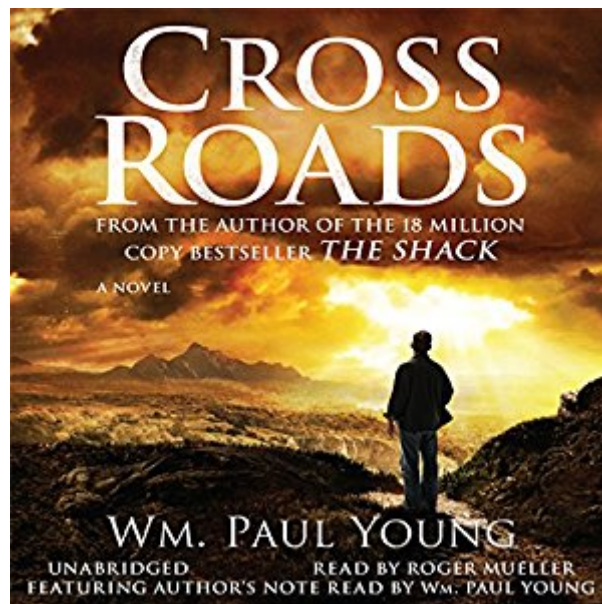


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# Cross Roads



## Synopsis

Anthony Spencer is egotistical, proud of being a self-made business success at the peak of his game, even though the cost of winning was painfully high. A cerebral hemorrhage leaves Tony comatose in a hospital ICU. He 'awakens' to find himself in a surreal world, a 'living' landscape that mirrors dimensions of his earthly life, from the beautiful to the corrupt. It is here that he has vivid interactions with others he assumes are projections of his own subconscious, but whose directions he follows nonetheless with the possibility that they might lead to authenticity and perhaps, redemption. The adventure draws Tony into deep relational entanglements where he is able to 'see' through the literal eyes and experiences of others, but is "blind" to the consequences of hiding his personal agenda and loss that emerge to war against the processes of healing and trust. Will this unexpected coalescing of events cause Tony to examine his life and realize he built a house of cards on the poisoned grounds of a broken heart? Will he also have the courage to make a critical choice that can undo a major injustice he set in motion before falling into a coma?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

CROSS ROADS...Even Better Than The ShackWow!Stop reading this and go read this book!If you need more convincing, I'll say a few words about this reading experience. Millions of people enjoyed The Shack for its fresh perspective on God's love and existence in community. I am guessing that even more people will relate to Paul Young's latest.With incredible insight, which I suspect can only be gained through painful experience, the author takes us into the private world of Tony Spencer.

Tony is a shrewd, wealthy businessman, who has ruined so many relationships that he suffers from paranoia. When a near death experience sends Tony into a coma, the story takes us quickly into his inner world. Readers follow Tony's journey into a real land where he meets Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and Papa God. If Paul Young had to face critics of *The Shack* who took exception to God being portrayed as a black woman, it isn't going to get any better when those folks read *CROSS ROADS* :) Like layers of an onion, Tony Spencer's hurts, pains, sins, and corruption are revealed to him, even as he encounters the trinity of God who is intent on bringing wholeness to him. Occasional use of strong language drives home the point i.e. Tony is told, "...you are adopted by Papa God, you are not powerful enough to change that..." p. 199 In a surprising manner, Tony is allowed and enabled to view life through the eyes of others as he is transported back and forth from our world to his own inner world. The story is easy to read and creative. It will pull some tears as well. The book does not directly take on the age old question of why bad things happen to 'good' people, but we see characters dealing with Down's Syndrome, cancer, death, betrayal, addiction and the gamut of sins.

Some years ago I remember Madelene L'Engle, author of *A Wrinkle in Time*, writing that she generally disliked going to Christian fiction writing conferences, because they contain so little talent and depth. As a rule I avoid the fiction section of Christian bookstores for this same reason, they feel anemic. Thus far I think there is only one exception to this rule. William Paul Young (author of *The Shack*) just released his second book *Cross Roads* and though he hasn't yet displayed the prophetic qualities of Lewis, MacDonald or Rebecca Stead (author of *When You Reach Me*) his writing is certainly unique among Christian authors in the US. Young departs from most Christian fiction authors by continuing to explore race in our culture, sexism in the church, and in *Cross Roads* he also explores discrimination young people with Downs syndrome face. He does this with more depth than in *The Shack*. I think Young can see that US Christians need discipleship in these areas, but I really wish he'd go deeper into the issues. His exploration of each are only side stories to the main plot, which is dominated by an intelligent white male's struggle to grieve loss, forgive himself, and learn to give. Young also touches on one of the greatest tragedies that US Christians face today: the fragmentation of our society and our resulting lack of community. Young offers us a story of a family created by necessity. A white woman, her daughter in the hospital with slim chances of survival and her son with Downs live with a black woman who has migrated from New Orleans after Katrina. Without each other they couldn't survive, but together they forge a way. Whether Young meant this to be a picture of what the church is supposed to be isn't clear, nevertheless he lifts it up to us an beautiful ideal.

I saw an ad on CNN the day the book was released. Of course, having been thoroughly inspired by "The Shack" I was intrigued and immediately went to to read some reviews. A couple of reviews said it was "better than 'The Shack.'" I thought, "not possible." So is it better than "The Shack?" Well, that's like saying the Gospel of John is better than the Gospel of Matthew when the truth is that I can't imagine one without the other. (Of course I'm just making a point and not suggesting that Young's books are on a par with Scripture.)The book starts out a little slow but it's a proper pace as it develops the plot and the characters, especially Tony, the main character. After the first 2 or 3 chapters you become intrigued with the unfolding drama. As the intensity increased I thought, "Oh man, I feel like I need to brace myself for the emotional climax that will surely come." Prepare yourself, you will not be disappointed.Now some might say that all this emotion stuff is "sappy." That's just a natural human response, a defense mechanism to avoid strong emotion, to try to maintain control, adult composure. I would recommend the opposite. Be the innocent child, let yourself go. Let the author lead you through the story, become vulnerable, "dive into" the main character, (and other characters), become that character vicariously, see things through his eyes as it were. You'll understand the significance of this when you read the book.For me, one of the most significant chapters was "The War Within," by far the longest chapter. Pay special attention here. Several large theological issues are debated with the cast of characters allied against Tony. I love the way academic stuff is brought to life in a drama such as this.

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