

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.



I can't tell you how wonderful it is to sing again – and to get to sing at MCC Portland with my daughter, Naomi

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Yay, back singing and back in MCC. MCC Portland Oregon was kind enough to have me in their combined in-person/online service. Rev. Nathan Meckley and I go back a year or forty, so there was a “visiting home” feeling in being there, and I got to catch up with some other seriously old friends 😊.

On another subject, I had some interesting internet exchanges this month. But first, how many of you remember Balaam’s ass? In the book of Numbers it seems that the king of the Moabites gets scared that the Israelites are going to invade Moab. So the king calls one of the “soothsayers” to cast an evil spell on Israel. Now there are several times in the Bible that God seems to use people who are seen as prophets or “witches.” (Which is kind of an interesting side conversation – like why could the witch of Endor actually conjure up one of God’s true prophets?) ANYway, so God sends a message to Balaam that he should NOT go curse the Israelites. Balaam says he won’t go, but ultimately he gives in, gets on his donkey, and heads for the king of Moab. On the way, God sends an angel with a drawn sword to block the path but only the ass can see it. When Balaam keeps beating the poor ass to go forward, the ass finally turns around and says, “I’ve been faithful to you. Why are you beating me?” Balaam is so startled that he answers the donkey and finally Balaam can see the angel too. There’s more to the story, but what everyone takes away from it is that God can use any way God needs to in order to get the point across – even a donkey.

Back to the internet encounters. Most of you know that I answer all my hate mail – and honestly most of it is just “I’m confused” mail or “I’m terrified” mail. A few days ago I saw a post on Mark Lowry’s Facebook page. He posted a quote from Anne Lamott: “You can safely assume that you have created God in your own

image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do.” Wow, the responses he got were astounding, although I guess it’s normal for the internet these days. People jumped all over him. “You are so wrong. God doesn’t hate anybody.” “No, God created us in His (sic) image. We don’t create him in ours.” And worse, on and on. Even when the people writing these things finally figured out they were wrong, they jumped over to bashing Anne Lamott. That made me feel like I was in good company!

A couple of days later an old friend from the Jesus Movement, Karen Lafferty, put a recording of *For Those Tears I Died* on her Facebook page. (Karen, you might remember, wrote *Seek Ye First*.) I know that Karen disagrees with what she would call my “lifestyle,” so it was kind of her to post her band playing one of my songs at a “Jesus People reunion” concert in New Mexico. The first comments were all very loving and full of joyful emotional reactions. “I remember hearing this song for the first time @ CCCM about 40+ years ago: unforgettable! 🙏🙏🙏”

“Still is so humbling! I never forget Children of the Day.”

“Ditto what Linda said, makes me cry! God did an amazing thing and I was one of many thousands of blessed recipients of his love. Thank you Jesus!”

“Heart warming and teary eyed, thanks to the Lord.”

“I was a young Catholic punk playing in Folk Mass when that song dropped. But at least I remember it. I learned this from my parents in the early 80s. Such a good song!” (*I love this. “when that song DROPPED.” Made me feel SO old!*)

No one mentioned my name until one of the guys from the group Love Song said, “Marsha is married to another woman... just sayin.” And they were off and running! They were into the lake of fire and God’s final judgment. Some of my own friends were posting “God is love and grace” comments but they fell on deaf (or prejudiced) ears. Karen just said, “true, but the song is still full of truth,” but others were on a tear asking, “Have you read the Bible all the way through? God will judge all of us.” Finally one guy posted, “you are correct. There will be a final judgment, but that does not negate the truth that is in this song. All truth comes from God. **If this truth is negated because of the sin of a songwriter, then we better throw out the book of Psalms.**” So, there I was right where I belong. Somewhere between King David and Balaam’s ass!

With Gratitude, Marsha & Cindy

Please note our PO Box address – it's too long to remember!

Cindy's Mission Work

Many thanks for those of you who have chosen to support Cindy on her mission trips. Unfortunately, as you know, the trips for the past year have been canceled. Cindy is sad about this since she feels that people need the mission teams more than ever. But she also respects the concerns of the mission leaders. It looks as though it might be January before she heads out again.

Please be assured that all of the donations you sent are in savings and waiting for her opportunities to travel again!

We will let you know when she can resume mission trips.

You can support BALM when you shop online

(You can read the instructions online but the simple thing is this: when you want to shop online at a major store, you go first to www.igive.com/BALM. You put your info in & then it gives you a list of most stores you've ever heard of.

So, for instance, you go to igive.com/BALM & pick BestBuy, it takes you to that site & you order whatever you want to online. All your coupons & 'special deals' still apply. There's no extra charge to you at all, but that way, they automatically donate part of their profit to BALM Ministries.)

(I forget myself sometimes, but it makes a big difference if you can remember.)

Prayer List & Ministry Opportunities

- † *Prayers for our family of color. For the lives taken and anger unabated, for justice to finally come.*

- † *Praises for Marsha's knee surgery and for gradually healing pulmonary emboli*
- † *Prayers that we may all keep on sharing the Good News with the least, the lost and the hungry – to give as we've been given to; to love because Jesus first loved us and we have SO much to give away.*
- † *Prayers for our health as we start up regular concerts again.*
- † *Prayers for me to be able to set up more concerts and special music.*
- † *Prayers for our country & for all of us to find a way forward together.*
- † *Praises for the ministry opportunities opening up and for ALL of your support*

What You Have to Say

"I was water baptized at Calvary Chapel in the ocean when I first heard that song...what glorious invitation."

"Wonderful memories with this song. My sister and I sang this very song in church as a duet one Sunday morning in Minnesota. Our church liked to celebrate the children. I was 10 and my sister Karen was 12. It is definitely a song of the ages."

"Oh such wonderful memories of those years! As I watch. I could see a lot of my older generation brothers and sisters! This song has been going thru my head lately and I just start singing! So many beautiful songs."

"When we had...moved, we felt the Lord was directing us to the small church in town. There were 10 of us. The pastor could hardly believe it as this was going to be the closing of the church if they did not get more members. The church is still active today!"

"you are correct there will be a final judgement, but that does not negate the truth that is in this song, all truth comes from God. If this truth is negated because of the sin of the

songwriter then we better throw out the Psalms." (just for the record, I DO believe this is true. I don't have any problem with being a lesbian, it's one of the blessings of my life. But I certainly have plenty of sins that I work to be healed of and forgiven for every day.)

"Marsha, may the God of all comfort bring you peace. God, knew you before you were formed in your mamma's womb and knew you would be where you are this very moment. What a healing God we have. Blessings!"

"I know there's no way you'd remember me, but one of my best friends and I drove (a long way) one Saturday in the mid to late 90's to see you in concert at an MCC. You left a lasting impression on us both, as I'm sure can be said by countless others! God bless you for the ministry you've had all these years!!"

"We used to sing this song at youth beach retreats. I still sing this every time I go to the beach. (Your music) has changed my life."

Upcoming ministry

Oct 28-31 Reformation Project in Phoenix AZ *Dates are open this weekend!*

Nov 6-7 The Villages FL, United Church of Christ. Concert on the 6th at 3pm, service on the 7th at 10am www.villagesUCC.org

Please consider reaching me at ssbalm@aol.com to book something for your church!

A word from a longtime supporter of Balm ministries: ChristianGays.com is a community for ALL LGBT people to meet & develop friendships based on faith & other common interests. We offer Chat Rooms & Forums, & all information is private, accessible to members only. WE need this now more than ever! Join us now at <https://ChristianGays.com>