

Haiti Trip Report

October 20, 2018, through October 30, 2018

By: Herb Nordmeyer

Mount Calvary

On Sunday, October 14, Candice Dominguez and I made a presentation about Haiti to the Bible Class at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in San Antonio. The presentation went well, and afterwards Judy and I were late to church due to all the questions which were asked.

Before and after the presentation, Candice had metal art from the Lophane Project on sale.

On Saturday, October 20, and Sunday, October 21, Mount Calvary had a craft sale. Proceeds from the craft sale and donations to the Bible Class are going to housing in Haiti.

Saturday, October 20

Judy dropped me off at the San Antonio Airport at 4:00 am. Had two bags to check, each about 45 pounds (I was traveling lighter than usual) and a carry-on which barely fit in the overhead compartment.

Made it to Miami and had to change planes. Headed directly to the new gate, and when I arrived, within 5 minutes I was boarding.

We had a problem arriving in Port-au-Prince. The schedule claimed that we would arrive at 12:52 pm, but we arrived about an hour early. American Airlines had Haiti on Daylight Savings Time, but Haiti was not on Daylight Savings Time.

Had no problem retrieving my bags and was met by Helen, Lophane, and others.

They had put a medical team on the plane that morning.

David Vangness from Oregon arrived. He was to work with food distribution, container contents distribution, and teaching people how to build portable blackboards. In between, he would do whatever needed to be done.

Wally Bogusat from Canada arrived. Wally was involved with unloading the container and distributing the contents and with the week-long class for thirty pastors.

We were staying at Lophane's Guest House. He completed it earlier this year.

Much of the afternoon and evening was taken up with getting ready for the week's work and with unpacking.

Sunday, October 21

After breakfast, we headed to Bon Berger (Good Savior) Lutheran Church. I thought the service lasted 2 hours, but others insisted that it lasted 2 hours and 15 minutes.

Lophane told me that he had not gotten the documents that I had sent him concerning the course and the teaching of the Instructor Candidates. As a result, we

were scheduled for 20 hours of classroom time rather than 30 to 35 hours. Also, the meeting with the Instructor Candidates was set for the last day, not a meeting before the start of the course and then again after the finish of the course.

Chaudry came over to plan, and we started working on ways to overcome the lost emails.

Helen's younger sister was in bad shape, so Helen knew she may need to head back to Florida.

Monday, October 22

Due to a medical condition, the veins in Helen's sister's leg collapsed. Today her leg was amputated. Helen decided to head home as soon as she could get reservations.

The class was scheduled to begin at 9:00 am, and we arrived at the school at about 9:00 am. It took about 20 minutes to set up. Students came in during that whole entire time.



Herb explains to the students what to expect from the course.

Most of the students had not received any preparatory material. The Student Instructors had been through the class before. I had two jump-sticks with all the class material and supporting documents, so the students could download the material onto their computers. None had brought their computers with them since they had not gotten the word to bring them. Nedjie Pailant, an architect, a building inspector, a former student, and a Student

Instructor, asked to take one of the jump-sticks home with her that afternoon, so she could start studying the material that night. Of course, permission was granted.

The classroom was small, it had uncomfortable wooden benches, the walls were not appropriate for projecting onto, and the benches filled much of the room, so there was not much room to maneuver. By US standards, the classroom would not have been considered usable, but it functioned well for us.

Our classroom did not have a screen for projection, and none of the walls were suitable, so we pulled out the folding screen and hung it with double-sided tape. As the day wore on, we found that the double-sided tape was not strong enough to hold the screen. The second day we moved the screen to a different wall and used rope to hold it in place. The screen is 120 inches long. Since we did not need all that length, we folded it in half. Since the only wall we could tie it to was the window wall (a sec-

tion of wall with ventilation block installed), there was light coming in around the screen which interfered with viewing the slides, and it cut down on the ventilation.

One item we have found very useful is a foldable projector stand. We can adjust the height of the projector and tilt the top of the stand as needed. The room was furnished with student desks which had a slanted writing surface and a flat seat to sit on. Each desk was long enough to seat 4 to 6 students. They would not have been a good stand for the projector.

Our projector was a new one, a View Sonic PA 5035, with 3,600 lumens of brightness. The previous one was about 10 years old and had died. Having used the old one under less-than-ideal conditions, we determined that we needed a brighter projector. The new one projected well when there were lights in the room.

