



# Finding God in the Shack: Seeking Truth in a Story of Evil and Redemption

By Roger E. Olson

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*The Shack* has touched millions of readers with its portrayal of a compassionate God in the face of great evil. Many have identified with the main character's Great Sadness, the terrible burden of grief that often accompanies and follows a deep loss, for the Great Sadness is part of the human condition. And it compels us to ask, Where is God? Who is God? Roger Olson, who has faced his own Great Sadness, finds a good deal of comfort in this much beloved, story as have so many others. Some may ask, however, Is God really like that? Is that really how God responds to evil? Can God be trusted? Olson also views *The Shack* with a theologian's eye and finds much sound truth. He delves into many of the significant issues raised by the book such as forgiving those who have done us great evil, how God acts in the world, how God is three persons in one and what difference this makes to us. While he offers his own criticisms of the book, he largely finds the truth about God in *The Shack*.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

For readers with religious or biblical questions, Olson offers a theological, easy-to-understand analysis on the "unusual portrait of God" found in *The Shack*. (Gail Welborn, Montgomery's Journey, November 2009)

The extraordinary success of *The Shack* and the wave of discussions it has engendered combine to make Olson's work an important commentary. (Darold Morgan, Christian Ethics Today, Fall 2009)

A helpful guide. At once a guide for the seekers and a reference manual for Christians who might be helping them in their search. Olson highlights each theological point raised in *The Shack* and expands on it from a biblical perspective. A handy study guide with questions is included at the end of the book. *Finding God in the Shack* would be a great companion to a book discussion group in your neighborhood or church. (Lauren Yarger, Christian Performing Artists ([christianperformers.blogspot.com](http://christianperformers.blogspot.com)), May 29, 2009)

Read *The Shack* first and then read through Olson's treatment of its themes. Olson's book also can be used in a class or group setting since it includes a study guide. Olson's clarifications are excellent. *Finding God in the Shack* will give us additional biblical information to keep us grounded in our faith. (John Dobbs, The Christian Chronicle, May 2009)

"Olson offers a fair and wise assessment." (Derek Melleby, ENGAGE, Spring 2009)

"I kept wondering what a good theologian would make of all this and was not disappointed when one of the nation's leading evangelical scholars stepped up to address the issues raised in *The Shack*. Dr. Olson, professor of theology at Baylor's George Truett Seminary, gives us his just-released *Finding God in the Shack*, a book conveniently divided into twelve chapters with a study guide; perfect for a quarterly group study or reading circle." (Jim Miller Book Review, March 11, 2009)

"If you have questions about *The Shack*, and if your questions are theological, and if some have suggested that this book is full of heresy and you are wondering about the book, then you need to read Roger Olson. The reason this book is the one you need is because Roger Olson is a very good theologian and Roger Olson has read the book (some critics haven't) and Roger Olson is not on some defense of the book or 'out to attack' the book. It is one of the only discussions of the novel that is both theologically alert and fair minded." (Scot McKnight, Jesus Creed ([blog.beliefnet.com/jesuscreed](http://blog.beliefnet.com/jesuscreed)), February 10, 2009)

"Written by theology professor Roger Olson at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, the book attempts to defuse concerns over *The Shack*'s unorthodox depictions of God and the Trinity. Dr. Olson correctly points out that much of Mr. Young's novel is actually quite biblical." (Robin Russell, United Methodist Portal ([www.umportal.org](http://www.umportal.org)), March 6, 2009)

"Author Roger Olson takes the reader on a play by play of William Young's *The Shack* as he explores the book's many complex and controversial issues. The discussion is illuminating as well as intriguing." (Kenny T., Book Bargains and Previews ([www.bookbargainsandpreviews.com](http://www.bookbargainsandpreviews.com)), February 2009)

#### About the Author

Roger E. Olson (PhD, Rice University) is professor of theology at George W. Truett Theological Seminary

of Baylor University in Waco, Texas. He is the author of *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform*, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity & Diversity* and *The Westminster Handbook to Evangelical Theology*. He is also coauthor of *20th-Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age* and *Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God* (both with Stanley J. Grenz), and of *The Trinity* (with Christopher A. Hall).

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