

## [The Shack - Is It Christian?](#)



By [Nathan Jones](#)

Few Christian books in the world today have been compared to John Bunyan's classic *Pilgrim's Progress* in its enormous impact in shaping the world's faith. William P. Young's 256-page self-published novel *The Shack*, though, has achieved that epic comparison.

Within a year after its May 2007 publication date, *The Shack* sold a whopping 1.1 million copies and has dominated *The New York Times*, *Publishers Weekly* and *USA Today's* bestsellers list. A feature film is even in the works. The popular book can be found in most Christian's bookshelves, Bible studies, and even Sunday morning services. But, is the message of the book Christian?

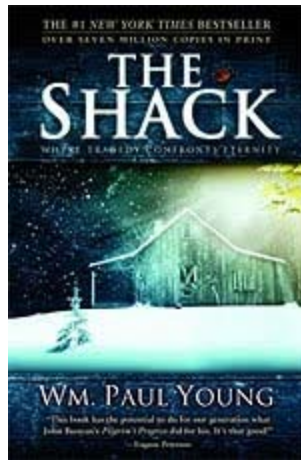
For an answer to that question, we'll go to Eric Barger, the founder and director of [Take a Stand! Ministries](#). Eric is an authority on the cults, the New Age, and rock music today. From his past as a former drug addict and rock n' roll musician who was deeply involved in the New Age movement, Eric has emerged since he gave his life to Jesus Christ to become one of today's greatest defenders of Christianity in America.



Eric Barger

### **What is your attitude about the book *The Shack*?**

In an era when Christians will defend to the teeth the Harry Potter books, they will see nothing wrong with *The Shack*.



It sounds like I am really down on the Church, but I am for the Church. My ministry is to the local church. I go out and speak in the local churches 40 or more times a year, 40 weeks a year. And so, I want to see the church changed and turned around so we will all understand Biblical thinking and get a Biblical worldview in their hearts.

When you have *The Shack* come in so fraught with doctrinal problems, though, it makes you wonder how could churches have accepted this so easily? The only reason can be that we have turned off our biblical worldview and let our emotions guide us, because *The Shack* is a very emotional story.

*The Shack* was written by a fellow named William Paul Young. He likes to be called Paul. He is a Bible school graduate from Warner Pacific College in Portland, Oregon, and later went to another Bible school in Canada. This is his first book and there are several things in it.

First of all, God passes a note to him to tell him to meet Him in the shack, which is a place in the Oregon wilderness where his little girl we assume from the book was murdered. This is a very tragic story. So, God is now reduced to passing notes to people. I thought God spoke through His Word and through His Holy Spirit to us, but now its notes.

When God comes to the shack He comes in the form of an African-American women named Papa. Now, this is tough to talk about because of the genders going on here. Well, Papa is a god, an African style or a black god from Polynesian occultism which is where it came from. Now, Young is not about to announce this when he goes on Christian TV and radio and talk about this. There have been many Christian ministries that I am shocked that they have offered this book and talked about it favorably. But, that Papa figure comes from Polynesian occultism.

The Holy Spirit in this book is an Asian women and the Jesus in the book is never called the Christ. What does that tell you? It is another Jesus, and, of course, Paul warns us that that there will be false Jesus' and false gospels and false spirits. [2 Corinthians 11:3-4](#) fits that classification.

I don't think that it is an accident that Jesus was never called "the Christ" in the book. We also have a Trinity but not THE Trinity in the book.

The next thing we see, and there are many things but I will just bring out a couple, Jesus is said to be the best way to know Papa, not THE way to know Papa. Very subtle language there. That leaves the door open for Universalism to be the truth that Young is trying to bring out.

The third thing is that the author crafts God into the image of a man. It says in [Romans 1:21-23](#) that is forbidden for us to do, to craft God into the image of a man. I know that it is a novel and I realize you can take liberties in a novel that you can't in some other type of book, but in this case Young is playing with something that the Scriptures speak so clearly about.

The author is a good friend with a professor at Western Seminary in Portland who has written a very scholarly 38 page paper and now has broken ties with his friend, Paul Young. The author of this paper is named James DeYoung. He has written this paper saying that he knows that Paul Young is a Universalist since they've had arguments about it. They have talked about it over and over and yet Paul Young is going on Christian TV programs and in Q&A sessions after he speaks in churches and volunteering out of the blue saying, "I am not a Universalist." Nobody is asking the question, but he is volunteering it anyway. And here is why, because according to James DeYoung, this professor at Western Seminary, the editors of the book spent over a year trying to convince Young to take the universalism out of the book, and he never got it all the way out. It is still there.

This is not just a guess that Young is a Universalist. No, this is a guy who is teaching what is called Reconciling Universalism, which is different than the idea that all paths lead to God, which is Classical Universalism. Reconciling Universalism says that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world and that God wishes no one to perish, and so we're all saved.

Reconciling Universalism is the same thing that Carlton Pearson fell into up in Tulsa. It is the same heresy. By the way, the doors of that church are totally closed now. He sent the

rest of his people to a Unitarian Church in Tulsa. He followed the same idea that we're already saved and we need to tell the world, "Bring the missionaries in off the field, because if they are in a dangerous place they're in the wrong place because we don't have to tell anybody anything since everybody's saved, whether they ever heard about Jesus or not." This completely destroys the message of the Bible to think like that, but that is what Reconciliation Universalism is about. And *The Shack* teaches it.

It is shocking to me how many seasoned Christians have shut off their Biblical thinking because of the emotional grip the story has on them from the very beginning of the book.

If you have fallen for the teachings in *The Shack* and are now not positive that you know the Jesus of the Bible as Lord and Savior, you need to pray a simple prayer and ask Him to come into your heart and then turn from your sin and walk toward Him and follow Him and seek Him. It is one thing to pray a simple prayer, but it is another thing to then turn from your sin and walk after Him. I know when I read in the Scripture that Paul said he was the worst of sinners. I wondered if God know who I was, because I know what I was. And yet, God forgave me of my sins and cleansed me and delivered me. He can change any life, any person. He loves us. He wants the best for us. He is just there for you if you'll call out to Him and trust in the name of Jesus.