

## **Moravian Moment #77**

### **Rekindling the Passion**

The Moravian Staff from throughout the Eastern West Indies Province held its Staff Retreat in Mandeville Jamaica, July 7-11, 2008. The retreat was held under the theme: Rekindling the Passion. Members of some of our Churches have sometimes asked, why do our Pastors need to go on retreat? This Moravian Moment seeks to give an understanding of what a retreat is and how our Staff can be reenergized for the work of Ministry. Webster's dictionary defines "retreat" as "a period of retirement or seclusion, especially one devoted to religious contemplation away from the pressures of ordinary life". "Spiritual" references "the higher intellectual or endowments of the mind, intellect, consciousness or the moral feelings or states of the soul".

Making a 'spiritual retreat' then is choosing a place of quietude, perhaps with a teacher or spiritual guide, to rediscover the divinity that exists at the center of our lives. In his book *A Place for God*, author, Timothy K. Jones suggests a retreat so we may "recollect a scattered life and focus on the one who calls and seeks and invites us to communion."

The Retreat offered our Ministers an opportunity to experience a variety of approaches to communicating with the divine. One's channel to God may occur through meditation and contemplation, and prayer. The idea is that in silence one can't hide from one's problems, or from God. The retreat environment provided one with time to experience the peace and joy of meditation and contemplation in his quest for the Divine. The simple regularity of prayers, meals, rest and communion offered by spiritual retreats keeps one spiritually and physically healthy.

Thomas Keating states, "A retreat is not a substitute for daily life. It should be a booster and an accelerator of the spiritual journey - you go a long way in a short time. But if it is not continued then by some daily process, its primary benefit and effect will be missed." A retreat provides a focused opportunity to learn and strengthen practices which may lead us to a "shift in perception", thereby changing our relationship with life, one another and the world around us.

We are naturally spiritual beings, living human lives. In the book of Hosea, God invites us to 'come to the desert to pray and He will speak to our hearts'. Jesus very often went up on mountains or in the desert, away from the crowd to retreat and pray. Retreat allows us to break our ordinary pattern of daily life. When we turn off the television and cell phones, we are in an environment to affirm our commitment to spiritual priorities.

A retreat provides you the environment to rest your body, mind and soul. A retreat is an invitation from God to "come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest". It is a place where one is re-energized and more aware of the body, mind and soul connection. It is a time to pull oneself back from the stresses of life and evaluate and reevaluate one's walk with God. Our Staff rekindled the passion for God, our spouses (best friend), ministry and the Church, our walk with one another, to see men and women come to know Jesus, our young people, for our people to be delivered from slackness, looseness, Immorality and sin, for the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman, and for righteousness and holiness. Remember: Even God rested. We were wonderfully blessed by our retreat facilitator, Dr. Marva Dawn who took us to heights we dreamt about.

*July 20, 2008*