

Mp3 Fern Batchelor - The Call



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A new experience in Messianic Jewish music, from exuberant praise to intimate worship, in a range of musical styles. Acoustic guitar, keys, percussion (including box of Tic-Tacs), poignant vocals. 14 MP3 Songs GOSPEL: Contemporary Gospel, FOLK: Gentle Details: My Testimony by Fern Batchelor Of course, I'd like to share my entire life story with you. ;-) But I'll be merciful and only hit the points that are relevant to the testimony of how I came to salvation, and how I became part of the messianic movement. Let's see.... my parents were both Jewish, but my experience of Judaism was rather limited, more cultural and traditional than religious. We were not the most observant family. My father was raised in a Jewish home and had his Bar Mitzvah, but he was the scientific type, and he only believed what could be "proven". My mother was soft-spoken and compliant, and although she seemed to believe in some sort of God, she had not been raised in an observant environment at all. So an ambivalence about all things religious permeated our home. One idea that came across quite clearly, however, was the fact that "we" (the Jewish people) were different from "them" (everyone else). And I wasn't entirely sure I liked being different. When we moved from our Jewish neighborhood in northern New Jersey to a predominantly Catholic neighborhood a few miles away, the difference really began to show. I distinctly remember the time a playmate in first grade came over to me on the playground at recess, where we had been playing together for several months every day, and told me that she couldn't play with me any more. When I asked her why not, she said, with a toss of her head and all the disdain a seven-year-old could muster, "Mommy says we don't play with Jews". My parents observed the major holidays, and I have a few obscure memories of times when we went to synagogue. I remember my mother making up the Chanukah Angel and getting us a Chanukah Bush so we wouldn't feel left out at Christmas time. There was a sense of cultural heritage, but nothing with any meaningful substance. When I was eight years old

we moved to Levittown, Pennsylvania, and it was there that my brother first began attending Hebrew School to prepare for his Bar Mitzvah. I idolized my Big Brother, and anything he did, I wanted to do too... so naturally I asked if I could go to Hebrew School. My parents said that I could, and I was excited to enroll. What we did not know until years and years later was that they had mistakenly put me in a second-year class with children of my own age, rather than in a first-year class. The teacher was from Israel, and she believed that the way to teach children Hebrew was to speak almost nothing but Hebrew in class. The result was that I was painfully, totally, humiliatingly lost! I was used to being an excellent student in school, and this came as a crushing blow to me. Lacking the foundational building blocks of the language, I could get good grades only in History, because that book was written in English. I fell farther and farther behind, until one day I was mortified to have to take home to my parents a letter from the class president saying that they would have to kick me out if I didn't shape up. Well, my parents allowed me to leave the class and I never pursued my Jewish education any further. But that experience, combined with the overall lack of acceptance I felt at that synagogue and at school, put a very bad taste in my mouth for all this Judaism stuff. Fast forward to high school... a difficult time at best, and made no more pleasant by occurrences such as the time a classmate stopped me in the hallway, looked me dead in the eye, and said in an almost accusatory tone, "You're going to hell because you're a Jew!" Needless to say, by this time I no longer wanted to take my peanut butter and jelly on matzoh sandwiches to school for Passover! I barely wanted to attend the family holiday gatherings. I just wished I didn't have to be quite so different. When I was sixteen I began apprenticing in a dog grooming shop, and the owner and her boyfriend kept talking to me about Jesus. They told me they were Born Again Jews, and described the concept of asking Jesus into your heart. I went home and told my mother all about these meshugenah (crazy) people who thought Jews could have anything to do with Jesus. Even with my minimally observant background, I believed that Jews and Jesus didn't mix! I listened politely and respectfully, but that was all. Many times people came across my path who told me about having a personal relationship with God through Jesus, but I simply was not interested. I firmly believed, as my father had taught me, that if it couldn't be proven scientifically, then it simply wasn't so. Religion was for weak people who needed something to help them cope with life, not for us. We had good minds. We were self-reliant. We could make anything we wanted to make (we often built things together), handle anything that came along. We didn't need a crutch. We were above average... more than that, were the "elite", the "elect". A

