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Religion Update February 2013: The God of Second Chances: Katie Ganshert

Holly Lebowitz Rossi | Feb 08, 2013



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Photo by Kinsey Christin

The general plot of Katie Ganshert's second novel, *Wishing on Willows* could easily be a feature story in any small town American newspaper—beloved small business owner (and widow) Robin Price faces losing her quaint café to a developer who has visions of condos on land currently occupied by both the restaurant and a thriving town ministry.

But Ian McKay, the developer that Price must confront on behalf of her small Iowa town, is not a faceless corporate

giant sent to mow down local businesses without regard to the carnage it might cause. Instead, he's come to town with his own financial baggage, reeling from a recent divorce, and struggling with his Christian faith.

Willows is a follow-up to Ganshert's debut novel, *Wildflowers from Winter* (WaterBrook Press, 2012), part of a two-book deal that has put Ganshert on the map as a Christian romance author. *Willows* heroine Price made an appearance in *Wildflowers* as well, as a model of someone whose faith strengthens her life and the lives of those who call her small town home.

Ganshert lives in Bettendorf, Iowa, a small city, but her fictional town of Peaks is loosely based on the smaller town of LaClaire, in which the former fifth-grade teacher once lived. She also draws inspiration from her family; in the novel, Robin Price has a 3-year-old son, and Ganshert's son recently turned 4.

Real life also informs Ganshert's fiction in deeper ways. McKay, who "sees himself as a failure," is on a journey in the novel to understand "that's not what defines him," says Ganshert. And that's where faith has come in—for Ganshert's characters, and for herself.

"Especially as a woman in today's society, we try to do it all—being a wife and mother, working," she says. "I can feel like a failure 100 times a day. So I always come back to my identity in Christ and the knowledge that God sees me through what Jesus did for me on the cross. I get my strength from that."

Ganshert and her husband are now channeling that strength into a new goal, as they hope to adopt a child from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The family's choice of country is a full circle



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of sorts for Ganshert, who was deeply moved by a 2006 HIV/AIDS mission trip she took to Kenya. Among other meaningful aspects of that trip was the fact that she returned “bursting” with a story that inspired her to become a writer.

Reflecting on all of this, Ganshert says the emotional process she went through before she could say “yes” to adoption is similar to the journey she takes Price on in Willows—diving into the deep end of a financially and emotionally risky situation far outside the lines of the life she envisioned for herself.

“So often, in those uncharted, scary territories is where we experience God most fully,” says Ganshert.



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Dani Pettrey
Great article! So inspired by Katie :)
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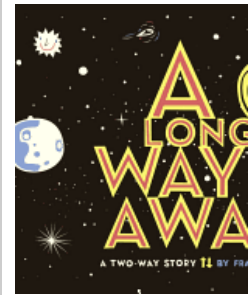


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Maxie Lloyd-Hamilton Anderson · ★Top Commenter · Pasadena, Texas
I enjoyed reading this Katie! I know sometimes the requirements keep a lot of children from having loving homes. At least here in the US. Like having their own room amongst other things. I was part of 8 siblings and we never had our own rooms. And, most times, several sharing a room. We didn't have

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