

# The Marshan Chronicles

*For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.*



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We are into another month of online everything. And we will get to that. But it's impossible to start into this month without stopping to grieve for a whole different pandemic.

Like everyone, I see the images all the time. This one seemed different for some reason – to see a man killed before our eyes. Maybe we see so much shooting and violence on entertainment screens that the blood and guts are hard to take seriously. But this quiet, casual death really got to me.

Then I went on line and saw how many of my friends didn't understand. Maybe they just hadn't seen the news, so when someone posted "I can't breathe," the responses were, "Oh no. Do you have a cold? Do you think it's COVID?"

Or maybe they don't understand so that when someone posts, "Black Lives Matter," they say, "Hey! All lives matter." They don't think about the fact that I never once thought to tell my children how to act if stopped by the police. I didn't have to tell them, "Drop your cellphone immediately and never reach for your pocket or you might get shot." I didn't even tell them, "Keep your hands on the steering wheel if you're ever stopped and don't move them." It never occurred to me because I frankly always thought, "Well you'll be safe as soon as the police are there." So no one ever had to say that my children matter. That was a given. We say, Black Lives Matter, because it is NOT a given.

Or they say, "all this rioting and looting – they're only hurting their own cause." First of all, there's the "they" again, and this should not be "their" cause. It should be ours. Martin Luther King said, "...a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it that America has failed to hear?...It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met..." And from the book of Amos 5:24-25, "Away with the noise of your songs. I will

not listen to the music of your harps, but let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream."

SO, I'm taking my own advice and speaking up. It's the very least I can do. And tell you some thoughts ( still very much under construction):

If the circle's wide enough for you but won't let me inside,  
If the teen who's questioning next door is frightened to confide,  
If you say that you believe that God has made me who I am,  
But you fear your job and family will never understand, you must

Stand closer, love is just a word,  
Stand closer, actions can be heard,  
Thoughts and prayers are not enough  
To say my going must be tough  
You're not standing close enough...stand closer

If the knee that's kneeling on your neck won't take away my breath  
The rifle shooting at your back will never cause my death  
If I say that I am with you, but you're standing all alone  
If rocks and insults fly at you but I don't feel a stone (I must)

Stand closer, love is just a word  
Stand closer, actions can be heard  
Thoughts and prayers are not enough  
To say your going must be tough  
I'm not standing close enough  
Stand closer

The concert for Healing Housing was a wonderful success. Last time I checked it had been watched around 1500 times, which is a lot for us 😊. Cindy's testimony was really powerful and several of the women from the shelter that we did the concert for wrote to us to let us know how encouraged they felt hearing her stories. Our church, Brentwood United Methodist Church (BUMC) let us record in the church facility. Weird to be alone in such a huge building but it made the concert much easier. We were both distracted by how weird it is to be watching yourself as you minister! I think we'll put the screen backward or something next time. OHH, AND NEXT TIME WILL BE JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> 7PM CENTRAL TIME ON FACEBOOK LIVE (Marsha Stevens-Pino Facebook page – there's only one of me...thank goodness.)

If you drop in, please think about whether setting up an online concert and sharing time like this would be helpful to any group that you're part of. We'd love to do some more.

*Love and Gratitude, Marsha & Cindy*

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### **Cindy's Mission Work**

Many thanks for those of you who have chosen to support Cindy on her mission trips. She is also working on ways to make the computer programs she uses available to all the missions she travels to, particularly to those our church runs in South Africa. The programs track everything from school attendance and performance to health and vaccination status to who is sponsoring that child or teacher and whether they are up to date on their donations. Unfortunately, as you might guess, the trips for this year have been canceled so far because of the concerns over COVID 19 (the new corona virus). 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. So for now, she is working on the computer programs for each of them, and writing to the kids we sponsor to keep in touch with them.

### **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](http://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](http://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**

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

- † ***Praises for our church home in Brentwood United Methodist, & prayers for the changes that need to be made. Special prayers for guidance for us and our role/s here with "Draw the Circle Wide."***
- † ***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 wisdom as Cindy and I figure out our place in the middle of all this & for the great musicians getting some new recordings done for us.***
- † ***Prayers for me to be able to set up more concerts online.***

### **What You Have to Say**

*"I travel a lot with my job as a caregiver and it's been nice to take a break from the normal radio. Also being a lesbian woman that believes in God, and dealing with that relationship early in my life, I can sure relate to the church norms. My mom's family is Pentecostal and my dad's family is southern Baptist. I grew up with a slim chance I would ever have any kind of relationship with God. I often say I'm a recovering Southern Baptist. I also found MCC in my early 20s, and that church allowed me to develop a relationship with a loving God. Thank you for your gift and your willingness to share it with the world. I'm blessed to be on the receiving end of your talents.*

*At first I wasn't sure if I would like the live cd with the talking, but actually with my hours in the road, I heard it through, and I'm glad I took the time to listen. CJ's story is an incredible journey, and it surely blessed me and made me have to think."*

*"Your music is an inspiration, especially during the time of*

*uncertainty, pain and death. Thank you, and I thank God for you."*

*"Your first song has had a special place in my heart since childhood, but I believe today I found out the reason why and what God was trying to tell me."*

*"Children of the Day (the group I was in during the 70s) were considered the first Jesus People group. I just found this out a few years ago!"*

*"As a trans female, I went through a lot of ridicule achieving myself as a gospel pianist. I have played and sung your song (For Those Tears I Died) for many years as an encouragement for myself and others. Bless you for writing this beautiful song."*

*"Marsha, please tell Cindy what a beautiful testimony she gave. I really needed to hear this today. Thank you. I love you."*

*"Thanks for doing this concert (online). Touching my heart and lifting my spirits."*

*"It is wonderful to see you both and hear you after all these years. You look great and sound as beautiful as ever. Your music always touches me so deeply."*

### **Upcoming travel**

**June 16th** – 7pm central time, concert from home. This will be set up as Facebook Live on Marsha's FaceBook page, Marsha Stevens-Pino

Please consider reaching me at [ssbalm@aol.com](mailto:ssbalm@aol.com) to book something online for your church!

*A word from a longtime supporter of Balm ministries: [ChristianGays.com](http://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>*