

The Gaithers Accepting The Emerging Church And Its False God

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea follows these two articles about this news event.

<http://wayoflife.org/files/bcbd31fb2901f9edf26598eea956af64-266.html>

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The 19th annual Family Fest hosted by Bill and Gloria Gather will features William Young, author of *The Shack*, and the 2005 Gaither Praise Gathering featured emerging church leaders Brian McLaren and Leonard Sweet (“Gaither Family Fest,” Lighthouse Trails, March 7, 2009).

Young is tied into the emerging church (he spoke in February at Zondervan’s National Pastor’s Convention in San Diego, which was an emerging church gathering with Brian McLaren and Rob Bell), and his book depicts the false god of the emerging church.

“The Shack” is a fictional account of a man who is bitter against God for allowing his youngest daughter to be murdered and who returns to the scene of the murder, an old shack in the woods, to have a life-changing encounter.

The “God” that he encounters, though, is not the God of the Bible. Young depicts the triune God as a young Asian woman named “Sarayu” (supposedly the Holy Spirit), an oriental carpenter who loves to have a good time (supposedly Jesus), and an older black woman named “Elousia” (supposedly God the Father).

God the Father is also depicted as a guy with a ponytail and a goatee. Young’s god is the god of the emerging church. He is cool, loves rock & roll, is non-judgmental, does not exercise wrath toward sin, does not send unbelievers to an eternal fiery hell, does not require the new birth, puts no obligations on people, doesn’t like traditional Bible churches, and does not accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God.

The Shack’s god says: “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...” (p. 120), and, “Those who love me come from every system that exists. They were Buddhists or Mormons, Baptists or Muslims ... I have no desire to make them Christian” (p. 182).

“The Shack” is another building block of the end-times Tower of Babel.

Gaither Family Fest To Include *The Shack* Author

Editors at Lighthouse Trails

<http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/index.php?p=1398&c=1>

The Shack by William P. Young has been on the [New York Times Best Seller List](#) for 15 weeks, currently in the number one position for Fiction books. The book has been promoted by popular Christian figures such as Eugene Peterson and Gayle Erwin (*The Jesus Style*). What's more, numerous Christian ministries such as Probe Ministries (an apologetics group based out of Texas) are endorsing the book. Probe's associate speaker, Sue Bohlin says "The Shack became one of my all-time favorite books before I had even finished it." [1](#)

In addition to receiving wide acceptance from the Christian community at large, the author speaks at many evangelical churches. On September 19th and 20th, for instance, Young will be speaking at North Valley Calvary Chapel in Yuba City, California, church of Calvary pastor Bob Fromm. [2](#) However, even though this is a Calvary Chapel church, Calvary Distribution (the resource and book venue for the Calvary Chapel movement) has issued an "Official Statement" regarding *The Shack*. Calvary Distribution's book reviewer, Keyan Soltani, calls *The Shack* "a dangerous book." The Official Statement reads:

Due to the popularity of this book and the positive endorsements it has received from the Christian community, we felt that it would be prudent to explain why, as those who hold fast to the word/nature of God as inerrant, we will not be endorsing this book. Some of our concerns include:

- The minimizing of the word of God: *The Shack* errs in the presumption that God desires to be freed from His word as expressed by the characters, yet, the Psalmist tells us in Psalm 138:2 "For You have magnified Your word above all Your name."
- The redefining of the nature of God: the book implies a theology of modalism which is defined as the non Trinitarian belief that the Heavenly Father, Resurrected Son and Holy Spirit are different modes or aspects of one God, as perceived by the believer, rather than three distinct persons in God Himself.
- The book's conversational tone is intended to catch the reader off guard with overt casualness. There is a personalized-trademarked version of God that requires the least bit of commitment; seeker-friendly experience over truth; an air of anti-authority for the spiritually lazy consumer. The double-speak and theology that is embedded in this book with its underlying condescension, protesting agenda, and liberal theology are genetic markers of the emergent church.

We recognize the enormous popularity of *The Shack* but are wary of the overlying theological implications and the presentation of the person of God within this book.

In a Lighthouse Trails report on *The Shack*, it was brought out that co-author of *The Shack*, Wayne Jacobsen [3](#) resonates with the leaders in the emerging church, which may well have influenced the final draft of *The Shack*.

The book refers to God as "the ground of all being" that "dwells in, around, and through all things--ultimately emerging as the real" (p. 112)--this is the ripe fruit of contemplative/emerging spirituality. One can find this language and definition of God in the writings of John Shelby Spong and Marcus

Borg, and the concept overflows within the emerging camp. Let there be no mistake, this description of God does not mean that God upholds everything; it means that God is the essence of all that exists (in other words, He dwells in all humans and all creation).

New Age proponent Sue Monk Kidd would agree with *The Shack's* definition of God: in her book, *First Light*, she says God is the graffiti on the building (p. 98).

It is possible that a key to understanding *The Shack* could actually lie with Monk Kidd who was once a conservative Southern Baptist Sunday school teacher. She began studying the teachings of mystic Thomas Merton, which eventually led her out of the Southern Baptist arena and into the New Age. Today, she follows goddess spirituality (Sophia) and has said in one of her books that God dwells in all things, even excrement (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*).

There is perhaps a striking similarity between *The Shack's* "God" the Father and the Black Madonna used in Monk Kidd's best selling novel, *The Secret Life of Bees* (coming out soon as a movie). Monk Kidd says the Black Madonna she chose is "a powerful symbolic essence that could take up residence inside of [the novel's character, Lily] and become catalytic in her transformation."⁴ The fact that both Sue Monk Kidd and William Young have chosen a *Black Madonna* figure as representing "God" and that both talk about the *ground of all being* (God in all things) cannot be ignored.

Episcopal priest (panentheist) Matthew Fox says, "Today the Black Madonna is returning. She is coming, not going, and she is calling us to something new (and very ancient as well)... [T]he Black Madonna archetype awakens in us and ... she is so important for the twenty-first century.... The Black Madonna invites us into the dark and therefore into our depths. This is what the mystics call the "inside" of things, the essence of things. This is where Divinity lies. It is where the true self lies.... Because she is a goddess, the Black Madonna resides in all beings. She is the divine presence inside of creation"⁵

The gap between the New Age and Christianity is being narrowed, and *The Shack* is another disastrous and deceptive tool that will bring this about. When [David Jeremiah](#) favorably quoted and referenced Sue Monk Kidd in his book, *Life Wide Open*, we knew this would further close the gap that gave Christianity its distinctness. It is this distinctness that allows sinful man to see his need for a Savior. When that gap closes, the Gospel message will be hidden from view from even more people than it is today. *The Shack* has brought about some huge strides in causing this to take place.

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: It is obvious that the great apostasy is upon us. The Gathers have honored God with their lips for decades but now they feature the author of a book (The Shack) which makes a mockery of the true God? How can this be? Are they ignorant? Or are they just like the fallen children of Israel in Isaiah's day who worshiped God with their lips but their hearts were far from Him?

Isa 29:13-14 Therefore the LORD said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men, Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden." (NKJ)

Some are shocked that Gayle Erwin has embraced the Emerging Church and "The Shack." Based on my face-to-face interactions with Gayle, and his treatment of Roger Oakland at a pastor's conference, I am not the least bit surprised that a few more wolf hairs are showing through his sheep's clothing.