very important word, that last one. As a young adult I pursued a life of sinful indulgence. I was hurting and empty inside, but unwilling to admit it, seeking worldly things to bring me happiness. One night, my friend and I saw a man on TV. He was touting a religion that seemed to include all the things I thought were good: astrology, mysticism, meditation; a belief that all paths lead to God, that in fact, all people and all things were a part of God. This religion was called the "New Age". I began to lean forward and became intensely interested as this man said that the Christ had come, and that he was waiting in the desert for anyone who wanted to come to him. The more interested I became, the more agitated my friend got. He said that the man was not telling the truth. I said there was no such thing as absolute truth. He said that there was, and he could prove it. I dared him to do so. He went over to a bookshelf, picked up a small leather book, and literally blew the dust from its surface. He looked upward, closed his eyes, and seemed to thumb randomly through the book, finally landing on and reading aloud these words of Jesus: "At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect, if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert', do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms', do not believe it." (Matthew 24: 23-26 NIV) I could hardly believe my ears! There, in a book I knew had been written centuries earlier, Jesus was describing the exact scenario I was now seeing on TV! What's more, He was also saying that it would fool even "the elect"... and according to everything I had been brought up to believe, that was ME! My head began to spin a bit. I was full of questions. We talked for hours and hours about the real coming of Christ.... the "rapture".... and all the end-times things that my boyfriend said he believed. The more we talked, the more chaotic I felt inside. I wasn't sure there really was a God at all; my father said he believed that when we die, we just cease to exist. But I had always figured that I was a pretty good person, and when I died, if there was a God, He would understand that I didn't want to waste my life committing myself to something that I wasn't sure was real. I thought I could just sit on the fence, and when I died I would find out how things really were. I did not believe in a literal hell, just heaven (maybe) or oblivion. And besides, if there was a heaven, didn't all Jews go there automatically? That's what I had heard. But here was this guy telling me that I was a sinner in need of a savior, that I was separated from God by my sinful state, and that Jesus had paid the price to redeem me and make it possible for me to have a personal relationship with God. The turmoil increased, and the hour got later and later. Finally, at about 2:00 in the

morning, my friend ran out of patience and blurted out, "Look, I have to get some sleep. If you want peace, just open your heart up and ask Jesus to come in. Good night!" I wanted peace! At that moment, I felt as if I were opening up my entire self and I whispered, "Jesus, if you're really the way to peace, then I need you!" I felt a deep, profound peace enter me, a peace that I knew was beyond my own ability to produce. My body tingled all over with a gentle electricity. I slipped off into a sweeter, deeper sleep than I had ever known. When I awoke, I knew that I was changed. The whole world felt fresh, brand new. The sky seemed bluer, the bird's songs more intensely beautiful. I felt a joy and a gratefulness that could barely be contained. I kept saying "Thank You!" over and over, rejoicing that I finally knew Whom to thank! I knew there had to be a next step. I called my only Christian friend, Brad, who encouraged me to "find a Bible-believing, Christ-centered church and get grounded". I was all too happy to leave Judaism behind and become a Christian, assimilating into a nice United Methodist Church and putting my musical gifts to work for the Lord as a worship leader. One little problem, though: my pastor had a bigger heart for the Jewish people than I did! He insisted upon greeting me with open arms and calling out to me in his booming voice, "Daughter of Abraham!" Frankly, I would have preferred that he just call me Fern. But the love in his heart was so genuine, that God used this man to begin the much needed healing in my heart concerning my people and my own identity as a Jew. Seeing the change in me, both of my parents also got saved. They have since gone on to be with the Lord, but I take comfort in the wonderful assurance that I will see them again! Brad and I were later married, and initially we worshiped together at my church. Over my years as a believer, I had visited a messianic congregation in Philadelphia, but it was too far away to be practical for regular attendance, and besides, I still wasn't sure I wanted to be that closely associated with Jewish people. But God decided to again exhibit His sense of humor. It was October, and Brad and I were at a Christian retreat in the Pocono Mountains, about 3 hours from home. There we met a young lady who told us about the messianic synagogue she attended in Northeast Philadelphia. We were intrigued when we learned that this congregation, Beth Emanuel, was literally around the corner from the place where I worked! We promised to come visit, but I wasn't really thrilled about it. I figured we would just fulfill our promise by visiting once, and that would be the end of it. But God had other plans. On our first visit, I was amazed to find that I knew every single song the worship leader sang! I felt connected. When we sang the "Sh'ma" (the one truly universal prayer of the Jewish people) I got tears in my eyes. The people reached out to us in a warm and loving way. The Rabbi shared his own love for his Jewish

heritage and its fulfillment in Yeshua (Jesus). Over a course of months God gently, lovingly drew me into reconciliation with my Jewishness, and beyond that, to a sense of fulfillment in being a Messianic Jew, and a desire to support the messianic vision. The Lord called us to leave our church and attend Beth Emanuel Messianic Synagogue regularly, and I have since become a worship leader there as well. I am now learning all the things that I never knew growing up, about the cycle of festivals and their fulfillment in Messiah Yeshua, about how to be an observant Jew, about the original Jewish context of the Christian faith. My husband is excited about his role as a Messianic Gentile in the Body of Messiah. In fact, it was really his enthusiasm that did the trick for me and helped me cross the last barriers into full reconciliation. One more thing I would like to share. From my earliest memory, my brother and I have sung and written songs together. I have been a professional musician in various settings, and also a songwriter.