Chaudry and I set up the equipment and requested that the Student Instructors watch, since they would be setting it up for the rest of the week. Meanwhile Lophane and several others brought a generator to the school and set it up as far away from the classrooms as the two long extension cords we had would allow. As a result, the sound of the generator was not disturbing.

We started each day with the singing of the Doxology and with prayer.

I taught the first class, Chaudry the second one. That got us to noon. I asked Nedjie if she would like to take the third class. She stated that she was not ready, but that she would. We pulled the speaker notes and the handout sheets from the instructor notebook and gave them to her. Over lunch, she studied.

We have found that students learn better when they eat and that they stay longer in the afternoon if they have eaten lunch, so we provide lunch for the students each day.

The temperature in the classroom ended up getting to about 100 degrees Fahrenheit. There were two fans in the room. One was a large fan about 3 feet in diameter. The other a smaller fan, possibly 15 inches in diameter. When I started to get overheated, Nedjie aimed the smaller fan at me. I commented that by taking care of the instructor, she was getting an A. After that, all who were close to the smaller fan ensured that it was pointed at me if I showed signs of getting overheated.



Nedjie delivers the class Failures Part 2.



Nedjie explains how she will handle the class entitled Failures Part 2.

Nedjie took the third class, right after lunch, and did an excellent job. Periodically she turned to Chaudry or

me when there was a detail where she was not clear. She had all the students' attention for the entire class.

We covered the following classes on Monday:

- A Introduction
- B Failures Part 1
- C Failures Part 2

After the class was over, we packed up, and Lophane took us back to his Guest House.

Wally and Lophane spent time unloading and sorting the container that the Lutheran Church of Canada had shipped.

David and Helen were involved in food distribution.

Pastor Warren Hamp ("call me Woody") came from Canada to lead the four-day Pastors' Workshop. Wally moved out of the room David and I were sharing, to share a room with Pastor Woody.

Our room contained two sets of bunk beds and a single bed. If I woke up during the night, I would often note that Valentin was in one of the beds. He handles security and often arrived to go to bed after I was asleep and departed about the time I got up or shortly before. The room was equipped with an air conditioner and a ceiling fan. The air conditioner usually came on about 9:00 pm and shut down around 6 am.

(Pastoral education in Haiti is a problem. There are not enough seminary-trained pastors to serve the needs in Haiti. Many of the pastors only have the equivalent of a high school education, so there is no way the LCMS seminaries in the US would accept them. Wally had arranged to ship boxes of Haitian Creole **Luther's Small Catechism** in the shipping container.)

Tuesday, October 23

Got word that Pastor Darrell, from Ft. Meyers, died from a heart attack. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Mission: Haiti. I had met him 3 years ago on one of the trips to Haiti. He had rolled out of bed and hit the floor. He thought he had cracked a rib, but when he got back to Florida, the doctors found cancer. He had been fighting the cancer for 3 years.

Helen left this morning for Florida.

Most of the students brought their computers with them to class. Everyone who wanted to download the data from the jumpstick did so.



Herb answers a student's question.

During the class, Chaudry and I taught most of the classes since the Instructors-in-Training were not ready to get up and teach. We covered the following classes:

- D Challenges
- E Why Does Concrete Fail?
- F What is Concrete?
- G Introduction to QC and Aggregates
- H The Physics of Concrete

After the classes were over for the day, we met with the Instructors-in-Training for a few minutes, and they spent time going through the notebooks, picking out the classes they wanted to teach.

Occurring from Tuesday through Friday was a Pastors' Workshop. We shared the same generator and our food came from the same place. When they left to go home, they took items donated to them which had been shipped from Canada and which Wally helped unload and sort.

Lophane made arrangements to change the class schedule so we could hold the class through Friday, and that I would meet with the Instructors-in-Training on Saturday for follow-up.

Wednesday, October 24



Jean loves to ask trick questions.

In any class there are a number of personalities which are seen. One of the students, who was quite bright and paid attention to every detail we discussed, loved to ask trick questions. After answering his question, he often followed it with "what if..." About mid-morning I gave the class a problem. First, I described a beam that was 20 meters long and had a cross section of 45 cm by 45 cm. After discussing the rebar placement, I stated that we had a 7.0 earthquake. Where would the beam break? The student was on his feet and said it would break in the middle. I asked how he had figured that out. He explained in detail.

I said, "That is strange. The beam is lying on the ground."

