Report on the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship Youth Festival 2017

The year 2017 marks the 11th edition of the CBF Youth Festival which was successfully hosted by the CBF Youth Department in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago under the auspices of His Worship, the Mayor of San Fernando declaring through our theme, “I Stand For Jesus”.

The festival attracted over two hundred (200) regional delegates from nine (9) Caribbean countries and over two (200) local delegates. Represented were Barbados, Bahamas, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Jamaica, Guyana, Grenada, special guests from the USA and Trinidad & Tobago. Right from the start, the CBF Youth Festival local arrangements committee was highly ambitious but spiritually grounded. What was put forward, was a five (5) day event, in a country whose energy could be felt when delegations attended previous festivals, by a local organising committee that had been formed less than two years ago.

The host country, Trinidad & Tobago, had a long track record of producing world class events, and from all perspectives, the CBF Youth Festival 2017 was a huge success. The strong support received from the international body, the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), the local Baptist bodies, the Baptist Union of Trinidad & Tobago (BUTT), the Trinidad & Tobago Baptist Association (TTBA) and the International Independent Baptist Convention (IIBC), national ministries, private companies and individual sponsors resulted in more than four hundred (400) persons being able to experience worship, fellowship, missions and so much more. The quality of mentors, leaders and pastors was outstanding and we were able to witness a very high level of satisfaction in all events.

As we were hosted to the south of the island, the communities of San Fernando and Marabella were all fully engaged in the festival helping to deliver a regional/international event of a high standard, welcoming brothers and sisters in the faith. Our delegates got the opportunity to see the many talents of Trinidad & Tobago with a dramatic display of our diversity and taste the rich culture at our “Taste T&T” segment which was all a part of the opening ceremony. They were also able to participate in workshop sessions on the second day followed by the mission/outreach project on the third day. Since the festival was held in the southern part of the island, the fourth day offered an exciting trip to the capital city of Port-of-Spain in North Trinidad.

This day culminated with a parade through the streets with the youths declaring collectively, “We Stand For Jesus”. Even though the rain came down, it didn’t deter from the goal, and our voices were heard. After everyone was dried and comfortable, we were ministered to by many local and regional talents. This, I believe was the climax of the festival, which most delegates approved of and were in agreement with. It was truly an amazing time of praise and worship.

We had expected a high level of media interest in the event. In the end this far exceeded even our most optimistic expectations. A target was set of a potential media audience of 1000 followers on social media but the final audience reach was estimated to be 2500 on both social media and radio.

The high internet presence further added to this international profile. By any standards this is a spectacular result. Not only as a confirmation of the CBF Youth Department’s ability to initiate and conduct a world class event, but also to establish our credentials as one of the leading regional youth bodies in the Caribbean. As for the local organising committee in Trinidad & Tobago, the implications for future events and for tourism in general are truly exciting. We now have a strong base upon which to build future youth events and our team is committed to lifting our game even higher. Delegates, team management, local officials, volunteers, the public and our own executive are all contributing thoughts on how to improve the festival and as a result, we expect that the next CBF Youth Festival to be “potentially” held in the year 2019 in the island of Turks & Caicos, by the grace of God, will be even better.

Thanks goes out to all those who helped to make the CBF Youth Festival 2017 so successful. This includes supporters, the Southern Academy for the Performing Arts and staff, the pastors and prayer warriors, workshop leaders, private and public sponsors, volunteers, the community of San Fernando, the CBF Youth Department Executive, the BWA Youth President and the BWA at large and, of course, the delegates who came to experience an awesome time in fellowship with each other, in fellowship with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.