

General Topics :: the "Shack" reviewed by Tim Challies

the "Shack" reviewed by Tim Challies - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/5/21 18:00

Time to Rain on this Parade

I am certain that there is no other book I've been asked to review more times than William P. Young's *The Shack*, a book that is currently well within the top-100 best-selling titles at Amazon. The book, it seems, is becoming a hit and especially so among students and among those who are part of the Emergent Church. In the past few weeks many concerned readers have written to ask if I would be willing to read it and to provide a review. Because I am always interested in books that are popular among Christians, I was glad to comply.

First, a word about the book as it is written. William Young shows himself to be a capable writer, though I would not have believed it through the first couple of chapters. The book began with far too many awkward sentences and awkward sentence constructs (e.g. "One can almost hear a unified sigh rise from the nearby city and surrounding countryside where Nature has intervened to give respite to the weary humans slogging it out within her purview"). But as it went on and as the story took over the book became easier to read. The story itself is interesting enough, though certainly it lacks originality. The last chapter should have been left on the editing room floor and the final paragraph (before the "After Words") was a ridiculously terse attempt to provide closure to remaining plot lines. But on the whole the book is readable and enjoyable. Never does it become boring, even after long pages of nothing but dialog.

But Young did not write this book for the story. This book is all about the content and about the teaching it contains. The book's reviews focus not on the quality of the story but on its spiritual or emotional impact. Eugene Peterson grasps this, saying in his glowing endorsement, "When the imagination of a writer and the passion of a theologian cross-fertilize the result is a novel on the order of *The Shack*." This book has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* did for his. It's that good!" Could it really be that good? Is it good enough to warrant positive comparison to the English-language book that has been read more widely than any other save the Bible? Let's turn to the book's content and find out.

The Shack revolves around Mack (Mackenzie) Philips. Four years before this story begins, Mack's young daughter, Missy, was abducted during a family vacation. Though her body was never found, the police did find evidence in an abandoned shack to prove that she had been brutally murdered by a notorious serial killer who preyed on young girls. As the story begins, Mack, who has been living in the shadow of his Great Sadness, receives a strange note that is apparently from God. God invites Mack to return to this shack for a get together. Though uncertain, Mack visits the scene of the crime and there has a weekend-long encounter with God, or, more properly, with the godhead.

Young covers a wide variety of theological topics in this book, each of which is relevant to the theme of Mack's suffering and his inability to trust in a God who could let his daughter be treated in such a horrifying way. The author is unafraid to tackle subjects of deep theological import--a courageous thing to do in so difficult a genre as fiction. The reader will find himself diving into deep waters as he reads this book. Unfortunately much of this theology is simply inconsistent with the Bible. Young shares strange ideas on the Trinity, the way God reveals Himself to us, forgiveness and a variety of other topics.

Despite the great amount of poor theology, my greatest concern is probably this one: the book has a quietly subversive quality to it. Young seems set on undermining orthodox Christianity. For example, at one point Mack states that, despite years of seminary and years of being a Christian, most of the things taught to him at the shack have never occurred to him before. Later he says, "I understand what you're saying. I did that for years after seminary. I had the right answers, sometimes, but I didn't know you. This weekend, sharing life with you has been far more illuminating than any of those answers."

Throughout the book there is this kind of subversive strain teaching that new and fresh revelation is much more relevant and important than the kind of knowledge we gain in sermons or seminaries or Scripture. Young's readers seem to be picking up on this. Read this brief Amazon review as an example: "Wish I could take back all the years in seminary! The years the locusts ate???? Systematic theology was never this good. *Shack* will be read again and again. With relish. Shared with friends, family, and strangers. I can fly! It's a gift. 'Discipleship' will never be lessons again." Another reviewer wa

rns that many Christians will find the book difficult to read because of their "modern" mindsets. "If one is coming from a strong, propositional and, perhaps, fundamentalist perspective to the Bible, this book certainly will be threatening." Still another says "This book was so shocking to my "staid" Christianity but it was eye opening to my own thoughts about who I think God is." At several points I felt as if the author was encouraging the reader to doubt what they know of Christianity--to deconstruct what they know of Christian theology--and to embrace something new. But the faith Young reconstructs is simply not the faith of the Bible.

Because of the sheer volume of error and because of the importance of the doctrines reinvented by the author, I would encourage Christians, and especially young Christians, to decline this invitation to meet with God in The Shack. It is not worth reading for the story and certainly not worth reading for the theology.

from: http://www.amazon.com/review/R181CNPBRQWDTY/ref=cm_cr_rdp_perm

Re: the "Shack" reviewed by Tim Challies - posted by Talkn2u, on: 2008/5/22 10:25

Greg...

I logged on this morning, to post the question if anyone has heard of this book and what they thought of it.

I was just made aware of it last night.

I was glad to see that you have already put something on here, for us to consider.

I have been online reading excerpts from The Shack.

At this point I have made a decision on an opinion but will only say that there seems to always be books that hit the "Fad Realm" in our society: "Prayer of Jabez", "Best Life Now", etc... and people seem to buy out these books in mass supply.

If it carried the Truth of the Gospel, I don't believe it would have such popularity.

Thank you for posting the review.

Bonnie

Re: - posted by Ruach34 (), on: 2008/5/22 11:21

Hey Greg. I was at Mardel's (christian bookstore, in town where I live) and saw this book at the checkout, just asking to be purchased. I glanced at it, read the synopsis and the rave reviews, considered buying it, then put it down and continued on.

I picked it up because of a conversation I had with a hospital chaplain who said this is an important book dealing with the issue of grief. Theologically he said it was important as well.

I will have to send this review to him and let him read it, but am fearful, that anyone without a solid, Biblical foundation/framework, nor a steadfast devotion to the Bible's pre-eminence will see any danger in the pages.

I will hesitate to read it, if offered, and hopefully decline unless the Lord prompts me to read it. Chaplaincy is also the road the Lord has me on and the issue of grief will be addressed many times and how to deal with it. I earnestly believe the Lord will not only teach me about grief in His word but give strength and wisdom in the moments of consolation that lie ahead for me.

This trusting and walking is considerably more appealing to me and more sure than slurping up all teaching relative to the issues, as if thinking, 'if I get it now I will be prepared in the future for it.'

thank you for the review

Re: - posted by chadster, on: 2008/5/22 22:51

Just today I had a friend who was chiding me for criticizing a book which I had not read...he felt it was unfair that I would base my opinion on the reviews of others. After reading this thread, I am able to more fully identify with the frustration he felt.

I read "The Shack" and was greatly impacted by the book. I'm not saying that everything about it is theologically perfect, but I believe that God is using this book to reach scores of people who will never pick up a Bible. I highly recommend the book. The review that Greg posted is certainly in the minority...by far the majority of people who have read this book have been blessed by it. It was given to me by a very mature Christian who serves as an intercessory prayer leader who has walked with the Lord a number of years. She highly recommended it and I have since spoken to many "devoted and committed" Christians who were also blessed by the book.

Why is it that if anything doesn't line up exactly with our personal orthodoxy, we're the first in line picking up the stones and ready to bash and discredit...frankly, I find that very disturbing about the majority of the participants on this forum. Are we the only "righteous" ones in the earth??? Have we forgotten the words of the apostle about judging others? To his own master a man will stand or fall and STAND HE WILL!! God is the judge..why do we feel we need to do His job???

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/5/23 0:41

Hi Chadster,

Quote:

-----our personal orthodoxy

If the source of this controversy is rooted solely in personal preference, then I would agree that it is an unfortunate division. However it may be a hasty assumption to characterize the critique in this way. Just as it is reasonable to ask if people have read the "Shack" before rejecting it outright, it is also reasonable to consider the critiques against it before rejecting them, in light of scripture.

I wish the Shack was just being sold as a good story like the "Matrix" or Lord of the Rings". That would be fine, but instead it is being presented as a book with a unique effectiveness for conveying biblical truths. In that case it should be tested seriously..and even judged! We present the sincere reader quite a contradiction by saying this profound book contains deep truths about God---only you must not test it to see if this is so. The real word of God invites us to "Test all things and hold fast to that which is good" 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

Quote:

-----I believe that God is using this book to reach scores of people who will never pick up a Bible.

With respect for your good intentions here, I would like to challenge your underlying premise. For thousands of years the Word of God has been the proper and authorized means to convey God's truth to men. It has been preserved at great price, and has survived all attempts to destroy it and deconstruct it. Now there is something deeply amiss that we think we can reach men without the Bible, even if only in the initial stages of our evangelical schemes. As well intentioned as our plans are to re-tell the bible with all new plot devices and characters, I am pretty sure they will not be met with success. Perhaps the Shack is a stirring story with 'spiritual' elements, but it is the Bible that was given for revealing God and His son, and there simply are no pop culture substitutes.

So then why does the publisher position The Shack as this?

We believe our generation is somehow unique in history. We seem to think we must leave our bibles in Church, and craft a more effective message on our own that is more relevant to 'post modern' man. Sermons abound today, where instead of exegeting scripture, the 'pastor' exegetes popular culture for his message. He uses a clip from a movie as a 'parable', or a sentimental story to explain God's 'feelings'. The trouble with this is, I don't believe the bible is the type of book,

where we can convey it's essential truths while doing away with it's actual words.

If we want people to hear God, we must use His Word. If people will not hear the Word of God as it is given by God, then they are not going to hear our own artistic attempts.

When we are sick, we are careful to read the ingredients, and instructions on label on the doctors prescription. If we were prescribing a drug for a terminal patient, we wouldn't given them something they don't need, just because they don't want what they do need... and then call that compassion and relevancy! We would give them the cure that is relevant to their sickness! If they are indifferent to the cure, it is because they are not convinced of their need for it. This is the real problem, and an alternative narrative with reinvented characters in reinvented situations will not change their indifference to God's word.

Sinners cannot respond to the Gospel if it is disguised as something else. Evangelicals need to put away their pop culture subterfuge and just trust that God's word works in our generation just as it has in every generation.

These are just my thoughts for consideration brother.

Blessings,

MC

Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2008/12/24 6:02

Quote:

chadster wrote:

Have we forgotten the words of the apostle about judging others? To his own master a man will stand or fall and STAND HE WILL!! God is the judge. .why do we feel we need to do His job????

I am in the middle of listening to an audio version of this book (purchased legally ;-)), and have to admit that after getting over the initial shock of having God the Father present "Himself" as "African American Woman", I have to admit, for the most part, I have been satisfied with the explanations given within the book.

It would seem that, at the half way point (where I'm at now), the key issue is that we need to look beyond our misconceptions of God (for the principle character Mack, in the book, this was formed by his alcoholic Bible quoting, wife beating father, and his dealing with having his daughter abducted by a serial killer, in spite of both his, and his wife's faith in Christ), and our need to get down from "His throne", and entrust our life to what He defines as "good and evil", rather than our own, received from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil".

I read in another review, quoted on this site:

Quote:

Okay, it is only an allegory. But like Pilgrim's Progress, allegories contain deep truths. That is my problem. It is the author's low view of Scripture. For example, Mack is tied to a tree by his drunken, abusive father, who "beats Mack with a belt and Bible verses." The author reflects derisively in another spot that "nobody wanted God in a box, just in a book. Especially an expensive one bound in leather with gilt edges, or was that 'guilt' edges."

Meaning no disrespect from the one who penned these words (I'm not 100% sure who it was, but if I'm right, I am a little shocked, considering that he has experience around prison evangelism), but they read like those of someone who has little contact with sinners in the real world. I would find it incredibly difficult to number the amount of times that I have encountered "ex-Christians" who are so as a result of growing up under abusive (both physically and sexually) parents, who were either ministers and/or missionaries, in my limited street evangelism experience. It has been a great joy to be able to help some of them reconcile such an apparent inconsistency, while maintaining both the integrity of God, and purity of doctrine.

Several books have made an attempt at addressing these themes, but they tend to drift into much presumption (Rick Joyner's final quest comes to mind, with his implication that Paul was telling Joyner that he (Paul) had got it wrong, during his life, and how he (Joyner) could do life better), but so far I have not seen this kind of thing in the Shack. In fact, whenever it seems that the book is about to round this kind of corner, a twist is presented that sets it straight.

Having said all that, I'm only half way so far, so it is not inconceivable that I could be posting a retraction once I have finished.

Re: - posted by Lonny (), on: 2008/12/24 6:41

I read The Shack on holiday and so I have to confess it was in a bit of a haze as I lay by a pool... However having given the ideas in the book some thought then I have a tendency to split my thoughts to both sides of the argument - I think if we can view it as a novel, a piece of fiction then it throws up some good and interesting points about how we understand God and that God is actually much wider, deeper, greater and simply "beyond" anything we can imagine - The Shack helped me remember that in that I was so surprised when "God" appeared as He was very different from my preconceived notions. That is a help to me and something I will remember. However there were some concerns in the book - especially some of the ideas about how God does not expect anything from us and He knows us totally anyway then He knows what we will do before we do it and yet loves us anyway. Now in a sense this is true (and therefore liberating) but I also do believe that God does expect things from us - our love, our obedience, or devotion and so on. The youth in my church have been very excited by the book and generally combined with their lack of biblical and doctrinal knowledge then my concern is that books like the Shack tie into an "experience" led view of Christianity which I believe to be little more than "froth" and unreality and a foundation in sand for when storms of life come.

The Shack needs to be read before judgement can be put against it but that does not imply total acceptance or total rejection. If treated as a work of fiction then there are aspects that can be helpfully used and aspects that can be rejected when held up to scripture as well. As so often in life it is not a 100% yes or no - but I would encourage the reading of The Shack - either through borrowing it and buying it - we need to be aware of what is going on out there in "Christian land" and making our own decisions.

Re: - posted by Lowly, on: 2008/12/24 9:02

Has anyone ever read "The Knowledge of the Holy," by Tozer? This is a powerful book. God Himself has revealed to us who He is. Jesus is the perfect reflection of the glory of God.

If we want to know His nature and character, it is seen in Christ Jesus and the word of God. Jesus said to us who would follow Him that it is given to us to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

We are to seek, knock, and ask.