Throughout my life, the things that I wanted to express, things I felt were important, were all communicated through the writing of songs. Of course, when I came to know the Lord, I began to write for Him. My brother and I drifted apart somewhat because of the differences in our beliefs, and my songwriting went solo. But then my brother also got saved, and he has begun writing wonderful songs to the Lord with his wife. Brad and I have collaborated on many songs as well. It is amazing to see how, in God, all things work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose! In recording my first CD entitled "The Call", my brother and I lifted our voices together once again, this time united in praise and worship to the Lord! Hallelujah! Truly, He is the God of restoration! "The Call" contains music that reflects the scope of my pilgrimage with the Lord. It is our prayer that it will be used to draw people closer to Him. _____ About the Artist (my wife!) by Brad

Batchelor Many good things may be said about Fern Shapiro [her maiden name], but the thing that stands out in my mind about Fern is her true heart of love and worship for God. It's this constant seeking of His will in her life that makes it a joy to be married to her. Fern was born and raised Jewish [minimally] but never really embraced her Jewishness. In fact, for all intents and purposes, she denied her Jewishness. So, in 1982 when she accepted Jesus as her Savior [a very Christian concept] she was more than happy to join a Methodist church and become a "Christian". Little did she know that the "Rev" at this church had a bigger heart for the Jewish people than she did! She would shrink at his greeting her with his big hug and exclamation of, "daughter of Abraham!"... but God was beginning a healing. There are so many details to this healing that, for the sake of brevity, I will jump ahead to 1996 when we first attended Beth

Emanuel Messianic Synagogue in Northeast Philadelphia. I was enthusiastic and Fern was reluctant, which I didn't realize at the time. I was overwhelmed with what I perceived to be the fulfillment of prophecy, that in the last days the veil would be lifted from the eyes of the Jewish people, and that after almost 1600 years, Jews were again saying, "I am a Jew and I have accepted Yeshua as my Messiah [a very Jewish concept]. I do not have to become 'Christian'. I will simply trust in the shed blood of the Lamb of God to cleanse me from my sin and restore my relationship with God" [another very Jewish concept]. As the Old Covenant says, "...without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin". I know Fern would have much more to say about the healing that has taken place in her heart, and even greater than this, the joy that she has experienced in embracing her Jewish heritage and its fulfillment in Messianic Judaism. The music on this album reflects the full gamut of Fern's walk with the Lord, both before this restoration and after. We hope that it will bless both Jew and Gentile in their relationship with Yeshua [Jesus]. _____

A Review of "The Call" by Phil Pearlman of messianicmusic.com A few months ago, I was contacted by one of our featured messianicmusicartists about a Jewish believer who had just completed a CD compiled of original Messianic songs. It was her first CD, and I was asked to give an ear to it. I contacted Fern, and told her to send it to me. We receive many CD releases from all over, and sometimes it is a while before I can give an ear to all of them. I received "THE CALL", and decided to open it right away. The cover caught my eye, and I felt that there might be something special about it. Boy, was I right! This one has got to be one of the most refreshing releases sent to me in a while. All songs are written either by Fern, her husband Brad, or both. They are all scripture based, but what makes this release unique is the great style of songwriting that Fern and Brad employ. It is obvious that there has been some good musical background in Fern and Brad's lives, as displayed in each unique song. Each song is written not only to accommodate the scripture-based message, but seems to capture the very emotion of the message portrayed. I have seen many artists who have recorded songs based upon God's word, however to capture its meaning through the music transcends directly to the heart. There are many songs on "THE CALL" that I wanted to give to you as a song sample; however, I have chosen three of my favorites. You'll just have to get this release to hear the full collection. The first song sample is from the song entitled, "Everything That Has Breath". Based on Deuteronomy 6:5, and Psalm 150, this song calls us all to the reason that we exist. Praise Him with all of your heart, mind, and soul, is the theme to this uplifting song. We are to praise Him in all that we go

