



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH TRACIE PETERSON

1. This is book #2 in the HEART OF THE FRONTIER series—what’s it about?

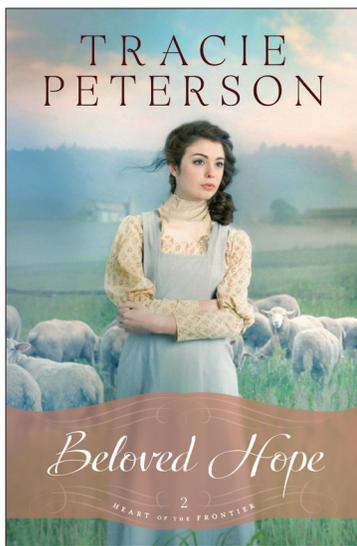
Beloved Hope picks up a couple of years after book one, *Treasured Grace*. *Treasured Grace* dealt with the Whitman Mission massacre, and book two deals with the trial of five Cayuse Indians believed to have played an important role in the massacre. It was really a mock trial—everyone knew the men would be hanged—and I wanted to show the general atmosphere and attitude of the day. Interwoven with that true event are my characters from book one, but this time the focus is on Hope. Hope is one of three sisters, and she was there at the mission on the day of the massacre. She was held hostage, along with the other women and children, including the youngest of the three sisters, Mercy. This book is about Hope’s journey to healing and finding true love—God’s love first and foremost, and then the love of our hero, Lance Kenner.

2. Is this story based on real-life events?

Yes. The Whitman Mission massacre happened in November of 1847. The trial takes place in late May of 1850 in Oregon City, Oregon Territory. The attack on the mission was really a turning point in American history. The attitude of the U.S. government changed dramatically after the attack. The first large contingency of soldiers was sent west to establish forts and offer protection from the Native Americans, but perhaps even more drastic was the attitude that came out of these events—that perhaps the only way to establish peace in the newly settled West was to exterminate the entire native population.

3. Did you do special research for this book?

Absolutely. There were so many rich details that had been documented, and I did my best to read them all and speak to people who knew more about this topic than I did. I read diary accounts by the women who had endured the attack and captivity, diaries from the Catholic bishop who was in charge of the area, formal records from the court and the trial, and personal accounts from local politicians and newspapers. I went to Oregon City to research museums and the location. I wanted to make this book as accurate as possible, but also to show all sides of the event.



Beloved Hope

HEART OF THE FRONTIER #2
by Tracie Peterson

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4. Why did you write a book like this with such a difficult topic?

I think we're foolish when we fail to remember the mistakes of the past. The negative attitudes toward the Native Americans were often justified, but just as often unjustified. When I share these events out of history, I do my best to give a balance and show the situation from both sides. As I mentioned, too, the events of the massacre changed the policies of how the Native Americans were dealt with, and would only lead to more trouble. Added to this, I wanted to create a story about overcoming. In book one, Hope gave birth to a baby as a result of her ordeal and abuse at the hands of the Cayuse. It was all hush-hush, and only a few ever knew about it because the baby—a little girl—was given to friends to be raised. So not only did Hope endure rape and captivity, she bore a child and had to deal with that as well. All of these issues come into play in the theme of overcoming adversity. I wanted to show Hope's journey, because I believe many readers will relate to it.

5. So the spiritual theme is about overcoming?

Yes, in part. The real-life women who endured the massacre and captivity were good enough to write about it—at least in part. They were very closemouthed about the sexual abuses, although they often mentioned the women “being forced to become wives to the Cayuse.” To speak about such a thing would further brand them in a society that was already uncomfortable knowing they had been held captive by the Cayuse. Imaginations were certainly just as active then as now, and many of these women were ostracized because of what happened. I believe this was due to fear. Fear that if it could happen once, it could happen again. I wanted to show that in this story and deal with how they might overcome. However, there was also the difficult question of “where is God when bad things happen?” We struggle with this today, and it seemed more than appropriate to discuss in the storyline, along with the healing importance of forgiveness.

6. Ultimately, what do you want the reader to take away from this story?

I hope the story and lives of the real and fictional characters will give the reader a better understanding of the pioneers who overcame outrageous obstacles to settle America. I hope the spiritual message will touch their hearts and help those who are struggling with similar issues to heal. Most of all, I hope and pray that the reader will draw closer to God and learn that even when things seem hopeless, God truly is still in control.