I have not read the book, so I am not judging it.

Our God is majestic, Omnipotent, Immutable....He wants us to have the knowledge that He is the Judge and that day is coming, a day of wrath and vengeance, and all men will stand before the judgment seat.

And yet, He is the Lamb, who purged us from our sins, and sanctified us to our Father, and has given us an inheritance with Him. Who rescues us, who carries us in His loving arms. The Good Shepherd watching over us.

He disciplines us to know what is in our hearts. I could go on and on, but I am talking to the choir.

I only say these things to say, Our God has given to us His word, His Son, and His Holy Spirit that we may come to the full knowledge of Him. He has revealed Himself. Everything that has ever happened to me in my life, the Lord has shown Himself to me who He is through His word. He is the great I Am.

Anytime I have been confused, broken, devastated, etc.....I have sought Him and He answered me.....

Please forgive me if I am being presumptuous about this book.....

But when Jesus saved me He began the work.....and I am whole heartedly cooperating with the Holy Spirit that He will finish the work. I want to grow up in the fullness of Christ, I desire that He would produce the fruit in me that is pleasing to my Heavenly Father. The Character and Nature of God are found in Christ, and I will spend my days pursuing to know Him.

Please again forgive me for using the word "I" so much, it is only an expression of my heart....it is not about me.....

I only say these things to consider when you read the book.....we need to have a good measuring stick.....

In His amazing love,
Lowly

"Learn of Me for I am meek and lowly of heart..."

A combined reply to 4 posters - posted by White_Stone (), on: 2008/12/24 9:39

The time God gives us is too precious to waste on fiction, **especially** fiction that misrepresents Him. If I was reading a book and they represented God Almighty as a black woman, I would burn it!

chadster,

Quote:
-----Why is it that if anything doesn't line up exactly with our personal orthodoxy, we're the first in line picking up the stones and ready to bash and discredit...frankly, I find that very disturbing about the majority of the participants on this forum. Are we the only "righteous" ones in the earth ??? Have we forgotten the words of the apostle about judging others? To his own master a man will stand or fall and STAND HE WILL!! God is the judge..why do we feel we need to do His job????

John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

We are instructed to use righteous judgment. I believe it has been used on this fictional work.

Ruach34,

Quote:
-----This trusting and walking is considerably more appealing to me and more sure than slurping up all teaching relative to the issues, as if thinking, 'if I get it now I will be prepared in the future for it.'

Very good point!

MC,

Quote:
-----Sinners cannot respond to the Gospel if it is disguised as something else. Evangelicals need to put away their pop culture subterfuge and just trust that God's word works in our generation just as it has in every generation.

AMEN!!

Bonnie,

Quote:
-----If it carried the Truth of the Gospel, I don't believe it would have such popularity.

Amen and AMEN. . . Your comment says it all.

Years ago, I read 'Ben Hur.' Recently, I reread it and was disgusted with the way the author portrayed Jesus. It appears the Holy Spirit has been at work on my taste for recreational reading. The same as He is working on turning me against

Hollywood movies. Watching a movie we have viewed countless times the other night and little things jumped out at my husband and I that we simply accepted previously (the movie is in the junk pile now).

chadster, Lord willing you will have the necessary time to rethink your opinions, just as He has given me that time for reflection and study.

We should all be aware that the time is at hand, He IS coming very soon. Praise Jesus.

Kind regards,
white stone

Re: A combined reply to 4 posters - posted by Miccah (), on: 2008/12/24 10:12

I posted this on a different thread about "The Shack". I believe it applies very well.

Quote:
-----My suggestion is to stay far away from this book, especially new or weak believers. I can see nothing good coming from this book besides a greater falling away from the Truth.

Re: A combined reply to 4 posters - posted by Lonny (), on: 2008/12/24 10:21

Oh good grief! Time is too precious to waste on fiction? Lighten up!

Paul himself used his knowledge of books that weren't scripture when evangelizing so why shouldn't we? God can speak to us through a myriad of ways - not all of which are through the Bible - he speaks to me through nature, through the actions and attitudes of others, through worship, through sermons, through the fun that children have - I am not comparing them to God's Word as given to us in the Bible and I am not comparing The Shack to that either but God can still speak to us through it.

:-)

Re: I, with many, have posted on The Shack before. - posted by JoanM, on: 2008/12/24 10:50

Proverbs 21:16 The man that *wandereth* out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

Should we wonder if imaginations lift themselves up against the knowledge of God? this particular imagination? against the knowledge of God?

Should we seek the dead on behalf of the living? Should a man not seek God?

Clear evidence it is revival or ruin.

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2008/12/24 11:07

Lonny, what heresy is acceptable for you and others to read?

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2008/12/24 11:12

The Lord has left it to us to choose what we take in, be it for good, or be it for evil. If we rely upon our human intellect, it is likely that we will choose wrong, for we do not know the truth of the matter.

It is like the eating of food. For years we were unaware of the poisons that were resident in the fruit - pesticides that were tasteless, but have been slowly poisoning our systems none the less.

We must ask the Lord to show us the way, for only He knows the truth of the matter and will keep us unto life.

Re: - posted by Lonny (), on: 2008/12/24 14:38

Good question Miccah - I will actually read all manner of books and poetry which might not strictly be in line with orthodox Christian thought - however I will do that either to understand what the world is saying about life or to challenge my own way of thinking. That way I try to ensure that I don't get stale or hidebound and also to ensure that I am not giving answers to questions that had stopped being asked some ten plus years ago. How about you?

In terms of the analogy of eating food - everyone knows that the odd burger is truly delicious! :-)

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2008/12/24 15:06

Quote:

-----In terms of the analogy of eating food - everyone knows that the odd burger is truly delicious!

What "tastes" good is not always what is good for you. In fact, often it is the things that "taste" good that are the most lethal for the enemy knows that you can be trapped by appealing to your senses.

Through "greed for gold," or the desire to make more money, Satan manipulates one person to add a little "flavor", knowing that the "product" will be more desirable to another. Through "lust" for the added "flavor", another will buy this product because it "tastes" good. Invariably, this added "flavor" is full of poison, and is usually addicting.

It is a cycle designed to destroy both the buyer and the seller.

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2008/12/24 15:34

Lonny wrote:

Quote:

How about you?

Lonny, I have read "The Shack", hence I feel that it is ok to warn against it.

Being past the spiritual milk stage in my walk, I am able to read books as such, with MUCH prayer before, during and after, in order to increase my understanding and knowledge to fight against such things.

But I would never recommend to people to read this garbage without those people first being led by the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is leading you to read a/book, then one should read it, but this is usually not the case.

To recommend something that you KNOW is wrong and literally breaks the Second Commandment is inexcusable

Maybe you have heard this before and is a good analogy to use in situations like this. The best way to combat heresy is to study and know the Truth. This Truth is given to us through the Spirit of God and through the scriptures.

Another good lesson about what is acceptable or not can be obtained through the observance of what the "main stream church" deems acceptable or what they embrace. If it is embraced by Laodicea, more than likely it should be thrown away.

