

Family

Book sees God through new eyes

This summer, I finally read “The Shack” by Wm. Paul Young. Several friends had been urging me to read this best-seller, but I rarely read what’s been called “Christian fiction.”

I usually find the theology to be bland or just plain bad, so I was planning on skipping “The Shack” as well. But, needing something to read, I finally broke down and gave it a try. I have to admit that my friends were right. I thoroughly enjoyed the book – and its theology.

The plot is fairly simple. Mack’s 5-year-old daughter Missy had been kidnapped during a family camping trip. Her body was never found, but her dress and blood-stained floor boards were found in a shack not far from the campsite. Missy was presumed dead.

Mack had never gotten over the tragedy, had given up on church and God. One day he found a note in the mailbox inviting him to return to the shack where Missy’s dress had been found. The note was signed Papa, which was Mack’s wife’s name for God. After much deliberation, Mack decides to follow up on the invitation. He goes back to the shack.

While there he encounters the Trinity – Papa, a large, comforting black woman who loves to cook; Jesus, a Middle Eastern carpenter whose nose was too big; and Sarayu, an Asian woman who is small, nymph-like and almost ethereal. They invite, guide, encourage, and challenge Mack to deal with his grief, anger, and abandonment of God. God leads Mack on the most profound journey of his life.

It is this depiction of the Trinity as two women and a very human, not at all handsome Middle Eastern man that has stirred up the most controversy about the book. Such Trinitarian images were not new to me. They seem to be a combination of Eastern Orthodox and progressive Trinitarian theologies, so I found them, rather than troubling, to be refreshing.

Too often our image of God remains stagnant, unchanged and unchallenged from what we imagined God to be when we were in kindergarten. Young’s Trinity demands that we see God to be greater than our imaginings or our preconceived notions about just who God ought to be. This book helps the reader realize that we cannot, should not envision God in just a few, or even just one way. God is bigger than our human minds can ever possibly know, and Papa, Je-

Carol Rahn

• From the Pulpit

sus, and Sarayu invite the reader to get to know God once again, perhaps in a new way, different than ever before.

I also appreciate Young’s Trinitarian relationship to be one of love. It is love that binds the Three Persons together and love that binds God to creation, and especially to humanity, sinful though we may be. I hope that if anyone takes anything away from this book it will be the critical nature of God’s eternal love. No matter how estranged our relationship might be with God or with others, or even with ourselves, God’s love is still there, we can never stop God from loving us.

One criticism of the novel is that the focus becomes too much of a self-centered spirituality that might endorse the “I’m spiritual, but not religious” philosophy that is becoming so popular in our society. On the surface this may be true, but not entirely. The inter-relationship of the Trinity itself enforces the idea of community and the interdependence of the Three Persons one upon another as a model for human relationships. And although Mack might be transformed by his singular encounter with God, he still relies on family and friends, not only to continue to deal with Missy’s death, but to reclaim his own life after he leaves the shack.

Author Young acknowledges that this book might not be for everyone, but I would encourage folks to give it a try. It might not be the book for you. The Trinitarian image or the theology might not be where you are right now.

But we need to remember that this is a novel. It is not a formalized statement of orthodox theology, nor is it a theology textbook about the Trinity. It is story, pure and simple. A story with God as three of the main characters, yes, but a story nonetheless. It is also one man’s idea of how God may be for him, and perhaps for others. It is not intended to be a “one-size-fits-all” statement about God.

Summer may be almost over, but if you want a book to curl up with as colder weather sets in, give “The Shack” a try. You, like Mack, just might encounter God again for the first time.



Joshua Robert Adams and Jessica Renee Morton

September wedding planned by Colby grad

Jessica Renee Morton and Joshua Robert Adams plan to marry Saturday, Sept. 12, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Colby.

The bride is the daughter of Don and Melinda Morton of Colby. She is a granddaughter of Don and Rosa Morton of El Dorado, and the late Glen and Shirley Stragey of Colby. She is a 2004 graduate of Colby High School, a 2006 graduate of Colby Community College and now

a student at Fort Hays State University. She works at the Days Inn in Hays.

The groom is the son of Harry and Melanie Adams of Grand Island, Neb. He is the grandson of Robert and Mary Adams of Cozad, Neb., and Loren and Donna Marler of Salina. He is a 2006 graduate of Alma High School in Nebraska. He works at Wendy’s in Hays and the grocery in Plainville.

