

The Shack

I read *The Shack* after a copy of the book was given to me by a friend. My friend was convinced at first, that this man's story was nonfiction.

The story, written by a Missionary Kid(MK) now grown was originally intended as a gift to his children and grandchildren. The author did not take pains to publish, it was through the effort of friends that his story was finally published.

The book is an account of a man and his family, whose lives were shattered by the kidnapping, rape and murder of the youngest daughter during a family outing. With that setting, the story continues with Mac's personal struggle with suppressed anger, grief, unanswered questions about who God is and was, and the gradual death of faith in a God who could allow such tragedy, terror, and ugliness.

The story presents his journey, through strange encounters with the persons of the Godhead. Primarily, the book is not about nor intended to be a treatise on theology or any one set of doctrines. Although many readers have indignantly suggested that he needs to get his spiritual house in order, they are unquestionably taking one man's story of suffering and healing, and making it into another creature. This is one man's story, his journey, and we don't have to agree with the way he tells his story.

In my estimation, one tragedy I found is that Christian denominations compete with others to claim a higher level of truth because their doctrines don't match. This story is not about 'correct doctrine,' it is about a man's journey towards healing.

In researching the author's life, I read that he was a missionary child whose parents were involved in work in the remote and mountainous country of New Guinea. He attended boarding school, though he does not specify where or what time period.

With this discovery, the question that came to plague me was *What happened to this guy? Something sure did. I know something terrible happened and I need to find it out.*

The other tragedy was my attempt to connect with the author as a fellow MK. As a recovering MK, I desired to connect with and encourage my peer, but sadly, neither the author nor his publishers have responded to my inquiry. *Let sleeping dogs lie*, they say.

The author's story of successive rape on the mission field, in the boarding school he attended, and the severe impact of these traumas are not addressed or even admitted by those who evaluate his book. Not one evaluation of *The Shack* mentions his struggle to overcome. Not one speaks about the sexual attack on this child and the response of the mission board and the denomination to this tragedy.

Cover-up continues to be the by-word of Christian missionary denominations.