"The Shack" IS embraced by Laodicea.

Re: - posted by poet (), on: 2008/12/24 23:26

A.W. Tozer said: "wrong ideas about God are not only the fountain from which the polluted waters of idolatry flow; they are themselves idolatrous. The idolater simply imagines things about God and acts as if they were true."

I Just read "the shack" last week and wrote a position paper based on this book.

I found more than 50 statements in the book that misrepresent God, who he is and his character and nature.

My pastor recommended that I read it because he is getting his master at NW University; and it was required reading for one of his classes.

I just gave him the paper to check out on monday, I'll find out what he thinks after christmas.

I found it odd that some students in his class found many fundamental issues with the book and others noticed less.

This book is poison, and is so diabolical as to deny Christ, because it denies the Christ of the bible; of which the book says Mack's pre-conditioning or pre-conceived ideas about God are wrong, when we all as rational people get our ideas about who God is by HIS Word.

Believe me when I say this, our churches today are so ignorant of the God of the bible that they are not able to discern or recognize whether the god of the shack is any different from the God of the bible.

I'll give you an example of a pastor I used to sit under, who is an experienced based teacher.

he would say things like don't put God in a box; when he was about to make a statement that we would probably not agree with. why wouldnt we agree with what he was about to say I ask?

Because his next statement was going to say something about God that wasn't found in scripture, or contradicted one of the fundamentals thats why.

Pre-conditioning, pre-conceived ideas, don't put God in a Box... ohh better yet, don't be a Pharisee, I had that one used on me too, only because we question someones teachings but we try to compare what someone teaches with Scripture, not by Storys, or subjective testimonies, the Bereans were commended, and we should always compare what someone teaches with scripture.

Even if an Angel from heaven preaches a gospel other than the one we have preached let him be eternally occursed.

My pastor said that there are even churches out there that are using "the shack" as a sunday school teaching tool....

Not as a discernment tool either....

Please stay away from this book, do not recommend this book, do not promote this book.

Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2008/12/25 7:15

Quote:

poet wrote:

I Just read "the shack" last week and wrote a position paper based on this book.

I found more than 50 statements in the book that misrepresent God, who he is and his character and nature.

Hi Poet.

I am still plugging away at this book, and so am yet to form a concrete opinion about it. I must admit that I began this book, expecting nothing but "humanist junk", especially in light of its mainstream success, but have been pleasantly surprised. I would be interested to read your paper on it, especially the "50 statements in the book that misrepresent God".

Quote:

This book is poison, and is so diabolical as to deny Christ, because it denies the Christ of the bible; of which the book says Mack's pre-conditioning or pre-conceived ideas about God are wrong, when we all as rational people get our ideas about who God is by HIS Word.

So, if I am reading you right, Mack was right to believe that God is a cruel task master, who does not, in fact love him, at

best, and is powerless to help him, at worst? You believe that God is someone who justifies alcoholic wife beating, as long as the person doing so is a student of the Bible? You believe that God is someone who is waiting with a rod to beat us every time we get out theology slightly wrong?

If you put those statements, in the book, in their proper context, you'd see that this is exactly what you are saying, when you make the above statements. Brother, I have personally met many young believers whose parents demand that their children "honour their parents", while ignoring the command to not "provoke their children to wrath". I watched one such "man of God", who held a masters degree in theology from one of the most respected Evangelical Bible Colleges in Australia, slap his son across the back of the head, for asking why he had to eat the crust of the bread, which he didn't like.

The sad thing is, many Christians have deified "the Bible", at the expense of God (Tozer spoke of this also, btw). The Shack is making an attempt at addressing this.

Quote:

Believe me when I say this, our churches today are so ignorant of the God of the bible that they are not able to discern or recognize whether the god of the shack is any different from the God of the bible.

The same can be said about any book, regardless of the best intentions of the author. In fact, the above mentioned youth walked away from reading Leonard Ravenhill's "Why Revival Tarries" being convinced that his best efforts to meet up with God's "demanded obedience" were unable to achieve righteousness. I'm sure that Ravenhill would turn in his grave to be accused of promoting salvation by "self righteousness", and yet this was the impression that this young man walked away with. So, would you say that we should ban Ravenhill also?

Quote:

Even if an Angel from heaven preaches a gospel other than the one we have preached let him be eternally accursed.

Please present how the Gospel presented in The Shack differs from the Scriptural one? I'm yet to see it.

Quote:

My pastor said that there are even churches out there that are using "the shack" as a sunday school teaching tool.....
Not as a discernment tool either....

Naturally, any attempt at replacing the Scriptures with any book, regardless of its Scriptural integrity, is a dangerous one. But, then again, where do we draw the line with this? Do we ban illustrations in preaching, only permitting the Scriptural quotations? The Shack is intended as an allegory. Its purpose is to draw attention to certain Scriptural principles, not to establish doctrine, itself.

Quote:

Please stay away from this book, do not recommend this book, do not promote this book.

I am actually more concerned about the backlash against this book, based primarily on its popularity. What if God were to allow such a book to become popular, in order to offend our theological intellect? What if His target is the "Laodicean church", believing itself to be rich in its theology, having "progressed from milk to meat" (Heb 5:12-14)? What if His desire is that we leave "the principles of the doctrine of Christ..not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God", in order to "let us go on unto perfection" (Heb 6:1)?

(Oh, I'm gonna get some grief over this post...I can just smell it) :-)

Re: - posted by Koheleth, on: 2008/12/25 7:27

Quote:

Lonny wrote:
Oh good grief! Time is too precious to waste on fiction? Lighten up!

I think the question remains, in light of the death of Christ, how much we should lighten up. Peter told us to "be sober, be vigilant".

Quote:
-----I am not comparing them to God's Word as given to us in the Bible and I am not comparing The Shack to that either but God can still speak to us through it.

I agree that God can and does speak to someone seeking light by using errant sources. But for a person that already has light (spiritual light meaning more understanding of the truths about God), I do not believe that God will "speak" (reveal truth) through these types of materials. The presentations of God in The Shack may be an interesting exercise for Christians to think about, but will definitely never be God "speaking" unless we believe that God is choosing to use Bible-contradicting statements and perspectives to speak. If that were the case, God would be guilty of duplicity and confusion. The God of the Bible never has revealed himself as deceptive in that way.

Re: - posted by Koheleth, on: 2008/12/25 7:37

Quote:

CJaKfOrEsT wrote:
(Oh, I'm gonna get some grief over this post...I can just smell it) :-)

No. At least hopefully no undue grief. ;-)

Permit me a couple of questions on your final paragraph.

Quote:
-----I am actually more concerned about the backlash against this book, based primarily on its popularity. What if God were to allow such a book to become popular, in order to offend our theological intellect? What if His target is the "Laodicean church", believing itself to be rich in its theology, having "progressed from milk to meat" (Heb 5:12-14)? What if His desire is that we leave "the principles of the doctrine of Christ..not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God", in order to "let us go on unto perfection" (Heb 6:1)?

Is backlash inherently wrong? I see the comments here focusing on bad theology more than popularity, which is presented as a notable but lesser concern.

