

## My Thoughts on the Shack

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The book "The Shack" is a Christian novel by Canadian author William P. Young, published in 2007. The novel became a USA Today bestseller, having sold one million copies by June, 2008. The book is fiction but is based on the author's life experience and has never made claims of biblical truth, theology and philosophy to the extent of the story line. I personally have never read the book but, have watched the movie.

Regardless of what phrase you use to describe the book or the movie, many of the "theological arguments" against the book wouldn't exist if they remembered the fictional and metaphorical nature of it.

On the other hand, people who over-allegorize the fictional nature of the work will miss out on what the story is really about: to taste, to feel, and to see something that a chart of allegorical parallels can never achieve in America's current culture and anti-Christian climate. I understand we live in a generation of people that aren't interested in the Christian faith and have lost sight of what made America great.

A good example of a realistic fiction will possess a clearly defined personality that exhibits growth through the course of the story. Often the growth of self-awareness usually comes with hardships, struggles, pain, suffering and difficulties. A good example of metaphors used is C. S. Lewis, a well-known author and apologist, is best known for his seven volume series entitled The Chronicles of Narnia. His writings are one of the most well known in Christian circles for using metaphors and symbols to represent bigger ideas than the books represent.

Although Christian symbolism can be found in The Chronicles, Lewis recognized the importance of moving beyond areas in which people that are not open to the beliefs of Christianity. C.S. Lewis believed the best way was to create a fictional world in which it would be easier unbelieving to accept. This is similar to what Young did.

Even though Christian themes are present, the Chronicles are not dependent on them. Peter J. Schakel, a professor of English at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, states that a non-Christian reader can approach the book as a fictional story and "be moved by the exciting adventures and the archetypal meanings, and not find the Christian elements obtrusive or offensive". For this reason, "the Narnian stories have been so successful in getting into the secular world". The Bible has metaphors and symbols that are throughout it. For example the Christian characteristics are called sheep.

In John 10:27 NIV

*27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"*

John 10:14-15 NIV

*14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—*

*15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

The Lord Jesus Christ used parables to simply mean any fictive illustration in the form of a brief narrative. A parable is the simplest of narratives.

(1) McClintock and Strong defines Parable as (b) It signifies a fictitious narrative invented for the purpose of conveying truth in a less offensive or more engaging form than that of direct assertion.

Here is a short list of Old and New Testament examples:

Nathan reproving King David 2 Sam.12:2-3  
Jotham exposed the folly of the Shechemites Judges 9:7-15  
Addressed by Jehoshaphat to Amaziah 2 Kings 14:9-10  
Balaam took up his parable Num.23:7  
Job continued his parable Job 27:1  
Parable of the seed - Mt.13:18-23  
Parable of the Kingdom - Mt.13:24-30  
Parable of the Leaven - Mt.13:33  
Parable of the tares - Mt.13:36-52  
Parable of the Householder - Mt.21:33-41  
Parable of the Fig tree (return of Christ) – Mt.24:32-  
Parable of the mystery of the Kingdom of God – Mk.4:10-12  
Parable of the sower of the word – Mk.4:13-33  
Parable of the garment – Lk.5:36-39  
Parable of the Blind lead the Blind – Lk.6:39-49  
Parable of the Sower – Lk.8:4-10  
Parable of the Seed of God's word – Lk.8:11-18  
Parable of the Rich man – Lk.12:16-40  
Parable of the fig tree – Lk.13:6-9  
Parable of the Wedding – Lk.14:7-15  
Parable of the great supper – Lk.14:16-24  
Parable of the sheep – Lk.15:3-10  
Parable of the revenge – Lk.18:1-8  
Parable of the self-righteous – Lk.9-14  
Parable of the Nobleman – Lk.19:11-27  
Parable of the man & vineyard – Lk.20:9-16  
Parable of the fig tree – Lk.21:29-36  
Parable of the thief and robber – Jn.10:1-6

It's apparent that we have several parables in the Holy Bible. So, a parable is one of the simplest of narratives. It sketches a setting, describes an action, and shows the results. It often involves a character facing a moral dilemma, or making a questionable decision and then suffering the consequences of that choice. As with a fable, a parable generally relates a single, simple, consistent action, without extraneous detail or distracting circumstances. Young has stated in interviews that he sees *The Shack* as metaphorical or a parable rather than allegorical.

A parable is like a metaphor that has been extended to form a brief, coherent fiction. Christian parables are stories about ordinary men and women who find in the midst of their everyday lives surprising things happening. They **are not about** "giants of the faith". After the book and movie version are long forgotten God's word will continue to provide the only real truth that we will need. The shack reach others that wouldn't attend a church or listen to a believer so let's understand it is only a fictitious narrative NOVEL and isn't based on truth of God's word. That's my opinion.

