

settled are challenged and unsettled again. Can we be sure of anything?

With the children, we've been learning the old song "Count your Blessings": Count your blessings and remember what the Lord has done. Remembering what the Lord has done is one thing we can be sure of. As another chorus puts it, "Have you found rest and peace within... Tell what the Lord has done for you." Why? "Others may need him, too."

These are unsettling days, filled with uncertainties. Where can we find a hope we can count on for tomorrow? Count our blessings, see what God has done. There we will find a hope to carry us through whatever tomorrow holds. Tell what the Lord has done. Share that story so others can see the light of hope.



*Rev. Carey Jo Johnston*

## THE SHACK

Have you heard of *The Shack*? (No, I'm not talking about a cottage on Pigeon Lake.) *The Shack*, a novel by Canadian William Paul Young, has received major attention in the North American Christian community. The reaction to this novel ranges from rave reviews to claims of undiluted heresy.

The author, William Paul Young, explains in an interview with *Faith Today* magazine (Nov/Dec 2008), he didn't write the novel as a precise theological document. Rather, his wife

encouraged him to write it for his children, to help them understand his own "tortured spiritual journey." He came through very difficult circumstances and a time of healing to "a new understanding of God. Instead of a distant, judgmental God, he came to experience God as intimate and loving."

Eugene Peterson, author of *The Message*, says *The Shack* "has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* did for his."

So, what's all the buzz about? "The book's storyline involves Mack, an Oregon family man, whose six-year-old daughter is murdered by a serial rapist. Four years later as he goes through "the great sadness" feeling cut off from God, Mack receives a mysterious invitation from "Papa," his wife's favourite name for God, to revisit the remote crime scene, a shack in the mountains. There, Mack meets all three members of the Godhead. God the Father at first appears as a large African-American woman (later as the Father), Jesus as an ordinary-looking Jewish man and the Spirit as an artistic Asian woman. Conversations about life, tragedy and the ways of God follow. Mack returns a changed man" (*Faith Today*, Nov/Dec 2008, p. 21)

For me, the portrayal of the relationships between the three persons of the Trinity and how God is in relationship within the Godhead as well as with us makes the book worth reading. Grappling with the exact nature of the Trinity, God as three persons with one nature (essence), has kept theologians busy for centuries. This book very poignantly describes this central and defining relationship of the Christian faith.

Do I agree with everything in the novel? I can't say that I do. However, I'm still thinking about why I would or wouldn't agree with some of the ideas in the book. Is it worth a read? Yes.

At the very least it may help you gain a deeper appreciation for God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and how we can live in loving relationship with him.