If "our theological intellect" is not in error, why would God offend it? Why would God use a questionable work of fiction before he would correct his people using Scripture? Or using teachers and prophets?

Finally, why would God use this book instead of Scripture to have Christians "go on to perfection"? I think the word of God plus a few aids for motivation and discipleship are enough.

Re: - posted by poet (), on: 2008/12/25 15:57

Reply to

CJaKfOrEsT:

Iron sharpens Iron. If IM wrong in my assessment may God grant me the grace to be humble enough as to allow someone to speak into my life as to make me more Christ Like. Lets keep in the spirit of Grace and humality, towards each other,

I hope I become someday a great communicator to be able to convey my thoughts in such a way as to not let anyone feel that they are being attacked or their intelligence being maligned.

So anyway here we go.

I am going to attach my paper here below, but I am not going to post all 50 statements which were actually 65 on one reading. Due to the fact, for every statement that I post someone could jump on every statement and I would have to defend each one, supporting every position.

I would suppose that even the prophets of old dealt with the same thing while trying to warn of the coming judgment of God.

I am not a very good writer, and my inflection on paper always comes across as harsh or unfeeling, or unloving, but I am a loving and feeling person who cares very much for people and I try to warn but often the messenger is shot in the process. in my case stabbed in the back... often. such is life though.

CJaKfOrEsT:

In all due respect, you are making assumptions to my statements, and coming to conclusions that I have not made; or -- I may not be communicating myself well enough to get my thoughts out correctly. If that be the case IM sorry, I'll try and get better at this blog stuff.

I never justify hurting a child and at the same time demanding respect from them.

The child who is mistreated will stand before God and give account for His or Her lack of respect toward their parents, and at the same time the parents will stand before God and give account also.. but The Shack is Humanist, and God is not a Humanist and doe's demand righteousness from us, and obedience from us, God is not just waiting to judge us, but judgment IS going to come to HIS adversary's,

we can philosophize away his judgment, but it is still coming, no matter our parental raising, or circumstances.

The word says the Lord chastens those he Loves.

The shack puts it in a way as to get us to agree with the fact that God doesnt gleefully wait to bring judgment down on the disobedient.

You dont have to be a theologian to know that God does and will, and If you are a child of God then you too will be chastened because he Loves us and wants us to be a bride without spot or blemish.

the shack wrongly portrays God on the whole chapters diatribe to how God deals with HIS children. titled "here come da judge"

Anyway here is my paper.

THE SHACK

After reading "The Shack" I have thought hard about what to really say about it.

I do have a lot to say but for the sake of time and effort on my part I will be as brief as possible, limiting my opinions to a basic opinion and then a limited number of theological points that I could not ignore or for that matter any Christ loving individual who contends for the faith would need to mention.

First, I found that the story in itself was gripping and a page turner.

You just wanted to know what was going to happen next.

To be honest who wouldn't want to speak to God face to face, especially since someone like Mack had a lot of questions to ask.

The story was written in such a way as to draw you into the emotions of a parent losing a child and the situation was invented to make sure you couldn't bring judgment on Mack for leaving his daughter alone at the picnic table; he was busy saving the life of another child.

His healing process in the book was good, especially his needing to forgive his daughters killer, and putting upon himself Christ's nature in doing so. Yet it was threaded with things that aren't good, like on page 227 God says. "Just say it out loud. "There is power in what my children declare." What? Is he WOF?

Another good statement was found on page 97: "I am God. I am who I am. And unlike you, my wings can't be clipped."

Unfortunately this statement doesn't hold true in the book, he makes a statement then proceeds to bring God down to a human level, of which I will give an example shortly.

During my reading of this book I found at my first attempt more than 50 statements that either misrepresent who God is, or misrepresent his word by twisting meanings of conceptual teachings found in the bible or even blatant lies about who God is, or His character and nature.

I am going to give my 5 top reasons why I believe that "The Shack" is a heretical book.

Reason #1. This will be pertaining to my previous statement about Page 97 stating God being who he is.

The statement is good, but then in the entirety of the book, God is represented other than he really is. For example: Chapter 11 titled "Here come Da Judge"

Mack is put through an emotional roller coaster, then ultimately we, by Paul Young's writing prowess, on pages 162- 163 Mack is forced to choose two of his children that he must judge to hell, thus putting us in the same position concerning our own children, and in the place of God. Ultimately Mack refuses to do it, bringing home the point that of course he couldn't, because he loves his children too much to do such a horrendous thing, and is willing to take their place thus implying that Jesus did the same for us. And causing us to assume the same for God that he loves us so much as to never send any of his children to hell. Thus bring God down to our level, and in another part of the book he implies that God limits himself, for whatever reason, but in a statement in the book Mack is told that God likes surprises, which is also a human trait not a God trait.

This emotional story gets your mind to misrepresent who God is and how the atonement is supposed to work. The Gospel is misrepresented in this story and how God feels about sin and judgment.

Psalm 50:21 these things you have done and I kept silent, you thought I was all together like you but I will rebuke you and set them in order before your eyes.

Reason #2. Page 169 God speaking "Mackenzie, judgment is not about destruction, but about setting things right."

Why do I have a problem about this statement?, because in another statement in the book on pages 205-207 were forced to bring our minds to believe in a concept of expectations versus a relationship, changing who the God of the bible is, and what he requires of us.

On page 206 it states: "the idea behind expectations requires that someone does not know the future or outcome and is trying to control behavior to get the desired result. Humans try to control behavior largely through expectations. I know you and everything about you. Why would I have an expectation other than what I already know? That would be foolish. And beyond that, because I have no expectations, you never disappoint me".

First, he is calling God a fool in this statement, because for example, God does know the future, and did have expectations for his people, King Saul's example, was "God" not grieved about Saul, yet he already knew Saul's disobedience would take place, and regretted making Saul King over Israel.

Was not God grieved about the human race and had Noah build an Ark, or grieved with Israel to the point to giving Moses the opportunity to become the father of the nations, of which Moses interceded for them. Does not God have requirements and expectations from all of us? Including his Son Jesus, who when after getting baptized God in a audible voice this is my son whom I am greatly pleased. How can God be pleased about something unless he had an expectation based on an act of obedience? Thus, the statement made to John the Baptist stating that he had to do this thing to fulfill the law

Rule of first mention. Genesis 4:7 if you do well you not be accepted? And if you do not do well sin lies at the door and its desire if for you but you should rule over it.

Notice that here the scripture is clear about expectations, yet in "The Shack" we're forced to think of a God who knows everything which is true but apply it to expectations which is an incorrect thinking pattern.

The bible is full of IF's would imply an expectation on God's part from HIS servants.

Side note; God refers to himself as Mack's servant. That is a big problem, read Isaiah 6 or consider the bema seat of Christ, who is serving who anyway?

Reason #3. Pages 118-120.

This is probably one of the grossest misconceptions of how God feels about sin.

But on page 120 it says this: "I'm not who you think I am, Mackenzie. I don't need to punish people for sin. Sin is its own punishment, devouring you from the inside. It's not my purpose to punish it: it's my joy to cure it."

