

THE SHACK

I read *The Shack* after a copy was given to a friend by her sister. My friend was a little unsettled about reading it, so I offered to read it and give her my thoughts on it. Although I had many, I'm sharing only a few of those thoughts with you here. Very briefly, it is the story of a man, Mack, whose very young daughter is killed in a shack way back in the woods. A long time later, Mack receives a note from "God" in his mailbox that suggests he meet Him at the shack. He reluctantly accepts the offer and from there a far-fetched tale unfolds of oddities that touch practically all of Mack's senses in otherworldly ways. I'm not saying similar things can't happen, just that in this book, these things aren't exactly scriptural and appear to be presented as of the Lord.

The author, William P. Young, or "Willie," as he referred to himself, wrote such a believable foreword, that I didn't realize the book was supposed to be Christian fiction until I had read it and was discussing it with others. I still wonder about that. Willie describes Mack so well, so convincingly, that I believed it was supposed to be a true story. Therein lies part of the problem with *The Shack*. It is misleading...in more ways than one.

1. God is portrayed as a large black woman who calls herself "Papa." To me this is enough to confuse anyone not familiar with the Trinity of the Bible, anyone seeking to know God, or anyone who is a new or immature Christian. In this context, "large" says to me that "Papa/God" has either an eating problem, lack of self-control at the table, or a physical disorder (none of which is true...God is perfect in every way.) "Black" here immediately assigns a race to God..The Bible, however, does not. "Woman" here immediately attempts to change the Bible because God in the Bible is referred to ALWAYS as "He, Him, His, Father, etc." and never in any way refers to Him in the feminine.

2. Jesus is portrayed as a sort of Brawny guy. You picture him wearing a flannel shirt and carving around in wood...not an awfully wrong picture of the real Jesus Christ, but later on in the book when the Jesus character and the Papa character kiss on the lips in a show of affection, it's a little too much for me. In fact, in my humble opinion, it's a little too much for God and His Word, where that sort of thing is labeled as sin. (Later in the book Mack and his dead father, who has been brought back to him for reconciliation, also kiss on the lips as a show of affection. Weird at best, incestuous at worst.)

3. The Holy Spirit is portrayed as an Asian woman who is glittery and flittery and a sort of now-you-see-me-now-you-don't being who calls herself "Sarayu." A search of this term on the internet showed me that Willie appears to be tying the Holy Spirit in with the New Age and things Eastern. Again, as with God the Father, the Holy Spirit is always referred to in the Bible as "He, Him, His, etc.," and is never referred to in the feminine.

Some people say because they had a bad relationship with their fathers growing up that they can relate to God better as a large black woman, or maybe just as a woman. Actually, it appears to me that Mr. Young, Willie, has some major spiritual and emotional issues that desperately need to be addressed by a *truly* Christian counselor.

I took many notes as I read this book, many disturbing notes, too many to list here, but the main thought I would like to convey is:

This book serves to draw people...of all levels of spiritual maturity...away from The Bible and the God of The Bible. This book was very disturbing to me and draws me to the verse in The Bible that warns us to be wary in the last days of doctrines of demons (some translations say “doctrines of devils.”)

1 Timothy 4:1 - Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...

Please accept this as my humble...yet Bible-based...opinion.