He was quiet for a moment and then started laughing. He said, "You got me." We now get along.

We covered the following classes:

- I Admixtures
- J Mixing Concrete
- K Reinforcing Concrete
- L Considerations
- M Types of Structures

When the class let out and we got everything packed up, the Pastors' Workshop was letting out at the same time. Nedjie got her vehicle and drove Rony and me to the Guest House. That was much easier than waiting for Lophane, who was busy transporting others to the Guest House.

At the Guest House, David told me that Lophane, Noel, he, and I were going to have supper at a hotel. This was the first I had heard we were going out to supper. David mentioned Food For The Poor, and I remembered Helen mentioning having spoken to someone from Food For The Poor at an LCMS District function.

We met with Ed Raine, Executive Vice President for Food For The Poor, and the Haitian Director of the organization (an engineer). Ed explained what Food For The Poor was doing in 14 Caribbean countries and how they were not involved in just food distribution, but in numerous other activities, including building homes. They have a \$900,000,000 budget. After each of us introduced ourselves and gave a little background about what we were doing, we explored concepts about how the two organizations might work to the mutual benefit of each. There were a number of questions about the construction technology we are teaching.

Initially Shepherd of the Hills was in contact with Food For The Poor for their first trip to Haiti, but it seemed more of a tour rather than working with people. When Alice Klement met Helen with Mission: Haiti, a better arrangement was made. Lophane, David, and I discussed this bit of history and concluded that Food For The Poor tours were designed to inform about their projects, since they were part of the fund-raising process.

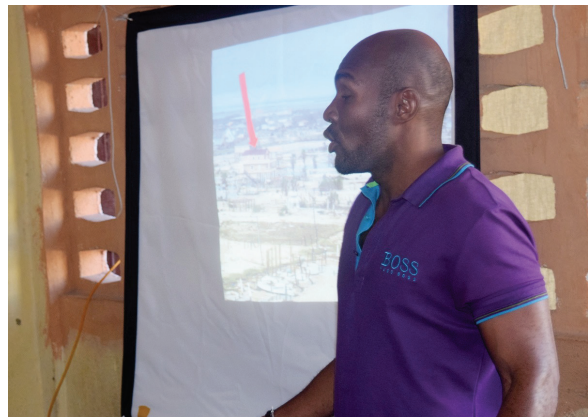
Thursday, October 25

Student Instructors taught all day, and I tried to direct the small fan at them.

When Ronald was teaching, he is an engineer with 25 years of home building experience, he knew the presentation well and several times quickly flipped back to a slide to illustrate a point.

When the generator ran out of fuel, someone had to go get more fuel. While that was going on, we headed outside and looked at the structures in the compound and discussed the good points of construction and the bad points of construction. The Pastor's Workshop took a break.

We need to incorporate several short tours into the course, since it opens a student's eyes more than just showing photos of building problems and failures.



Ronald teaches about the impact of Hurricane Ike on the Bolivar Peninsula in Texas and how a home which was constructed to be disaster resistant survived.

There was some base material on a concrete slab in the compound. While we did not know what it was to be used for, we knew that sometimes it is used as aggregate in concrete. After demonstrating how soft some of the larger aggregate was, we placed some in a water bottle, added water, and periodically observed how the particles settled or resisted settling. This demonstrated how the base material had excessive fines; and even if the large aggregate were harder, it was not appropriate for making concrete.



The students concluded the aggregate was not satisfactory when Herb crushed some in his hand.



Christie explained to the class why the concrete in the column was eroding.

We covered the following classes:
 N Building Layout
 O Foundations
 P Slabs
 Q Conventional CMU Construction
 R Confined Masonry Walls

When the class was over and we had packed up the equipment, Nedjie drove Rony and me to the Guest House. Lophane said it is a thank-you for the teaching. The Pastors' Workshop had 30 members, was at the same school, and let out at about the same time, so transportation was a hassle. A ride was a wonderful thank-you.

Started filling out class certificates

and found that the template developed on the Surface Pro would not open right on the HP. The HP does not have the font, *Lucidia Calligraphy*, so the computer substituted another font. In the process, it messed the formatting up. After about two hours I got that straightened out and got most of the names entered on the certificates. I decided to finish the Instructor certificates on Friday morning, which I did.

As of Thursday evening, Lophane had not heard from Pastor Thomas as to whether there would be time to present the certificates after the Reformation Sunday service on Sunday. The Lophane Project is one of the course sponsors, and most of the people involved with The Lophane Project are members of Bon Berger Lutheran.