The couple will live in Hays.

Deaths

Laura Elizabeth Davis

Laura Elizabeth Davis, 58, Colby, died of cancer at the Yampa Valley Medical Center in Steamboat Springs, Colo., on Saturday, Aug. 29, 2009.

She was born to Richard Star and Jeanne Turner Davis in Chestertown, Md., on Sept. 11, 1950. She graduated from Chestertown High School, and attended Chesapeake Community College and St. Mary’s College in Maryland.

After college, she moved to Steamboat Springs, where she met and married Chester Wheeler, and later met and married Bob Weiss.

Davis, a passionate environmentalist, won a governor’s Volunteer of the Year award for the work that she did creating a recycling program in Colby.

She loved gardening in town, and always came home from the county fair with blue ribbons for her canned goods and baking.

While undergoing chemotherapy at M.D. Anderson Hospital in Houston, she knitted scarves for family members and caregivers and worked on quilts for her sons.

She is survived by her husband. Robert Lee Weiss; five sons, Matthew Sheridan Wheeler, Edward Canby Wheeler, Zachary William Weiss, Jeffrey Davis Vincent Weiss and Robert John Andrew Weiss; her mother, Jeanne Davis; a sister, Linda Davis; a brother, Richard (Cheryl Lewis) Davis; and three grandchildren.

There will be a memorial service at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, 2009, at the Colby United Methodist Church.

The family suggests memorials to the Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice of Steamboat Springs, 940 Central Park Dr. No. 101, Steamboat Springs, Colo. 80487.

Thank You!

We want to thank everyone that attended our reception to wish us a Happy 50th anniversary. Also thank everyone for the cards we received in the mail. We appreciate all of you who made our day very special. It made us realize that reaching the 50th is quite a milestone.

A special thank you to our boys and their families who hosted the reception and made the day so overwhelming.

Bill and Marge Weishaar

Is your Thomas County organization planning a project or event related to the arts, literacy, education, or professional development for educators?

Would you like financial help?

Please contact the Thomas County Community Foundation to apply for a grant from the Betty G. and James Secrest Fund.

Application deadline: Oct. 1, 2009
785-460-9152 tccf@st-tel.net
www.thomascountycommunityfoundation.com

SERVICES DIRECTORY

Worship in the church of your choice this weekend.



BREWSTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, PO Box 250, Brewster. Pastor Dorine Chambers, 785-462-6044, Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.; Worship Service, 10:45 a.m.

Schedule of church services

GATEWAY FELLOWSHIP, 2nd and Sunrise, Oakley. Pastor James Bloom, Sunday Morning Worship and Children’s Church 10:15 a.m., Wednesday evening Bible Study and Intercessory Prayer 6:30 p.m. 785-671-4020.

COLBY INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH, 730 E. 3rd (former Jaycee’s building), Pastor Bernard Heinz, 785-460-0313, Sunday School 9:30 a.m.; Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sunday Evening 6:00 p.m.; Wednesday Evening 7:00 p.m.

ASCENSION-ON-THE-RAIRIE EPISCOPAL, Rev. Don Martin, College Drive & Wheatridge Rd., 785-462-3041, Holy Eucharist, 9:00 a.m. every Sunday. Evening Prayer, 5:15 p.m. Wednesday, September through May. Christian Education for Youth, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, September through May.

COLLEGE DRIVE ASSEMBLY OF GOD, 245 W. College Dr., Colby. Pastor Steve Todd. Sunday School 9 a.m. for all ages. Wednesday Youth at The Rock 3:30 and 7 p.m. Sunday Nite Life at The Rock 5-6 p.m.. 785-462-8234. cdag@st-tel.net.

BEREANCHURCH, 1000 S. Franklin, 785-460-2763, www.colbyberean.com; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. Awana Clubs, Wednesday, 7 p.m., Middle & High School, Wednesday, 7 p.m. @ the Heartland Christian School Gym.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, (Affiliated with American Baptist Churches USA) Carroll H. Morony, Pastor, 615 W. Webster, 785-462-2867. Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.; Family Worship: 10:30 a.m.; Bible Study: Sundays at 7 p.m. RC Club 2nd and 4th Sundays at 2 p.m.

COLLEGE VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH (Affiliated with Southern Baptist), 1185 Wheatridge Rd. at College Drive, 785-460-7144, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship services, 10:45 a.m. Prayer Service at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday’s.

