Dearest Friends,

Just saying "thank you" is not enough to express the deepest feelings of gratitude a man can have for the love and prayers you have shown us. The Curro Oncology team, Eugene Marais Hospital staff, and Delta Airlines staff are all real heroes. Without them Cindy never would have made it home to the U.S. and into the loving embrace of her family. With the flight from Johannesburg to Atlanta alone being over 17 hours and from Atlanta to Indianapolis another hour plus and with the movements required to transit the airports to embark and disembark on the planes and the need to be sitting in a wheelchair during times of waiting – it all took a huge toll on Cindy's body. I was able to keep her fairly comfortable during the long flight but just before our arrival into Atlanta her condition deteriorated quickly. Soon after we lifted off from Atlanta I thought I was losing her and began to cry to the Lord for help. The Delta pilots hit the throttle and we landed in Atlanta 20 minutes early. Airport EMS (alerted by the Delta flight crew) was waiting and took her off the plane and an ambulance that we had arranged then transported her 45 minutes to the hospital in Greenfield, Indiana – home! With the physical toll on her and the emotional and physical toll on me I found it was the hardest thing I've ever done and at 40,000 feet racing across the ocean and into the dark night feeling very alone and overwhelmed, I can testify – God was there. The end went down much different than we had hoped for but through it all, every step of the way, the LORD has helped us and has used many human hands and caring hearts to do so all through out this journey.

The latest at 4 pm on Friday October 9: Yesterday upon arrival to the hospital she was pretty much comatose and lethargic. She received medical care in the ER and then having reviewed her files and condition the doctors have moved her into a transitions unit at the hospital. I spent the night in the room with her and in the darkness of night heard her soft voice as she prayed to the Lord, something I'll never forget. This morning she "woke up" a bit and each of all the family has had an opportunity to see her and enjoy time and laughter together. It was the miracle we have all prayed for and the grace of God that you have all been a part of. Not soon after however came the onset of great pain and all the signals that the end of this journey for her is very near. She is in hospice care and the doctors have increased her pain meds and she will soon, once again, be in a comatose state. We called the effort to get Cindy back to the U.S. Operation Home Bound. We've completed the earthly part of that journey. What remains is to see her off to her Heavenly home. At this point we are all praying that her passing will be gentle and without great struggle as none of us want to see her suffer any longer. Heaven and our Lord Jesus await her. Will you please pray with us to that end. Obviously I am partial but I will tell you that I have never seen a woman, and hardly a man, with such resilience of spirit to go through what she has endured and to keep fighting back. God has used Momma Cindy's life and this present testimony to impact the lives of countless thousands of people and I above all am so blessed to have had the love, loyalties, and affections of this beautiful and amazing mountain woman from North Carolina for 35 years. Our marriage and ministry together has been that "something special" that only God can do.

As we watch and wait for her passing I am focused on her and my family. Please forgive me if I do not respond immediately to calls and text messages. To our prayer warriors and financial partners thank you for your patience. A long over due prayer letter update will follow as soon as I am able. Even during our cancer journey the ministry has gone on and God continues to do great things in Botswana and the ministry there has been blessed. I am eager and excited to update you on some of those things. Public funeral arrangements will be communicated as soon as they are known. In the meantime, we covet your continuing and constant prayers for us. Please pray particularly for Emily and Shane. Throughout caring for her Mom and the transitions Shane and she have been going through to establish their ministry in Zambia and the DRC Emily has had her own share of health issues and certain aspects of that will keep her from being able to fly home for the funeral. But as you know – she has been a rock by her Mom and I's side throughout and Shane has been right there with us as well.

Many have asked after me. I can honestly say that I'm ok. Very numb, very exhausted and overwhelmed but throughout this journey God's grace has been sufficient. My hearts desire has been to love my Cindy and to serve my wife's needs and desires honorably and to be a living example of the faith which we have preached all these many years. There's a lot ahead but I know the Lord is there. I will take the time to process the grief, care for all of the affairs, spend time our families, and when the time is right will return to the work in Botswana. I don't know what it will be like without Cindy but I know God has a plan. It's been well said that I don't what all tomorrow holds but I know who holds tomorrow and I know he holds my hand. That's all we need. A particular verse that God has helped me with in recent days is found in Psalm 119: 75-76, "I know, O LORD, that thy judgements are right and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant."

Cliché's, however true they are, seem a bit shallow in times like these. Only God's Word can bring comfort. I don't pretend to fully understand the "why" of all this affliction, especially all that Cindy has endured. But I know the "WHO" of our faith and He has been so good to me and Cindy that we cannot but trust in Him and His faithfulness. Cindy used to sing a song, one of my favorites, that carried this message, "When you can't see His hand, TRUST HIS HEART!" Indeed we do!! We love you! Thank you for loving us and loving the Lord through us as you have. Heaven is our home! Jesus is our hope! This life is just the journey! We're looking beyond and pressing on! – 2 Corinthians 4: 16-18.

In Christ,
Pastor Mike