



Cindy's Mom turning
80 the day before
Mother's day

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Dear Balm Benefactors,

Wow, we can't even begin to tell you how great your prayers are. This has been a month of introspection and learning. In case you can't tell, those are tough for me. I'm much happier having the "run and do stuff" kind of months!

Any time I'm not singing and getting to really see God touch hungry hearts is a foreign time for me. I've been blessed, for no good reason that I can tell, with spending most of my life getting to do just what I want to do – write and sing about Jesus. But for the time being, I only get to do that a few times a month. The rest of the time I am "tentmaking." (Most of you know that's what Paul did to support his ministry, so in some circles *any* job that one does to support one's ministry is called tentmaking.) At first I just put in my time at nursing, but I've started to really look for the chances I have to share Jesus at work. I know. That sounds pretty basic, right? But I'm accustomed to just talking about the Lord so openly that having to be sensitive to looking for the "right moment" is sort of a new concept for me. It's a completely different paradigm. I mean, no one came to work or got admitted to the hospital with the idea that they were coming to hear me share about Jesus, right? I realize that most of you have way more wisdom about that than I do, but I've finally come to look at it as sort of a treasure hunt. Where in my day will I come across someone who is in just the right place to hear something I can tell them about God? It's sure helped my perspective at work!

Family is always a joy. I had the chance to take my middle granddaughter, Joanie, to Disneyland for her 3rd birthday. It's a whole new place when seen through a child's eyes. The highlight for me was getting to hear my daughter, Naomi (who went through the upBeat! training 4 years ago) sing in her church choir.

Moving Cindy's mother, Joann, back home with us has been filled with joys and lessons. Most of the time she is the definition of pleasantly confused. She doesn't seem to be at all disconcerted by this – just takes it gracefully as a part of aging. I get used to doing little corrections like, "No, Mom, remember? Your glasses don't go in the spoon drawer." But I was flummoxed the other morning when she got up and said, "You'd better wake up Stu. He'll want breakfast, too." Now, how can you gently remind a person that someone they love died 12 years ago? So I paused trying to be sensitive and said, "Hmm, do you remember about Stu, Mom?" She stopped a moment and then the light went on in her eyes. "Oh that's right. Stu's gone. (pause) Well then, who was in bed with me?!" ☺ I had no answer for that one!

But all this has got me thinking. I can see that Mom doesn't ever really feel "home" anymore. Even here where she's spent so much time over the years, she'll ask, "Who lives here," or "Which room is mine?" I kind of know how she feels. Out of place. Out of step. Not like you actually "belong" anywhere. I wonder if this is just like the old song said, "This world is not my home, I'm only passin' through."

As Mom has more and more times that she sees people who have died long ago – including her identical twin who she misses deeply – I see the grace of her drawing closer to that other world.

When one of you, our supporters, sent us almost half of what we'd need to make a new CD, I could see where some of my new song ideas will come from. Sharing about Jesus in unlikely places. Seeing things through a child's eyes. And finally ending up in that place where we'll all "belong". Where we'll be finally home. Where Mom will always know where her room is. For some reason it makes it a little easier for me to deal with all those lessons!

Much love and prayers, Marsha & Cindy

**Free Ways to Help BALM Ministries
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(Below you can read their advertising blurb, 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 pick BestBuy, it takes you to that site & you order whatever you want to online. That way, they automatically donate part of their profit to BALM Ministries.)

Every time you shop at any of 700+ online stores in the iGive network, a portion of the money you spend benefits BALM Ministries. It's a free service, & you'll never pay more when you reach a store through iGive. In fact, shoppers will enjoy iGive's repository of coupons, free shipping deals, & sales. To get started, just create your free iGive account.

> **Start iGiving at:**

www.igive.com/BALM

(PS from Marsha: I tried this for my online shopping & after the first time, it was very easy & Balm did get the percentage they promise.)

Prayer List

- ✓ *Prayers for everyone's finances, including our upBeat! artists. You can learn more about some of them online.*
www.MarshallGrantMinistries.org
www.justinryanonline.com
www.orgenarose.com
www.myspace.com/dchancemusic
<http://cdbaby.com/cd/fredfrancis> just to get you started.
- ✓ *Praises for my nursing job & for time to care for Cindy's Mom after her stroke. Pray for her health. She is so precious to us.*
- ✓ *Wow, so big praises for someone who sent almost*

half of the \$15,000 it takes to do a new CD! I'm so happy to be getting started on that. What a miracle.

- ✓ *Prayers for the conferences we'll be participating in this year & prayers for new concerts.*
- ✓ *Prayers for new songs I'm working on ☺ & for our health.*
- ✓ *Prayers for Cindy's strength. She's in school, working for health insurance & caring for her Mom. Honestly she's stretched as thin as I've ever seen her & she needs your prayers.*
- ✓ *Prayers for wisdom for the dozens of emails I answer each week & for the still-closeted Christians who are hoping for answers!*

What You Have to Say

"I am SO excited that you are coming to Pittsburgh....I always check the concerts & was thinking maybe you would (be nearby)....but wow!!! to have you actually here....I will be checking back for the date to make sure I'm off work. I recently saw the first pastor that I called the day I came out to my parents etc two years ago....I remember being practically in tears as I told her I was so afraid of God's judgment, etc. It was great to share with her how many people God has brought into my life to lead me into a closer real relationship with Him – including you. Take care...see you soonish!!!"

"I am just sitting here listening to your music & find myself hoping to see you on the West Coast sometime soon. (My spouse's sudden) death last month has hit especially hard these last few days & I have remembered her introducing me to your music & our few times with you on your visits to Sacramento, before Rev Ed died. Thank you for your gift of music & the Spirit in which you bring Christ's message. I want to let you know that (a leader)for Pacific School of Religion, sang Eastern Gate for the memorial. Thank you for sending me the tracks for her. It was beautiful & just what she would have

wanted. With her having sung that in church just 2 weeks before, I know that she was trying to prepare us for sudden passing. May you be blessed as you bring God's message to God's flock."

"Thank you so much for your ongoing ministry! I learned "For Those Tears I Died" when I was growing up. When someone asked me to sing it again, I was looking for the history to go with it...what a wonderful story. In the United Church of Canada we have officially accepted folk in the LGBT community but changing attitudes is more difficult. How wonderful to know that you are ministering in the community! I will share your story so that people can start to make connections."

Marsha's Schedule

June 6 1st Congregational Church of Wakefield (UCC) in Northwood, NH
6:30pm concert (603)522-3189
www.FCCWakefieldNH.org

June 7 1st Congregational Church of Wakefield (UCC) in Northwood, NH
9:30 am special music (603)522-3189
www.FCCWakefieldNH.org

In July I will be in Pittsburgh (I can't believe I spelled that city wrong two months in a row – what a dolt!)
July 16-19 Marsha & Justin Ryan will be at the MCC Regional Conference held at the Radisson Hotel Pittsburgh Green Tree with a special concert on July 18th at 9pm (details at www.mcccchurch.org)
July 19 Marsha & Justin will be hosted by a Presbyterian church for an afternoon concert – details next month!

What Date Would You Like??

PLEASE!! As always, check the phone numbers for updated times & info. Go to www.BalmMinistries.net for current listings.

ChristianGays.com handles BALM Ministries sales outside the US. Also check out 5,000 pages of Resources, Education, Chat Rooms, List Serve, Prison Ministry, Blogging, Books & Music For Sale & much more