



Jamaica Connects Faith with Tourism

Kingston, Jamaica, June 07, 2008 --(PR.com)-- Government officials commend Miles Ahead's humanitarian work on the island.

The Jamaica Government is embracing faith tourism efforts which stimulate the economy and provide medical care to its nationals.

Jamaica's Ministry of Health and Environment recently expressed appreciation to the San Diego-based Miles Ahead nonprofit organization for its faith-based humanitarian mission, in which 80 medical professionals brought some US \$5 million in free medical equipment, pharmaceuticals and health care to Montego Bay. The volunteers, which included specialist doctors, pediatricians, surgeons, dentists and nurses, held free clinics and served an estimated 6,000 residents.

"The team must be commended for the excellent manner in which activities were organized to facilitate the treatment of patients, especially in deeply rural areas," noted the local government authorities, who were impressed with the fast turn around time for Pap smear results facilitated by use of modern equipment.

"Timely results are crucial to the prevention of cervical cancer, which affects hundreds of women in the region. We also wish to place on record our special thanks for the gifts of equipment donated to the local health system. Accept our very best wishes for your future endeavours," the Ministry of Health and Environment stated.

Jamaica's Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett recently disclosed that Jamaica is actively working to target the important and growing faith-based travel market, highlighting the work of former NFL player Pastor Miles McPherson and his group of almost 300 Miles Ahead volunteers. Other teams of volunteers, in conjunction with local churches and community organizations, conducted sports clinics, deaf education workshops, and school assemblies, and helped renovate two local elementary schools.

Andria Hall, a US-based faith tourism expert and internationally recognized journalist and author who was on island for the outreach efforts, said she was heartened to see faith tourism - a niche she has long promoted in the region - coming to reality. "There is so much we can accomplish when we touch and agree on committing our work to the Lord," said the former CNN News Anchor, who called on regional governments, the private sector and churches to work in close collaboration to target this market for the benefit of local communities.

Miles Ahead traveled to Jamaica as part of the Jamaica Broilers Group's 50th anniversary celebrations and three major family-oriented festivals, under the Best Dressed 50 Fest banner, presented in Mandeville, Montego Bay and Kingston. Messages were presented by evangelists Luis and Andrew Palau as well as McPherson himself.

Robert Levy, president of Jamaica Broilers, said his corporation and country were privileged to have



Miles McPherson and Miles Ahead on the island, while gospel musician Papa San, who performed to tens of thousands during the crusade nights, said "It's been great to minister to my island, Jamaica."

"The doctors you brought and the school repairs, it's all so beautiful. There is a way out, not through guns, not through prostitution, but through Jesus Christ - seek Him first," said former Jamaica soccer star Paul "Tegat" Davis. He joined with former Jamaica national Warren Barrett and a team of athletes led by ex-NBA basketball player Zack Jones as well as Darren Carrington, an ex-NFL player, to conduct free sports clinics for young people.

McPherson, referring to Miles Ahead's participation in the growing faith tourism movement in the Caribbean, said "People of faith have a gift they are called to share. Once people of faith know a need, they will want to respond. Something supernatural happens when someone invests in another person's life."

Video highlights of the outreach and the crusades are available at the recently launched interactive rich media site www.mileshead.tv.

Miles Ahead is expanding its Caribbean connections where it aims to make a long-term positive impact in communities by investing in people and programs that can sustain themselves and grow. It is in the midst of launching TAKE5, a fund-raising initiative to encourage people to do something for the youth by "taking 5 minutes to send in US \$5 (or \$50 or \$500)." The contributions will help Miles Ahead offer youth-focused leadership programs and a message of spiritual renewal. For more information, visit www.take5now.org.

Pastor McPherson, President of Miles Ahead, also is founder and senior pastor of the 10,000-strong Rock Church and Academy in San Diego, California - www.therocksandiego.org.

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