Ok, this statement has only a fragment of truth in it, that is, it's not my purpose to punish it. Meaning sin. True, God's purpose is not to punish sin, but to punish sin is in his character. And is backed up in His word.

Also, to imply to "cure it" gives the reader the impression that sin is a sickness that we have no responsibility for, like getting cancer. Aren't we called to repentance, and then he will heal our land.

It would require an entire ream of paper to write down every scripture and conceptual thought gleaned from scripture to show how God feels about sin and his righteous requirements set before His people who are called by His name. Mack uses statements like this: "weren't you always running around killing people in the Bible? You just don't seem to fit the bill."

Then God says: "I am what I am. I'm not trying to fit anyone's bill."

I'm not asking you to believe anything, but I will tell you that you're going to find this day a lot easier if you simply accept what is, instead of trying to fit in into your preconceived notions."

"But if you are God, aren't you the one spilling out great bowls of wrath and throwing people into a burning lake of fire?"

Now this next statement is what throws the reader into a mind set to get the desired result when he "the writer" is trying to bring his point home.

"Honestly, don't you enjoy punishing those who disappoint you?"

Then God's statement: "I'm not who you think I am, Mackenzie. I don't need to punish people for sin. Sin is its own punishment, devouring you from the inside. It's not my purpose to punish it: it's my joy to cure it."

Now if you're a humanist these statements would make you feel good about who God is, unfortunately for unrepentant sinners, God is not a humanist and He is going to judge sin and cast into the lake of fire all his adversaries.

Jesus said himself that the Holy Spirit was going to come and bring to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

It's not a sickness but a behavior problem, it's an obedience problem.

By his statements "I'm not who you think I am, or, I am what I am, I'm not trying to fit anyone's bill"

These statements if your mind is unguarded will allow you to begin to doubt God's written word, since earlier in the book by Mack's own admission, his thoughts and perceptions of God were based on bible school, and the bible.

Reason #4: Page 182; Jesus speaking, "Who said anything about being a Christian? I'm not a Christian."

Then Mack states, "Does that mean that all roads will lead to you?"

"Jesus states, not at all but then says; "What it does mean is that I will travel any road to find you."

This apparently means Jesus will travel any road to join them in their self-transformation.

Dr. James B. DeYounge, ThD., Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Western Seminary, states: "I have known the author and Young and I and our families have interacted.. Paul (Young) and I belonged to a Christian "think tank" of sorts and we conversed about many theological issues. About 4 years ago Paul embraced Christian universalism and has defended this on several occasions.

This book promotes universal Reconciliation.

Also Christ states in the shack "I am the best way any human can relate to Papa/elousia and Sarayu."

But is Jesus only the best way? The words best way are ever present, "the best way to eat pancakes is with maple syrup" Yet that is not the only way to eat them. "The best way to Oregon from California is the I-5 highway." Yet it's not the only way to Oregon." This "best way" teaching is consistent with other inter-spirituality concepts in the book.

Reason #5: The Bible is not true because it reduces God to paper.

Pages 65-66, in seminary he had been taught that God had completely stopped any overt communication with moderns, preferring to have them only listen to and follow sacred Scripture, properly interpreted, of course. God's voice had been reduced to paper, and even that paper had to be moderated and deciphered by the proper authorities and intellects, It seemed that direct communication with God was something exclusively for the ancients and uncivilized, while educated westerners' access to God was mediated and controlled by the intelligentsia. Nobody wanted God in a box, just in a book. Especially in expensive one bound in leather with gilt edges, or was that gilt edges?

Let's tackle his statements;

The bible is God-breathed. Yes its true many men put pen to paper, but none the less The Holy Spirit infused their work with God's words.

Men of God were writing God's message from Genesis to Revelation.

Closing statements:

On his boat ride with sarayu, he knew he was in her presence because he could feel the tingling down his spine. Pg 195

In chapter 15 "the festival of friends" Pg 216

When he meets his father he feels euphoric.

"Suddenly to their right, from out of the darkness emerged Jesus, and Pandemonium broke out.

Bringing my thoughts to a close I must first tackle this word Pandemonium.

“a state of utter confusion and uproar, pandemonium the name for the capital of hell coined by John Milton, its French/Greek ; pan meaning all, and daimon meaning demon.

“You could say all demons.”

Pandemonism: worship of demons, or genii, localized in all sorts of natural phenomena.

There are some pragmatic teachers including the likes of John Kilpatrick, who would claim the power of God’s presence by a feeling or a manifestation that can’t be verified by scripture.

During one of John’s church services he stated that we need more Pandemonium, we need more of God.

Now I can’t prove this but the author of this book probably has been practicing a spirituality that brings him to an altered state of consciousness, I would love to have a talk with him and discuss with him his methods of prayer, “Contemplative” which would include manifestations.

I think of the Kundalini awakening so named by the Hindu religion, but this technique is also practiced by New Age believers, The Occult and Contemplatives.

This is going to bring people to doubt God’s word by the mere presence of a manifestation, (read the beautiful side of evil) I have heard preachers who promote this stuff say things like, don’t put God in a box, or don’t limit God. When we start to doubt someone’s teachings aren’t we thinking of a scripture or thought gleaned right out of God’s word?

Don’t we always compare what people teach by scripture, to test, to judge, to reprove, to rebuke? Yet they know what they are about to say will not line up with God’s written word so they say before hand don’t put God in a box. Or worse yet they call those who use scripture as their plumb line those old Pharisees. “No one wants to be a Pharisee, do they?”

The word says; Test the spirits, lest we be led astray. Simon the sorcerer was an example of someone who historically was reported to obtain secret knowledge. Most scholars will agree that was the beginning of Gnostic teachings that the disciples had to contend with.

A.W. Tozer said: “wrong ideas about God are not only the fountain from which the polluted waters of idolatry flow; they are themselves idolatrous. The idolater simply imagines things about God and acts as if they were true.”

“The Shack” is a book that promotes a Universal Reconciliation.

Pantheistic in nature and character, “the ground of all being” A God that does not judge sin and we should not judge sin in either, even in ourselves.

Sin isn’t even called sin but disappointment.

The Jesus portrayed in the book is the best way compared to others, and no matter what path your on Jesus will meet you there, who is never disappointed in his people and never expects anything from us, just relationship, whatever that means.

Paul Young’s god is not the God of the bible.

Unless this book is used for teaching purposes, to teach about detecting heresy, or a class on discernment, I would never recommend this book to anybody, especially those who are not grounded in their faith and could be in danger of spiritual shipwreck.

Eph 4:11-14

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

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;

1Tim 1:18-20

18 This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare;

19 holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith:

20 of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.

By Howard Radcliffe.

Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2008/12/26 11:03

Quote:

poet wrote:
CJaKfOrEsT:
In all due respect, you are making assumptions to my statements, and coming to conclusions that I have not made; or--- I may not be communicating myself well enough to get my thoughts out correctly. If that be the case IM sorry, I'll try and get better at this blog stuff.
I never justify hurting a child and at the same time demanding respect from them.

