

The Shack

An Interpretive Review by Pastor Luke Biggs

April 15, 22, 29, 2009

Unit 1

I. Introduction: Our "Post-Christian Culture"

- Decline in church attendance does not equate with a decline in Spiritual interest!
- People (more than ever) are interested in "God-Sized" conversations done in a respectful way.
- Culture often hands Christianity an open invitation to engage people spiritually.

II. "The Shack": A three-pronged approach:

- A theological approach!
- An experiential approach!
- A practical approach!

III. Overview: Author & Genre

A. Author: Wm. Paul Young

1. Baby Boomer.

2. Post-Modern

- + Historical Epochs
- + Modernism
 - + Truth (right/wrong)
 - + Truth = Discernable
 - + Progress = Good
 - + Institutions = Honorable/Good
- + Deconstructionism
- + Postmodernism
 - + Question everything!
 - + Truth is relative!
 - + Life is messy!
 - + Institutions (generally) are manipulative and untrustworthy.
 - + Point: When you read the book use discernment!

3. Unchurched

B. Genre:

1. Fiction.
2. Allegorical Fiction
 - + More experiential than didactic.
 - + Not exact!

IV. Plot & Themes:

A. Elevator Description:

- A character named MacKenzie
- Experiences one of the worst tragedies a human being could ever go through!
- The result of this is two-fold:
 - ✓ MacKenzie sinks into a depression.
 - ✓ Becomes distant with God.
- God hungers for MacKenzie to wrestle - through the "Great Sadness"
- In the process MacKenzie contends with four things we all struggle with:
 - ✓ Our box - sized understanding of God.
 - ✓ Our critical attitude toward God.
 - ✓ The meaning of "darkness" in life.
 - ✓ Forgiveness.

B. Themes:

- The Trinity
- Evil
- Forgiveness
- Choice
- Judgment
- Substitutionary Atonement
- Relationship
- Institution
- Heaven
- Unionism

V. Organization:

- A. Unit Two: "Invitation into the Shack" (meeting God, The Trinity, Free-Will, Evil)
- B. Unit Three: "Getting to the Heart" (forgiveness, judging God, substitutionary atonement, God's judgment, hell, heaven)

VI. Questions: