, like our own, but for humans. She, out of him, and now all the males, including me, birthed through her; and all originating, or birthed, from God.

Eve was not hidden within Adam. There is no circle of relationship. God created Adam from the dust of the earth and breathed life into him. God then took a rib from Adam and created Eve and they worshipped and fellowshiped with God.

Genesis 2:21, 22 "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

Ch. 15 opens with Sarayu and Papa taking Mack on a journey of sorts in his mind. When Mack opened his eyes he was blinded by the light emanating from Sarayu, to which she responds, *"You will find it very difficult to look at me directly" "...or at Papa. But as your mind becomes accustomed to the changes, it will be easier."*

The rest of the chapter tells of Mack's clarity of vision. He is now able to see as the three god figures see and everything is illuminated with halos of light: Nature, animals, angels, sentinels, and of course people have an aura about them, more New Age philosophy that flows right into Necromancy. This is the

second time in this book that Mack will have contact with a dead loved one. The first, being with Missy when he was with Sophia and he saw his daughter through a waterfall. Missy knew her father was there and motioned as if she was hugging him. Now, in his mind with Sarayu and Papa, Mack sees a commotion of agitated lights which are coming from his dead father. This time Mack actually embraces his father, they forgive each other and all is well.

I believe *The Shack* is a compilation for all to see exactly what Mr. Young didn't learn while growing up with missionary parents and the occult influence that apparently took hold and grew in his perverse imagination. I'm also leaning toward the belief that because of his great loss as a child and young adult, Mr. Young's personal beliefs and perhaps a bit of his own story are incorporated into this "fiction."

So often people think that Christianity is only something soft, only a kind of gooey love that loves evil equally with good. This is not the biblical position. The holiness of God is to be exhibited simultaneously with love. We must be careful, therefore, not to say that what is wrong is right, whether it is in the area of doctrine or of life, in our own group or another. What is wrong is wrong anywhere, and we have a responsibility in that situation to say that what is wrong is wrong. (Schaeffer, Francis A.: *The Mark of a Christian*. Westchester, Ill. : Crossway Books, 1996, c1982)

Finally, I am saddened and bewildered to see the praise of this book by so many, especially those claiming a Christian testimony. May your eyes be opened and your lack of discernment be found growing in wisdom in accordance to God's truth and not vain and profane babblings. If you don't know the attributes of God the Father, Jesus his Son, and the Holy Spirit as described in God's word, but would rather take truth out of an erroneous fiction, then I would consider this an indication that you do not know God at all and your gullibility to be taken in by this deception is very disheartening. The evidence shows this book to be weighed and found wanting.

John's notes: Today so many books are coming out claiming the name of Christ, to be speaking about His Holiness, attributes and spirituality and more of God's character. Yet presenting works of fiction such as Frank Peretti's *This Present Darkness*, William P. Young's *The Shack*, the movie *The Passion of Christ* and a host of others then these writers are being seen as leaders and wise men speaking to large groups of Christians who applaud them for their works of fiction as giving some great spiritual insight when in fact they are no different than the Judaizers of Paul's day! The Apostle Paul condemned such false teachings in the harshest of ways in Galatians 1:6-9 which Paul says,

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

We need to contend against such things that others can mark and avoid them, Jude 3, Romans 16:17-18. We need to show how in fact they are presenting another Gospel, another Christ, another God or as Kathy has done showing them how books like *The Shack* perverts the very nature of our God. Churches promoting things like this and those exposed on BDM should be admonished and abandoned if they persist in being lulled into apostasy. It is important to know the true nature of the God of the Bible, His Son, and the Holy Spirit for times like these when a book such as *The Shack* (a work of fiction) distorts it and gains a following so it can easily be exposed as a counterfeit. Likewise, it is important to know the attributes of our enemy the Devil. What is clear is the confusion this book causes about the very nature and character of God is just one more subtle attempt to deceive the unlearned who are not faithful in seeing if these things are so as in Act 17:11 with the Bereans. I have fully supported my wife in this endeavor to expose this book for what it is - a book of lies, written by a person angry with Biblical Christianity who touches about every precious truth of scripture and desecrates it.

Some of the endorsements given to The Shack:

[Gloria Gaither](#) – Hosted a reading of *The Shack* even photographed and published in The New York Times.

[Michael W. Smith \(CCMer\)](#) – “*The Shack* is the most absorbing work of fiction I’ve read in many years. My wife and I laughed, cried, and repented of our own lack of faith along the way. *The Shack* will leave you craving for the presence of God.” On back of *The Shack*.

[Mark Lowry](#) (former singer with the Gaithers) – “Well, I finally finished *The Shack* by William P. Young. The first five chapters are very hard to read. Very painful. But somewhere around chapter 6, Dorothy lands in Oz and everything becomes technicolor. I really love this book. It confirmed for me a lot of things I’ve been learning about God.” From his 2008 Ramblings on his website May 2008.

James Ryle – “If God is all powerful and full of love why doesn’t he do something about all the pain and suffering in our world? This book answers that age old question with startling creativity and staggering clarity by far one of the best books I ever read.” In front section of the book “On what others are saying about *The Shack*.” (Mentioned many times within the Promise Keeper fiasco on BDM (Bible Discernment Ministries) and in the article, [Interesting Information About “Promise Keepers”](#):

James Ryle, Pastor of one of the Vineyard churches which supports the “Toronto Experience,” along with other “signs and wonders,” Pastor to PK Founder Bill McCartney, Ryle himself recently participated in a service making animal noises from the pulpit (this is one of the [Toronto manifestations](#)) “There are waves of tear-wiping laughter. Ryle makes sound effects, including some animal noises. He snaps his fingers, bangs the podium, paces and tells how God will appear here in suit of fire, oil, water. “You will feel! And the glory of the Lord will put you down!” (From the Washington Post 11/18/95)

[Eugene Peterson](#) – Author of the perversion of scripture called *The Message*

Christianity Today Magazine – *The Shack* received a positive review 7/10/2008 in *Fiction for the Faith-Starved*, while acknowledging many Christian publishers rejected *The Shack* "...ostensibly for being too theologically edgy..." they also praise its emotional story and state:

Despite its weaknesses, this is a story with the potential to wake readers up, to rekindle or reinvigorate their faith. In an era when so much Christian fiction is about pat answers, conventional themes, and the regurgitation of what we already know and believe, such stories are good news for thoughtful readers.

Not a word of about the heresy, blasphemy and gross error just excusing it as a "novel" See BDM warning on [Christian Fantasy](#).

[Other links to reviews warning of the deception of this book and more:](#)

Deceived by a counterfeit "Jesus" The twisted "truths" of The Shack & A Course in Miracles -By Berit Kjos - February 14, 2008

<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/08/shack.htm>

The Consequence of Role-Reversals in The Shack – Parts 1 & 2 The Divine-Human Relationship - By Pastor Larry DeBruyn

<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/08/discernment/8-31-role-reversals-shack.htm>

<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/08/discernment/9-5-role-reversals-shack-2.htm>

[The Emerging \(Global\) Church](#) – Numerous links to articles related to where *The Shack* gets many of its endorsements and the growing danger of the "Emergent Church Movement"

[Contemplative Mysticism](#) – Exposing the danger of this sort of imagination and visualization.