through. In fact, the song proclaims that Yeshua is the Rock, and great King over all nations. This harmonically driven song is well performed. So many artists attempt to portray "bigger than life" musical productions, which is a common trait in studio production. This song simply put, drives the heart of the scripture that it is centered around. You will be left with the desire to do just what the song proclaims. Praise Him! The second song pick is entitled "The Quiet Place". The song begins with a reminder of the noises we hear in the hustle-bustle of the world that we live in. Based upon Psalms 27, 46, and 131, this song brings us to the "quiet place" only provided by God and the beauty that He has created for us. I don't know about you, but much of the time I find myself running around almost in circles, caught up in the busy pace of life. I forget to slow down and enjoy the "quiet place". This song transports the listener to that quiet place. The beautiful melody, delivered by the rich tonality of Fern's voice, completes this wonderful song. You will agree, I am sure. The third song sample is entitled "A Miracle Happened There". Fern employs a wonderful recounting of the Book of Maccabees, along with words interwoven from the books of John, 2 Corinthians, and Matthew. The song makes the connection that just as the Lord provided the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days after the Temple was destroyed, there is also the miracle when we receive Yeshua. The darkness in our hearts is filled with His light. "There is none like Him! Who can compare?" May you all be blessed with this refreshing collection from Fern's heart to yours! Order your copy right away. You will be happy that you did!

BIOGRAPHY - Fern was raised in the Jewish faith, although just in a cultural upbringing. Her father taught her that religion was something only for the weak, who needed something to help them cope with life. Fern struggled through life's bumps in the worldly way. She received Yeshua as Her Lord, wanting to find the peace that she had not been able to find in the world. This came after she had seen a New Age show claiming that the Messiah had come and was waiting in the desert for anyone who wanted to come to him. A friend pointed her toward Matthew 24:23-26. "At that time, if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it! For false Christs and false prophets will appear...to deceive even the elect...See, I have told you this ahead of time. So, if anyone tells you 'There He is, out in the desert', do not go out;...do not believe it". According to everything that she had been brought up to believe, Fern realized that the 'elect' spoken of was her. That very night, Fern asked Yeshua into her heart. She had been acquainted with a man named Brad, whose steadfastness in the Lord led her to fellowship in a spirit-filled Church. She felt relieved to leave the Judiasm that she had been raised with, only to find that the Pastor had a bigger Jewish heart

than she did! Through the Pastor's encouragement and the healing of the Lord, Fern began to return to the true roots of her faith. After seeing the great change in her, Fern's parents also came to know Yeshua. Brad and Fern married soon after and in time, the Lord led them to a Messianic congregation located in Philadelphia. Fern continues to rediscover her Jewishness, this time with Yeshua in her heart. Fern leads worship in the congregation. Fern, Brad and son Teddy live in Pennsylvania.

A Review of "The Call" by Lynne Albertson of The Messianic Times The Call, Fern Batchelor's first album, is a family affair. It includes songs written by Fern and collaborations with her husband, Brad, as well as background vocals by brother Mark Shapiro and his wife, Chris. Fern says the concept for the title song, "The Call" came while Brad was designing and installing stained-glass windows for their congregation's new sanctuary. He noticed a message in the symbols of his designs: a Star of David, flanked by a shofar and a dove; a menorah between a chai (abundant life) and the Two Tablets of Stone. When read from left to right, the symbols said, "Calling Israel to receive the Spirit and abundant life through the light of His Word". Fern sensed an anointing on this concept and the celebratory song was based on the windows' message: "From the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the call to Yisrael is heard: come to life in the Spirit, life abundant through the light of the Living Word". The 14 songs on this CD reflect the joyful journey of Fern embracing her Jewish heritage after a pastor greeted her as a daughter of Abraham when she came to the Lord in 1982. Scripture backs her lyrics, and the simple melodic strains lend an Israeli folk sound to portions of this album, reminiscent of early Liberated Wailing Wall albums, the musical outreach arm of Jews for Jesus. Songs such as "Sabbath Rest", taken from the traditional Shabbat evening service, and "A Miracle Happened There", based on the book of the Maccabees, reveal the depth of Fern's Jewishness. "Everything That Has Breath" is a joyously uplifting praise song. In "The Quiet Place", flowing streams, birdsong and a lilting flute reflect the story behind the song. My favorite, "Candle in the Night", is a simple, worshipful love song to Yeshua. The chorus says it all: "In wonder I watched, and with natural ease, love grew.... and I'll never love another as I love You". The Call is a strong testimony to our restoration in the Lord.

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