

# THE SURPRISE HEALING

by Martha Dial

© November, 2005

I entered the hospital for a hysterectomy which was to take three hours with an estimated hospital stay of three days. Instead, I awoke nine hours later and the whole left side of my body was completely paralyzed and I was speaking gibberish. My daughter said that my mouth was twisted and my eyes were rolling and glassy. I was transferred to the neurology intensive care unit. After being stabilized, I was told I would be transferred to start rehabilitation where I would remain for approximately one month. I told the doctor I could not stay in the hospital for a month! He commended me on my determination and sense of humor and said my attitude would help in my recovery. He believed in me.

A week later I was transferred for rehabilitation and it seemed my therapy started the day I arrived. Being in the hospital was a shock to my system, and I soon realized that I had suffered some losses – some basic inhibitions, dignity, mental capacity and the use of once functioning limbs. Rehabilitation consists of many professionals working with you to help you find some sense of normalcy. The rehabilitation staff helped me to understand about stroke and recovery. My family was with me every day offering love and support and attending my therapies. But I felt at times that they didn't understand me and my needs now that things had changed in my life. I enjoyed two home visits, but I also felt awkward and burdensome. I felt like a stranger in my own home. I attended all of my therapies, prayed for healing and participated in research programs. I was very eager for any and all help.

However, after a month in rehabilitation, the day came for me to go home to my family. I fell the first night that I was home, and my family threatened to take me back to rehabilitation because I was not obeying my doctor's instructions (not to trust myself just because I was in familiar surroundings). I felt guilty and embarrassed by my action. I was in a wheelchair, so my family had to prepare my meals, help me dress, bathe and walk. They also had to be up with me several times during the night to assist me with medicine and other necessities. All of this created new trauma for all concerned. I was in a wheelchair for a month. Later, I graduated to a walker for a month and then to a cane, but I felt unsteady using it at first. My determination kept me pushing ahead. While I was at home, I entered three research programs to help my affected arm, hand and leg. These programs challenged me to try new things, such as walking on grass rather than concrete and keeping count of the number of steps I could ascend and descend with or without help. The questions I was asked in these programs made me think and experiment with new maneuvers.

Recovery is not easy and I may never be physically or mentally the person I once was. I try to be around positive people. I attend bible classes and church. I am in my block club and like to read.

I am grateful to God, all the many people I met during rehabilitation, my loving family and understanding friends and neighbors. I have truly been blessed and am now able to help my family do some of the things they had to do for me. I am actively trying to accomplish the things I still cannot do well. I keep the faith every day. Every day above the earth is a good day!