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**Forbidden – An Author Interview**

**By Lisa M. Hendey**

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Forbidden - Author Interview with Wilma Wall

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A war is on between two bitter and powerful enemy nations. A brave young man, persecuted at times because of his ethnicity, steps forward to defend his new homeland. A young woman finds herself conflicted over her love for this soldier, due to the fact that her own community objects to the war and fears those outside their own culture. Can the relationship survive and prosper? Timely issues present themselves in Forbidden (0825439477, Kregel, May 1, 2004, paperback, 316 pages), a novel set amidst the backdrop of Central California during World War II. First time novelist Wilma Wall tells the tale of this inspirational romance in the past, but imbues it with issues with have great relevance in today's modern world.

LH: A special thank you to Wilma Wall, author of the novel Forbidden, for this opportunity to interview you about your faith and writing! Wilma, I've read that you spent many years living in China. Please begin by telling our readers a bit about your background and your family.

WW: I was born in South China to missionary parents, and when civil war broke out in the area, we relocated north to an isolated village in Inner Mongolia, near the Great Wall. Not having playmates my age, books became my best friends, and I created a world of imaginary people.

When we left China and settled in California's central valley, I attended schools in the Reedley–Dinuba area through my junior year at Dinuba High School, and then went with my parents to Oklahoma where they served at a Comanche Indian mission. There, my father died so after I graduated my mother and I returned to Dinuba. I then attended Reedley College and Pacific Bible Institute (now Fresno Pacific University) where I met and married my roommate's brother.

We have three daughters, eight grandchildren and one great–grandchild. I taught piano in Madera, Hanford and Reedley for over forty years, and for seven years, taught pre–school at a day care center for migrant workers. I served as church pianist, organist, librarian and Sunday School teacher, and

wrote skits, pageants and puppet shows as well as co-edited a church newsletter.

Now I spend my time writing, and volunteering at a church-based thrift shop where I manage the used books department. I know the Lord put me there; whenever I need specific material for research, miraculously something turns up in the donations brought to us.

LH: Wilma, I too live in the Central Valley of California, so I enjoyed Forbidden so much because it felt like I was reading about home! Would you please briefly summarize the plot of Forbidden for our readers?

WW: College-educated Annie Penner is expected to become a dutiful Mennonite farm wife, but her love of music, literature and Bible discussion attracts the attention of pre-medical student Donald

Nakamura. Their budding romance is cut short by war between the United States and Japan, and the internment of all Japanese-Americans, including Donald and his family. Even their correspondence stops, and each thinks the other has found new interests within their own culture.

When the war ends and Donald returns, he and Annie realize their love is stronger than ever. But medical schools have rejected his applications, laws prevent inter-racial marriage, and widespread prejudice threatens to destroy his family and their livelihood. Annie's family is horrified at her association with a "foreigner." Donald's father, pastor of a Baptist church, has a pretty Japanese girl picked out for him.

Donald finds comfort in his beloved psalms and Annie bolsters his faith. They are sure God has led them together and trust Him to help them over the hurdles. But how will they convince their families, and what about the anti-miscegenation law?

They learn that God answers prayers in unexpected ways and can do much more than they'd hoped.

LH: What led you to write this book and what type of research did you have to undertake to write the story?

WW: I was invited to submit a novella, consisting of about 125 pages, for a different publishing company. I chose the World War II period because that generation is diminishing, and although many novels have been written about pioneer days and the civil war, not as much is available about that era. I feel that younger generations need to know what the atmosphere was like in those days, the patriotism, the panic, the injustices and the prejudice.

The company sent me a list of topics, and "a controversial romance" intrigued me. What could be more controversial during WWII, I thought, than a romance between a Caucasian and a Japanese, with our country at war with Japan? And to up the ante, how about making the Caucasian a Mennonite, who in those days were in a closed culture?

Being Mennonite background myself, I knew that culture; however, having roots in China I thought I could also step back and view it a little more objectively. I also am familiar with Japanese-Americans,

having taught many in my piano lessons. But I also did a great deal of research on both subjects: read every relevant book I could get my hands on, interviewed many people, scanned old newspapers at libraries, and researched the internet. I studied maps of the internment camps and joined the Japanese–American Citizen's League newsgroup online.

