

# The Marshan Chronicles

*For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.*



**November 2017, Volume 20, Number 11**

Dear Balm Benefactors,

What a wonderful whirlwind this past two months have been. Since the San Diego concert I've been to Union Seminary in New York City to work on a committee of evangelical affirming Christians, to Cape Cod to sing for extended family for Cindy's Uncle John's memorial service, to Beersheba Springs to sing and play with Cindy for a women's retreat, to Chicago to sing and present with friends at The Reformation Project Conference, to St. Louis for the Rolling the Stone Away pioneers conference and to Winston-Salem to do a concert. So...where to start?

The Union Seminary event is one for which I asked you to pray. You must have done a great job. I want to say again that I am impressed with Union, a decidedly NOT evangelical seminary, reaching out to the evangelical Christian community to help prepare and train people to be available to people in the Christian church who might be having their "Nicodemus moment." Nicodemus was the guy who had come out in the night to ask Jesus what He was doing there – and Jesus said, "For God so loved the world..." That one. It seems that there are lots of people in various kinds of evangelical ministries – singers, performers, pastors, etc. – who want to have someone to talk to about the fact that their understanding of Scripture regarding sexual orientation is changing. They want to talk to people who have been through what they're going through to encourage them along the way. So we are a group of pastors who are gay, pastors who have come out in evangelical churches as gay-affirming, parents of gay kids, leaders in affirming organizations, and people like me in various ministries in outreach to the GLBTQ community.

We decided to name ourselves, mostly so that press can reach out to those of us in an area where something is breaking, the Union of Affirming Christians. I know that's a little generic, but each of us loves the Lord and is ready to reach out to anyone finding that God is leading them in

new directions in faith and in ministry.

Of course, any visit I make to New York has to start with a visit to Dr. Ralph Blair. I met Dr. Blair, a New York City psychologist, in 1985 when he invited me to be the "keynote speaker" (actually singer/songwriter) at the West Coast Evangelicals Concerned conference that year. He started Evangelicals Concerned to provide a place for gay Christians to support each other as they came out of the closet in their home churches. He has remained a loving and faithful friend and is fascinating to talk to. We spent a long time talking about the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther posting the 95 theses on the Wittenburg Door.

When I got home, Cindy and I flew to Cape Cod for the memorial service for her Uncle John who was 95. Cindy spent a large portion of her youth staying with Uncle John and Aunt Jan, who was her mother's identical twin. He was a devout Catholic and someone she always looked up to and loved. Although he did not come to our wedding in 2003, he sent a note with his apologies for having to miss it and assured Cindy that he prayed for both of us and closed by saying, "My love for you never diminishes." Many other members of his family were at the wedding and we caught up with all of them at his memorial. Cindy saw that I struggled with my guitar playing, though, with the weakness and pain in my hands, so she formed a plan.

When we got home, Cindy signed up for guitar lessons so we could learn to play together. She went to 9 of them and we both signed up to do music for the women's retreat from our church, Brentwood United Methodist church (BUMC). We went to Beersheba Springs camp and helped to plan a retreat called Breathing Space. I sat in the meetings while people tried to think of what songs might have the idea of "breathing space" in it. Finally, Cindy made the comment, "Honey, just write one." Which, of course, I did ☺. The lyrics of the chorus are:  
*Just a breathing space, time to seek Your face,  
Rest in Your embrace our loving Lord.  
Hours to slow the pace, drink your cup of grace,  
We can leave this place our strength restored.*

Since we wanted all the women in our church to feel welcome, we had it start at dinner Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday morning so that mothers and working women could come to most of it. Most of the sessions moved from place to place around the campground, so having the guitar instead of recorded accompaniment was perfect. We ended up having a wonderful time and Cindy actually played on her own while I sang for some of the songs. It meant that I could sing even when my hands and joints were too sore to play. What a sweet wife, huh? More later!!

***Love and Gratitude, Marsha & Cindy***

**IMPORTANT!! YEAR END info**

We date your year-end giving by the date YOU put on your check, NOT by the date we receive your donation!

**Cindy's Mission Work**

Many thanks for those of you who have chosen to support Cindy on her mission trips. Next is Honduras in January. Keep her in prayer. Any gifts to BALM noted to Cindy (continue to be tax deductible) will be used for her 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](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**

- † *Pray for more concerts- starting with YOUR church! And for all the concerts that are in the works right now.*
- † *Gratitude for your prayers Prayers for Cindy on all her mission trips & the computer work she does to help them.*
- † *Praises for our new church home in Nashville – Brentwood United Methodist. I'm used to being the burr in someone's saddle, but that doesn't mean they're used to having one!!*
- † *Prayers for wisdom for outreach here in Nashville for the LGBTQ community who mostly continue to gather in bars.*

- † *Praises for a wife who is a ministry partner.*
- † *I'll be recording at least one or two songs later this year and I hope you can get them from my website.*
- † *Prayers for the Union group & the people who reach out for help either in coming out or in coming out as an affirming ally.*
- † *Prayers for the book to reach all the people it needs to. The Audible book is now available in all outlets where recorded books are sold.*
- † *Please pray for the book reviews that are being pitched in larger markets.*
- † *Prayers for upBeat! artists*
- † *Please keep sweet Mark Moseley & his wife Donna K in your prayers for COMPLETE healing from his stroke. AND please remember that if you or someone you love has symptoms of a stroke, you basically have 3 hours to get to a hospital where they have meds that can HEAL you before all the damage becomes permanent.*
- † *Praises for the songs I finished writing & the ones in progress. Prayers that I tune in on writing the things God wants to say today.*

**What You Have to Say**

"I thoroughly enjoyed your concert Sunday. Your music has always moved me. "For Those Tears" was played at my best friend's funeral and it was years before I could hear that song without falling apart. Cindy certainly moved me with the things she shared with us. Please extend my sincere appreciation to her for sharing. May God bless you richly."

"Thank you for being God's angel. Your song and voice held me in God's grace when I was in the closet as a young gay man. God reminded me once more that I'm not a mistake, that indeed God knew my tears in the

closet, and for those tears Jesus gave his life for me. I just experienced Jesus tonight in you."

"I got my own taste of a divine reminder of how sacred my life is as a queer child of God, and it was pretty sweet! Thank you, Marsha."

"I look at you and I am very proud of you! After so many battles faced, some lost, defeated others, I believe you are a warrior. You are standing there and with great strength, no one will bring you down."

"The first several times I listened to For Those Tears my brain heard "when in silence you cried." When I heard it sung I actually looked up the words on line because "silence" had spoken so powerfully to my heart that I could not quite believe it wasn't right...As a kid I often cried under the covers. Used the pillow to muffle it because there was nothing that would set my dad off worse than hearing me cry. So God gave me the word I needed to hear. I think that might happen when the songs you write are anointed. Whatever someone needs to hear to get the help they need."

**BalmMinistries.net for booking!**

**Jan 18-21, 2018** Gay Christian Network conference in Denver, CO (brrrrr!)

[www.gaychristian.net](http://www.gaychristian.net)

(I would love to see you for the holidays. You can reach us through the website or at [ssbalm@aol.com](mailto:ssbalm@aol.com) – I know, I'm old, I still use aol!)

**Check the website for updates** ☺  
**www.BalmMinistries.net**

*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. Join us now at <https://ChristianGays.com>*