



Finding God in The Shack

Randal Rauser

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What would it be like to lose your youngest child to a serial killer? And then to have God invite you out for a conversation at the very shack where the terrible deed took place? And then imagine that the door to that shack of horrors opened . . . and before you knew it you had been swept up in the motherly embrace of a large African American woman? This most unlikely of stories, as told in William Young's The Shack, has become a runaway bestseller and it is easy to see why. The book brings us on a redemptive journey through the shacks' of deepest pain and suffering in our lives, guided by the triune God of Christian faith. But even as lives have been transformed through this book, other readers have sternly denounced it as a hodgepodge of serious theological error, even heresy. With one pastor urging his congregation to read it and another forbidding his congregation to, many Christians have simply been left confused. Aware both of the excitement and uncertainty generated by The Shack, theologian Randal Rauser takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the pages of the story. In successive chapters he explores many of the book's complex and controversial issues. Thus he explains why God the Father is revealed as an African American woman, he defends the book's theology of the Trinity against charges of heresy and he considers its provocative denial of a Trinitarian hierarchy. But at its heart The Shack is a response to evil and so Rauser spends the final three chapters considering the book's explanation for why God allows evil, how the atoning work of Christ offers new hope for a suffering world and ultimately how this hope extends to all of creation. Through these chapters Rauser offers an honest and illuminating discussion which opens up a new depth to the conversation while providing the reader with new opportunities for Finding God in The Shack. "If you have ever had a conversation on The Shack, whether with an enthusiast or a critic, you will want to invite this skilled and accessible theologian into the conversation. Before you have read a dozen pages you will know why we need to keep company with theologians. They help us keep our conversations on God intelligent, informed and irenic." Eugene H. Peterson Professor Emeritus of Spiritual Theology, Regent College, Vancouver, B.C.



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Ben Papenfuss:

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