By the time I'd learned to know my characters, I'd fallen in love with the story and knew I couldn't do justice to it in a short novelette. So when it was finished I instead submitted it to a Christian manuscript service on the internet. Then I asked the Lord to take over, because I'd done all that I could. And about two weeks later, Kregel Publishing Company picked it up.

LH: Wilma, the relationship between Donald and Annie is filled with so many tensions and trials, but their common faith seems to be a strong bond between them. How has your own faith impacted upon your writing? Do you feel that people today also face cultural struggles in their relationships? How can they overcome these struggles?

WW: When I started writing for publication, I wrote for the secular market, but although an agent was enthusiastic about my work, she couldn't sell it. It wasn't until I gave my writing to the Lord that it was accepted.

Prejudice is still very common; many people who aren't otherwise biased still hate to see their children marry out of their culture. I think it's most important for a couple to have a common faith, to agree on values and take pre–marital counseling. Not every relationship can survive the storms of criticism, prejudice and gossip. But I also firmly believe if people allow God to lead in their lives, and will follow his precepts, He will help them weather through, and their relationship or marriage will grow stronger and their spiritual life will blossom.

LH: I really enjoyed and became caught up in this story! Do you have any future books or writing projects in the works?

WW: I have just received word that Kregel Publications has accepted another of my novels, Jade Bracelet. It is set both in China and California's central valley and portrays a life–long conflict between a strict mother and her rebellious daughter, and how the Lord brings about a reconciliation. The editor is also looking at another manuscript of mine, and I am currently working on a sequel to that one.

LH: Wilma Wall, author of Forbidden, thank you again for your time and participation in this interview. Are there any last thoughts or ideas you'd like to share with our readers?

WW: I would like to tell them not to get discouraged, and when things go wrong, not to try to battle through on their own. Take the problems to the Lord in prayer; He can and will show the way to go. Thank you and God bless you.

For more information or to order Forbidden visit  
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0825439477/digitalcropper-20>

Lisa M. Hendey is a mother of two sons, webmaster of numerous web sites, including <http://www.digitalcropper.com>, <http://www.christincoloring.com>, <http://www.catholicmom.com> and an avid reader.

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## **Crazy Interview Questions**

**By Joel Vance**

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If you want to get that amazing new job, you are first going to have to learn the answers to common job interview questions. The majority of the interview questions that you have thrown at you will be typical interview fare, but a company may decide to throw you a curve ball in the form of a crazy job interview question. This is starting to happen more and more, it is becoming quite a trend actually, so you need to take some time to learn what these interview questions might be so that you can answer them quickly and in a manner that leads to you getting the job.

There is a method to an employer's madness when they use an 'out of the ordinary' job interview question – and that's to get you thinking fast. In most cases the employer is testing you to see if you can think on your feet or if you are creative enough to work well in this job position. If the interviewer doesn't think you have what it takes because of your answers to the job interview questions, then you will not get the position.

Before you go into any job interview try to keep an open mind. Prep your imagination a bit to get it flowing freely just in case you get some of these crazy job interview questions asked of you. You can't afford to freeze up during an interview; because if you do, it is all over. So go in prepared, or at least as prepared as you can be.

Here are a few of the strange and yet rather common job interview questions that you may run across:

Q) If you were an animal what kind of animal would you choose to be?

Choose an animal that is efficient at everything that it does and one that is often very busy.

Q) What kind of fruit would you be?

You should choose a fruit that tastes good in a fruit salad along with many other fruits. This can be used to show that you are a team player who works well with others all of the time.

Q) What would be the very first thing that you would do if you won the lottery?

This is a gauge of your priorities. Whatever you do don't say you would quit your job.

Think about the answers to these sorts of job interview questions before you go into the interview. This way even if these particular interview questions don't get asked you will still have an idea of the types of answers that you should be giving.

Joel Vance is a Human Resources 17-year HR expert who's taught at 4 major universities around the country and currently has a best selling book on interview questions at



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