Brother, I think you have made wrong assumptions about my statements, as you have of some of the statements in the book. The "misconceptions about God" centred around Mack's understanding of who God is, based on what was presented to him by his earthly father. God appeared to Mack as a woman, until "He" could get Mack past his own unforgiveness toward his father, at which point He ceased appearing as a woman, and began to appear as a man. In this the Lord was gently leading Mack toward the realisation that is "closer than a mother", and is the proper representation of a Father, and not the erroneous one shown by his earthly one.

When I first saw God presented as a Woman, I was offended, but then I considered how God is compared to a mother in the Proverbs, and to a mother hen, protecting her chicks "under the shadow of *His* wings". In other words, He retained His masculine distinction, in spite of being described in "feminine terms". I heard once that the name "El Shaddai" bears the symbolism of God having breasts, in order to suckle "His young" (I believe Ron Bailey pointed this out in one of his sermons, so I welcome him to correct me if I got that wrong).

That, being said, is a slight deviation on my above point. I was not implying that Poet was condoning cruelty to children, only that Mack's "misconception of God" did condone such a thing, and therefore had to be forsaken, and corrected. That would be to put the book's statement in context, rather than drawing parallels with statements made by people who despise sound doctrine.

Quote:

The child who is mistreated will stand before God and give account for His or Her lack of respect toward their parents, and at the same time the parents will stand before God and give account also..

Again, this statement is responding to a "real life example" of the situation above. My friend turned his back on God, among other reasons, because of the "false notion of God presented to him, in his earthly father", in spite of his father proclaiming proper orthodoxy about God the Father. When he told his mother, "I just can't do what God wants me to do, to be saved." his mother replied, "How did you ever get the idea in your head that you had to **do** anything to be saved?" They believed, testified to the truth about "salvation by faith alone, which is not of works", and yet their home life implied that God required him to "do" something, on top of what Christ had done. All this because he was frequently "provoked to wrath". Note that the child's command to "honour his parents", is for his to take responsibility for his own actions, where the parental commandment to "not provoke his child to wrath" commands him to take responsibility for "his child's response" to his conduct (that thought should send a shudder through the spine of any parent).

Quote:

You don't have to be a theologian to know that God does and will, and if you are a child of God then you too will be chastened because He loves us and wants us to be a bride without spot or blemish.
The Shack wrongly portrays God on the whole chapters diatribe to how God deals with His children. titled "here come da judge"
Anyway here is my paper.

Firstly, not only does the Shack not deny Judgement, but it testifies to it, and to chastening. The chapter title "Here Come Da Judge" addressed the fact that, in Mack being offended at God for allowing his daughter to be abducted, he had in fact allowed himself to take the place of judge from God, and against God.

Sofia placed Mack in "God's shoes", so to speak, requiring him to choose which of his children would go to hell, and which wouldn't, based on their conduct. When Mack finally suggested, "Can I go for them?" Sofia let him off the hook, because he made the same choice as God, to die for their sins.

Sofia's comment, "Judgment is not about destruction, but about setting things right" does not deny the fact of judgement, but challenged his concept of the purpose of judgment. This event brought to my mind "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) It presents a God whose desire, in judgement is rehabilitation (isn't that the reason that the Spirit of Truth convicts the world of "sin, righteousness and judgement"?), and yet there are those who will ultimately reject such, and be condemned eternally.

Regarding your treatise, I will wait until I have had a chance to read it fully before I reply further. One question regarding it, before I do. How long did it take you to read the book before writing this, and how many times? (Sorry that was two:00 ps:)

Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2008/12/26 11:41

Quote:

Kohleth wrote:

Permit me a couple of questions on your final paragraph.

No problem, and here are some answers :-)

Quote:

-----Is backlash inherently wrong? I see the comments here focusing on bad theology more than popularity, which is presented as a notable but lesser concern.

No problem with backlash. I'm all for backlash. In fact, when I mentioned to friend of mine tonight that I had found myself impressed with the Shack (finished it tonight), he said, "What? Will the real Aaron please stand up? You? Impressed by something someone else wrote?" Brother I am an extreme scrutineer, and in fact approached this book with a high degree of scrutiny, expecting to have serious issues with it, on the onset.

Quote:

-----If "our theological intellect" is not in error, why would God offend it?

By that can I assume that you know all that there is to know about God? You are never challenged by reading the Scripture that a little "theological tweaking" is required, here and there?

Everyone embraces some error, even if minute. In fact, everyone could be justified in believing that they were the only one with a handle on truth. After all, we are only aware of our own deception when it is presented to us, at which point we are no longer deceived in that area. The question is, whether or not we have the wisdom to anticipate such a looming correction, when we still feel that we are right.

Quote:

-----Why would God use a questionable work of fiction before he would correct his people using Scripture? Or using teachers and prophets?

Brother, if you were to reread my post, you'd see earlier that I mentioned that such a book could direct our attention to ignored truth, contained in Scripture. That last paragraph was merely pointing back to such a statement.

Also, don't forget that the works of the reformers were considered to be "questionable", at best, by the mainstream of Christendom. My point of that last statement was to challenge us to consider that we may have chosen the "wrong side to be at for" in this theological contest. The Catholics derived that salvation was by works, citing James as their reference, and even Luther couldn't initially answer them, without denying the Epistle's authenticity. Could it be that, either we have missed something that the Shack is trying to bring into focus, or we have misread something within the Shack that causes us to see error, which is in fact not there.

For example, I read this in another forum:

Quote:

"Those who love me come from every system that exists. They were Buddhists or Mormons, Baptists or Muslims, Democrats, Republicans and many who don't vote or are not part of any Sunday morning or religious institutions."
the highlighted portion bothers me....a lot. Can someone help me out?

Here's a response:

Quote:

i think the keyword missed by many is WERE.

In fact, immediately after this quote comes the following:

Quote:

'Does that mean,' asked Mack, 'that all roads will lead to you?'
'Not at all,' smiled Jesus... 'Most roads don't lead anywhere. What it does mean is that I will travel any road to find you.'

So in other words, the original poster decided that the Shack promoted universalism, in spite of the very next statement contextualising the first, flatly denying such an accusation.

Quote:

Finally, why would God use this book instead of Scripture to have Christians "go on to perfection"? I think the word of God plus a few aids for motivation and discipleship are enough.

And you know what, so do the Jehovah's Witnesses.:-P Seriously, allow me to reiterate, Shack, pointing to Scripture, not replacing it.

Re: God's children / God's limitation - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2008/12/27 5:35

Quote:

poet wrote:
Reason #1. This will be pertaining to my previous statement about Page 97 stating God being who he is. The statement is good, but then in the entirety of the book, God is represented other than he really is. For example: Chapter 11 titled "Here come Da Judge"
Mack is put through an emotional roller coaster, then ultimately we, by Paul Young's writing prowess, on pages 162- 163 1. Mack is forced to choose to wo of his children that he must judge to hell, thus putting us in the same position concerning our own children, and in the place of God. Ultimately Mack refuses to do it, bringing home the point that of course he couldn't, because he loves his children too much to do such a horrendous thing, and is willing to take their place thus implying that Jesus did the same for us. And causing us to assume the same for God that he loves us so much as to never send any of his children to hell. Thus bring God down to our level, and in another part of the book 2. he implies that God limits himself, for whatever reason, but in a statement in the book Mack is told that God likes surprises, which is also a human trait not a God trait.

