

## **God is Real, To Heal, To Comfort, To Restore**

The socio/economic, political and moral climate of our community is one that breeds uncertainty and despair. Many of our youth are filled with apprehension and even hopelessness. Like a malignant cancer, crime, abuse and promiscuity motivated by selfishness and greed are destroying the moral fabric of our society and the 'flowers' of our nation; the youth. What can be done to check this precipitous slide? Where can hope be once more found? It was in this very environment that the Healing Ministries was raised up and continues to be a channel of assurance for our youth. In the midst of confusion and despondency, Jesus remains the solution, and has been using the healing ministries for the past five years to communicate this message of hope.

Like Pentecost in apostolic times the hospital ministry group enjoyed very humble beginnings. The environment was right the timing was perfect, the field was ready and though the laborers were few God was mighty to deliver. In July 2001 at a mid-year summit in Tobago the youth leaders of the churches in this conference were challenged to make themselves available for use by the Holy Spirit. Through the sharing of testimonies and personal interaction, we were motivated to seek opportunities and avenues for impacting our community. I was privileged to be one of those touched by the power of God and the compassion of Jesus and purposed in my heart to use my gifts for His service.

Little did I know that God had already provided my first opportunity at that retreat. Through casual interaction with a young man from the Laventille SDA Church, I was made aware of the concept of regular hospital visitation. I found out that unlike the special institutional visits that might be held by an AY society once a year if at all, this young man along with some old folks visited the hospital every week. For the first time I felt as though God was giving me an invitation to this type of ministry and was drawn into a commitment that would take me on an exiting journey that continues to this day.

At no time in the history of mankind has the future looked as bleak as the present. The elders have given up hope and the youth seem to be without restraint in their selfish ambition. The media daily bombards the public with this gloomy picture the facts are basically undeniable yet the existence and history of the 'Healing Ministries' must be equally irrefutable. On the 15th of September this year, we will be celebrating the completion of six years and the beginning of our seventh year in

ministry. We anticipate great exploits for God in this coming year of **perfection** and **completion**. A balanced picture of the present reality will reveal that there is hope for the youth because Jesus is alive and well.

Today, almost six years later the group has grown from a membership of five to a membership of over fifty young people and has expanded beyond the confines of the weekly hospital visits to ongoing community projects. Presently through our network, our ministry serves the **P.O.S general hospital**, the **Sangre Grande hospital**, the **San Fernando General hospital** and the **Mt. Hope hospital**. We've seen firsthand the power of God to bring physical and emotional healing to those who place their trust in Him.

We are involved in several community projects that include **soup kitchens, prayer stations, health services** etc. The members of this ministry are very ambitious for the advancement of the cause of God and are therefore always seeking for ways to improve their ministerial efficiency. They have been particularly exposed in areas such as **peer counseling, grief and bereavement counseling, first aid, Adventist heritage, stress management** and **prayer ministry**. One of their most recent thrusts has been training in the area of **HIV/AIDS home care**.

The compassion of Christ plays a very significant role in the motivation of the group members. Daily exposed to the debilitating effects of selfishness and insensitivity in the society the members of this ministry have to continually remind themselves of the life and ministry of Christ. Resisting the temptation to be dragged into the custom of self preservation that is taught and modeled by the majority of our nation's leaders our members go to great lengths to promote the values of humility and selflessness. It is through His power and following His example that we are able to bring comfort to the distressed. For the love of Christ constraineth us.

There are definitely enough experiences to suggest that there is hope for the youth of the church, there is hope for the youth of the nation and the world. There is no need to despair; there is no reason to give up now. While in the process of being fully restored into the image of Christ, the Healing Ministries are also instruments of restoration for the youth of the nation. Our watchwords for this coming year must be experienced with full vigor: '*Jesus is alive and well*' and "**God is still real to heal, to comfort and to restore.**"

**WRONDELL TIMOTHY**