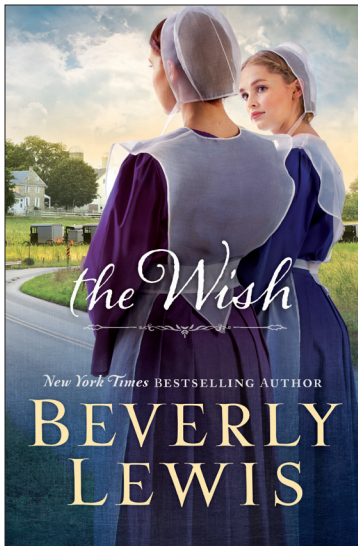




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH BEVERLY LEWIS



The Wish

by Beverly Lewis

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Media Contacts

FICTION PUBLICIST: **Amy Green**

952-829-2596

agreen@bethanyhouse.com

CANADIAN MEDIA: **Ellen Graf-Martin**

519-342-3703

ellen@grafmartin.com

Please send tear sheets to:

Amy Green

Bethany House Publishers

11400 Hampshire Ave. S. #200

Bloomington, MN 55438

1. Nearly two decades have passed since *The Shunning*, your first Amish novel, was published, establishing what became an extraordinarily popular new genre of fiction. What have the years since taught you?

Creating stories set in Amish farmland has been such a source of delight! This writing journey has taught me the importance of meticulous research and demonstrated to me just how universal some themes really are—love and loss, the need for hope, friendship, faith, and family. At its core, every book I write is about lifting the spirit and stirring the heart . . . which allows readers from all ages and walks of life to relate to my characters, however cloistered and unlike they may initially seem.

2. Can you tell us about the plot for *The Wish*, your newest novel?

Of course! Leona Speicher got the “sister” she always dreamed of the day Gloria Gingerich and her family moved to Lancaster County. The Arkansas newcomers seem to be the answer to Leona’s prayers—until Gloria’s father is expelled from their Old Order Amish church for reasons no one will discuss. Much to Leona’s dismay, the Gingeriches suddenly pack up and disappear. Then, after a silence of several years, Gloria unexpectedly contacts Leona, who makes up her mind to go after her friend. Will Leona’s good intentions lead to her own undoing?

3. Part of the story centers around Arkansas Joe Gingerich, who relocates with his family from Arkansas to Colerain Township in Pennsylvania. What inspired the idea of an Amish family from Arkansas?

Many people would be surprised to know that Amish now reside in more than thirty states—the hunt for inexpensive and plentiful farmland means that they’ve had to look well beyond the long-established Amish communities in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana. This particular family was inspired by an autumn trip my husband and I took to the Ozarks. It’s such a picturesque area; I could easily imagine an Amish community nestled there.

The Gingerich family plays a very important role in the life of my protagonist, Leona Speicher, but while Arkansas Joe’s daughter, Gloria, is everything a young woman might hope for in a friend, Joe himself may not be quite as wonderful as he appears. . . .

4. Friendship and sisterhood are both key themes in *The Wish*. What are some character qualities that you find invaluable in sustaining a close friendship?

I’ve been blessed with some rich friendships during my life, including one with my dear sister, Barbara, who was also my college roommate and maid-of-honor in my wedding. Yes, we are very close! Every friend brings unique gifts to a relationship, but some qualities that I find particularly essential are loyalty, patience, and forgiveness. I strive to be that kind of friend myself, but as the song says, truly there is no better friend than the one we have in our Lord Jesus.

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5. Your books have been published in a remarkable eleven languages, and your name is a frequent sight on bestseller lists like the *New York Times*. What do you think of the widespread appeal of your fiction?

Honestly, I still pinch myself! Only God could have orchestrated all I've experienced as a writer, and I'm ever grateful for how He has blessed me. There are no words to express how touched I am by the opportunity to hear from so many wonderful readers from around the world and to be able to share God's love for them through my books. I'm a storyteller at heart, and it's a blessing to have such dedicated reader-friends!

6. Do you have another stand-alone novel in the works right now?

Oh yes! Presently I'm busy writing *The Ebb Tide*, which will release in April of 2017. Eager to travel beyond the borders of Lancaster County, Sallie Riehl jumps at the chance to nanny in Cape May, New Jersey, over the summer. There, she befriends Edward Kreider, a Mennonite college student who shares her interests and values her love of learning—a love that has hampered her chances with the eligible Amish farmers back home. Sallie worries what her Old Order parents will think of Ed, but when her young charge is threatened, all other concerns are cast aside.

7. How can we keep up with your latest news and current releases?

There are many great ways to stay in touch via social media. To sign up for my free newsletter, readers can visit my Facebook fan page, www.facebook.com/officialbeverlylewis, or my website, beverlylewis.com. The website includes book trailers and excerpts, my monthly blog, fun photo galleries, authentic Amish recipes, and news about my upcoming Fall 2016 Book Tour, which will take me to library and bookstore events throughout Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi from September 7 through 17. I look forward to meeting my readers in that area because touring is something I very much enjoy—it gives me a chance to connect with my wonderful reader-friends!