



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH TRACIE PETERSON

1. What is *Treasured Grace* about?

Treasured Grace is the first book in a new dependent series (one where the books build on the previous books) set in the 1840s. My main character, Grace, takes her sisters west on the Oregon Trail, and they stop at the Whitman Mission near present-day Walla Walla when sickness causes problems. While there, my characters will face the devastating Indian attack on the mission that took place in November 1847. Grace is a healer who has learned the art from her mother and grandmother. She's also rather prejudiced and opinionated. Her love interest, Alex, is running from the past and God. He's determined to remain lost in the Oregon Country wilderness, but his heart has other ideas. As he and Grace clash, both come to learn that they have changes to make and that real love is there for them—if they are brave enough to accept it.

2. Why did you choose this setting and time period?

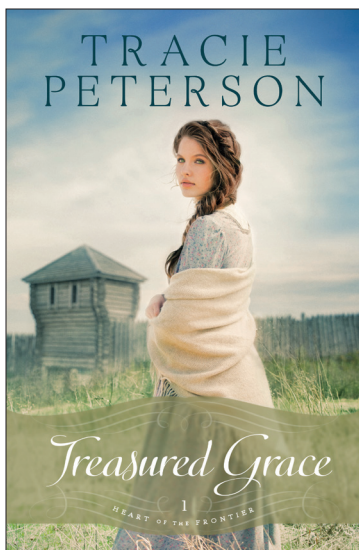
The attack on the Whitman Mission was a fascinating one that played a big role in the way the government dealt with the Indians of the west for years to come. Frustrated and dealing with the deaths of loved ones, the Cayuse Indians of the area had reached their limit of cooperating with the whites—Dr. Marcus Whitman in particular. There were quite a few diary accounts of all that happened at the mission, making it nice for me as a writer to create as accurate a fiction novel as possible.

3. Were your characters factual?

My main characters were purely fictional. There are real-life characters mentioned in the story. The mission was attacked and most of the men killed in November 1847. However, most of the women (minus Narcissa Whitman, who was also killed) and children were taken hostage for a month. The Cayuse Indians felt this would protect them from the government and keep other whites from attacking them. The women and children suffered greatly, and when negotiations finally allowed for their release, many of them lived in fear of being taken hostage again. Throughout the book, I scatter real-life people, but base all the characters' activities and speaking on diary accounts and historic records.

4. Did you have to do special research for this book/series?

I always seek to make the books as accurate historically and scripturally as possible. My readers have come to trust me for this, and I don't like to let them down. I read a great many diaries, as well as public records related to the events, I read recorded accounts that were printed in the local newspaper of the day and read museum archives related to the massacre. I also spent time at the Whitman Mission Massacre National Historic Site speaking with the Rangers there and getting to know the lay of the land. It was an amazing time of learning.



Treasured Grace

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by Tracie Peterson

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5. What kind of spiritual theme did you want to share with the reader?

As with all of my books there was a desire to speak to the matter of forgiveness, but in this story there was also the element of trusting God when all seems lost—trusting Him even when bad and undeserved things happen. I also wanted to create a story where there were serious consequences for my characters—consequences for actions put upon them and not actions they chose for themselves. People so often struggle with the pain and life-changing situations that are thrust upon them because of things done to them. I wanted to present a story that would show the reader that even when those things are done, we can trust God to bring beauty from ashes.

6. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

This series is definitely filled with historic events. In *Treasured Grace*, I worked to show both sides of the Whitman massacre event, giving the perspective of the Indians as well as the whites. There are always two sides to any event, and both sides were at fault in various areas for the situation. There are factual events such as the massacre, and later in book two the reader will learn about the real-life trial to condemn the Cayuse involved in the Whitman Massacre. Book three will also reveal real-life events that were motivated and intensified because of what happened at the mission. Throughout this series it has been my desire to share the real-life history while also weaving in a fictional story of three sisters and their journey west to start a new life and find romance and a deeper walk with God. I hope the readers will enjoy the series.