PLEASANT HOME CHURCH, Pastor, Perry Baird, 785-890-3375, 3190 Road 70, Edson, Worship, 9:00 a.m., Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

WINONA METHODIST CHURCH, Rev. Sheryl Johnson, Sunday School, 10:30 a.m., Morning Worship 9:15 a.m. (CDT)

MINGO BIBLE CHURCH, 420 Main Mingo, 785-462-2992: An independent community church served by Village Missions Intern Pastor Pat Colley. Sunday School: 9:30AM -all ages. Sunday Services: 10:45AM. Sunday Nights: 1st Sunday of the month: potluck following morning service - no evening service; 2nd Sunday: services at 6:30 PM; 3rd Sunday: informal fellowship - bring a snack to share!; 4th and 5th Sunday: services at 6:30 p.m.

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC, 785-462-2179, Father Dana Clark, Pastor, Saturday Eve. Mass 5:30 p.m., Sunday Masses 8:00 & 10:00 a.m., Confessions will be heard Saturday 4:30-5:05 p.m. and from 7:30-7:45 a.m. and 9:25-9:40 a.m. on Sunday.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Rev. Carol Rahn, 515 W. 4th, 785-462-6342, Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.

WESLEYAN CHURCH, 320 W. Pine - 785-462-8391, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:40 a.m., Sunday Evening Cell groups at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday Youth Ministries, Kids Clubhouse 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, 1145 S. Franklin - 785-460-6605, President Gary Slavens, 785-460-2656; Erwin Mitchell, 1st counselor, 785-460-1952; Tim Wilson, 2nd counselor, 785-846-7796. Sacrament meeting 10 a.m., Sunday School and Primary 11:20 a.m., Priesthood, Relief Society, YM/YW, 12:10 p.m.; Family History Center open to public, 7-9 p.m. Thursdays or by appointment. Call 785-462-3571.

REDEEMING LOVE MINISTRIES, INC., 345 N. Franklin, Dr. W.G. and Rev. Orvella Romine, Equipping Class, Sunday, 9 a.m., Sunday worship, 10 a.m., Wednesday, R.L.M Training Centers (Bible School), 6 p.m. Shop online at: www.rlmregionalchurch.com.

COLBY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Rev. James Mardock, pastor, 950 S. Franklin, 785-460-6521, Sunday Worship Services at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m., Fellowship coffee 9:30 a.m., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., KXXX broadcasts 11:00 worship. www.colbyumc.org

CHURCH OF CHRIST, Minister, Jarrod Spencer. 510 E. 4th, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m., Interpretation for the deaf, Wednesday, Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, (Disciples of Christ), Pastor Lyle Knebel, 385 W. 3rd - 785-460-2718, Sunday Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m.; Sunday School at 11:15 a.m. E-mail: fcccolby@st-tel.net.

OUR SAVIORS LUTHERAN CHURCH, Brewster, Sunday worship 9:00 a.m.; 2nd Sunday of the month at 8:00 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Rev. Don White and Rev. Tim Llewellyn, East 5th & Country Club, 785-462-3497, Services, Sat., 5:30 p.m., Sunday; Sunday School and Adult Bible Class 9:30 a.m.; Services, 11:00 a.m. Visit us at www.trinitycolby.com.

LEVANT COMMUNITY CHURCH, 205 1st St., Pastor Jerry Vincent, 785-586-2376, Sunday School (classes for 3 years & up and 3 adult classes) 9:30 a.m., Morning worship 10:30 a.m.

BREWSTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, PO Box 250, Brewster. Pastor Dorine Chambers, 785-462-6044, Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.; Worship Service, 10:45 a.m.

THE SHEPHERD’S STAFF, REXFORD, Joan Dingwerth, Director, 785-687-2565.

REXFORD COMMUNITY CHURCH, Rexford, Pastor Lane Purcell, 785-687-3305, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

BREWSTER COMMUNITY CHURCH, Mike Pinkelman, Pastor, Brewster - 785-694-2720, Sunday School (all ages) 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Bible Study 7:00 p.m., Wed. mornings 6:30 a.m. - Men’s Bible Study, Wed. 7:00 p.m. - Children’s Ministries (Royal Rangers/Missionettes), Wed. 7:15 p.m. - Intercessory & Prayer, Thurs. 4:00 p.m. - Women’s Bible Study.



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