This emotional story gets your mind to misrepresent who God is and how the atonement is supposed to work. The Gospel is misrepresented in this story

ry and how God feels about sin and judgment.

Psalm 50:21 these things you have done and I kept silent, you thought I was all together like you but I will rebuke you and set them in order before your eyes.

Point 1.

In response to your statement, may I ask if you believe every human to be "God's child"? Christ Himself certainly made a different distinction (note the color changes to identify the speakers red for Christ, blue for the Pharisees -

Quote:
-----**41** Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.
42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.
43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.
44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.
John 8:41-44

Christ here has made a clear distinction between the regenerate, and the unregenerate. Mack, although a tortured soul in need of healing, was a believer, and therefore God's child. God will not send any of **His children** to hell. It is the unregenerate, ie the "children of the devil", which are destined for the "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

The above quote says, "he loves his children too much to do such a horrendous thing, and is willing to take their place thus implying that Jesus did the same for us", and you appear to take issue with such a notion, in spite of its similarity with this one, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) Isn't this the key component of the Gospel?

Point 2.

The mystery of the hypostatic union is that of God limiting Himself, becoming Human, without relieving Himself of His divinity.

Quote:
-----**5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
Philippians 2:5-8

Consider Christ crucified. Jurgen Moltmann entitled a book, "The Crucified God". While I haven't personally read the book, Art Katz refers to it often, in his preaching. The mere title conjures up an image that is little faced, in its enormity, "When Christ died, God died." The Omnipotent One **limited Himself** to such a capacity to enable Him to endure death.

The mere subjection of Himself to the restraints of time is a limitation. To be longsuffering toward us as He awaits our repentance is a limitation.

(to be continued...)

Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2008/12/27 7:09

Quote:

poet wrote:

Reason #2. Page 169 God speaking **"1. Mackenzie, judgment is not about destruction, but about setting things right."**
Why do I have a problem about this statement?, because in another statement in the book on pages 205-207 were forced to bring our minds to believe in a concept of 2. expectations versus a relationship, changing who the God of the bible is, and what he requires of us.
On page 206 it states: **"the idea behind expectations requires that someone does not know the future or outcome and is trying to control behavior to get the desired result. Humans try to control behavior largely through expectations. I know you and everything about you. Why would I have an expectation other than what I already know? That would be foolish. And beyond that, because I have no expectations, you never disappoint me"**.
First, he is calling God a fool in this statement, because for example, God does know the future, and did have expectations for his people, King Saul

For example, was "God" not grieved about Saul, yet he already knew Saul's disobedience would take place, and regretted making Saul King over Israel.

Was not God grieved about the human race and had Noah build an Ark, or grieved with Israel to the point of giving Moses the opportunity to become the father of the nations, of which Moses interceded for them. Does not God have requirements and expectations from all of us? Including his Son Jesus, who when after getting baptized God in an audible voice this is my son whom I am greatly pleased. How can God be pleased about something unless he had an expectation based on an act of obedience? Thus, the statement made to John the Baptist stating that he had to do this thing to fulfill the law

Rule of first mention. Genesis 4:7 if you do well will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well sin lies at the door and its desire is for you but you should rule over it.

Notice that here the scripture is clear about expectations, yet in "The Shack" we're forced to think of a God who knows everything which is true but apply it to expectations which is an incorrect thinking pattern.

The bible is full of IF's which would imply an expectation on God's part from HIS servants.

Side note; 3. God refers to himself as Mack's servant. That is a big problem, read Isaiah 6 or consider the bema seat of Christ, who is serving who anyway?

Okay, I've tried to break the above section into points, but it is difficult, because there is a great volume of misconception in it (I'm sorry, but I couldn't find a nicer way to put that, while maintaining integrity. I hope that statement won't close you off to what I am about to say).

Point 1.

I have already commented in an (http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id23641&forum35#207147) earlier post regarding the statement "judgment is not about destruction, but about setting things right", so I will not repeat them here.

Point 2.

This point of "rules vs relationship" is one of the hardest to convey, and easiest to be misconstrued. Consider that Paul wisely inserted into his Roman epistle "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2), as if anticipating that there was no way to convey the concept of "justification by faith" without such an accusation being levelled.

Firstly is required a proper understanding of the Law..

Quote:

-----**18** For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

19 Wherefore then *serveth* the law? **It was added** because of transgressions, **till the seed should come** to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a *mediator* is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

Galatians 3:18-20

Okay, in a sense the Law "was", in the beginning (John 1:1), although it was not in the form of the letter, but in the form of God, Himself. God had no expectation to man, in the garden, were to have a "knowledge of good and evil", but that he was to entrust his judgments to the One who truly "knows good and evil". It was about trusting the promise given by One who is trustworthy.

Through Christ's finished work on Calvary, we who have put our trust in Him have returned to that full stature of relationship with God, having received the witness of the Spirit, that we are God's children. True obedience is only possible out of a relationship with Him (Hebrews 11:6).

I don't know about you, but I am pleased with my children (see definition of a child of God in last post) regardless of their behaviour, whether it grieves me or not. The father was pleased with His Son, because of **who He was**. Christ's obedience proceeded out of who He was. And so does ours. Our conduct is a mere by-product of our nature, and God sees the heart, before and after the actions have occurred (Matthew 12:33, Luke 16:16, Romans 6:17, Ephesians 6:6, 1 Thessalonians 2:4).

Whether we are Calvinist, or Arminian, we have to admit that God knows our actions before they have occurred, and yet He dies for us, before they were ever committed. This is the point that is being conveyed here, granted from an Arminian perspective, more than Calvinist. Do I 100% agree with the intricacies of the authors' thought processes? Well, no. But I can say the same of almost every Christian author that I have read, and they are all quoting from the same Scripture.

This issue of being liberated from the bondage of the Law (which is really what it is), is often glossed over, or watered down

wn to present Christ's sacrifice as being lacking, to some degree.

Point 3.

I have already quoted Philippians 2:5-8, so I won't again. But one only needs to consider Christ's washing of the disciple's feet? One of the main reasons that the Pharisees rejected the Messiah, was that they expected a king, but received a servant. There is a difference between being a servant by necessity, and being one by choice.

(To be continued...)

Re: - posted by poet (), on: 2008/12/27 12:14

CJaKfOrEsT:

I agree that Christ came as a servant, but NOW he IS Lord and King.

Mack is seeing the Lord after he has been lifted up and in His exalted position.

I suppose depending upon which lens we look through we can perceive different things from the same writing.

Mack sees Jesus as a buddy, who he can pal around with, I see Jesus as someone who is to be worshipped, honored, exalted, and served, he does not serve me, the only ways he serves or served me was when he offered himself as a perfect sacrifice on the cross to pay for my transgressions.

Upon which time he proclaimed: "It is finished."

He is also my perfect mediator, who prays for not only me but His church.

Theologically, we may agree or disagree, I'm not sure at this time, but we just see the book differently, In my reading of it I was perceiving an agenda in the writing is all.

God bless you and keep you.