Friday, October 26

Being up well before breakfast, I had time to finish the certificates and save them to a jump-stick.

After breakfast we headed to the classroom and set up for class.

Since we were running behind schedule, I determined that for the Building Churches class I would skim through it to show them what it contained. Just about all the technical information in the class had been covered in other classes.

For the Dome classes, we would use the Dome Homes class which is an introduction and brief documentation of the process of building domes.

For the Final Exam, the Student Instructors were challenged to develop the exam, to give it, and to grade it.

We would use the time from 9 to 1 for presentations, and then as soon as everyone finished lunch, the final exam would be given.

During the morning the following classes were taught:

S SCIP
T ICF
U Concrete Roofs
V Dome Homes
Z Building Churches

All were taught by the Student Instructors except for the Building Churches Class, which I taught.

Rony was given the jump-stick with the certificates on it, and he went to a print shop to have them printed. He sent a photo of one print via his phone to me. I looked at the photo. The photo was not good, but I told Rony to have them printed. When I had the certificates in hand a couple of hours later, I saw that the formatting had been messed up and they were not usable. Investigation on Saturday revealed that the print shop computer was an Apple and my HP was an Android. I did not convert the Word documents to Adobe. A computer crash had wiped that



Katia listens to her first question on the final exam.



Three instructors took notes, so they could grade the performance of each of the students during the final exam.

computer out a few months before, and I had not reinstalled the Adobe Program.

The Instructors decided that rather than a written exam, the exam would be oral. Chaudry

would call on a student, then a photo would be projected and a question would be asked. The three other Instructors were sitting to one side,

and they would judge how well the student answered the question. Each student was given at least 3 questions. I sat on the other side of the room and listened.
All the students passed.



Other students taking the final exam.

After giving instructions as to where and when to meet on Sunday morning, I explained to the Student Instructors about the meeting on Saturday.

As we were stepping out of the classroom, Nedjie gave me a hug as a thank you for teaching the class and for including her in the Instructor Training Program. Rony had the camera and called, "Another, I need a better photo." This happened three times. Seeing the smile on her face, I think she enjoyed it. She said that she could now call me Granpapa. I agreed. Rony did not take photos of the men who hugged me to say thank you.

When everything was loaded into Nedjie's vehicle, she drove Rony and me to the Guest House.

That evening, in discussing the problems with the certificates, Lophane suggested that I take my computer to the print shop and see if they would allow me to hook up to their printer. I countered with, "If they will not let me, we will find a printer and buy it." He said we paid over \$100 US for the printing of the certificates.



"Granpapa, thank you for teaching the course."

Saturday, October 27

The Instructors gathered at Lophane's Guest House at 9:00 am. We spent the time from then to 11:00 am going over the course, and how to improve it, going

through all the equipment and supplies which were available for their use when they taught, and the record keeping that would be needed. We then discussed what to expect the next day at Bon Berger when the certificates were given out.

As they departed, Benjamin drove Rony, Chaudry, and me to the print shop. They would not allow my computer to be hooked up to their printer, so we went to an office supply store. We explained our needs, and the clerk stated that it appeared that the HP 2600 printer (which was designed for home use) would be ideal for our use. It cost \$68.00. It came with a color-ink cartridge and a black-ink cartridge.

We returned to the Guest House and printed the certificates. Of course, we had to read the instructions before it would work.

Later in the afternoon, when inserting the certificates in the presentation folders, I discovered we had printed two certificates for one student and skipped another student entirely, so I got the printer out, set it up again and used the last sheet of certificate paper to print his certificate. Whew!

Sunday, October 28

After breakfast, we headed to Bon Berger (Good Savior) Lutheran Church about 9:00 am. We were some of the first to arrive. Lophane told us we should sit near the front, so we did. A few minutes later he came up and suggested we move back two rows. Then he pointed out a fan that was aimed down the row he suggested we sit in.

The Reformation Day service started about 9:30. There were several choirs and singers. I noticed that when the main choir sang, they tended to be looking up rather than out at the congregation. I turned and looked up. There was a screen just under the roof and the words of the songs were being projected there.

After the Benediction, Lophane, Chaudry, and I were called forward. Lophane explained that in 2013, I came to Haiti for a short-term mission and was challenged to develop technology for ultra-low-cost, disaster-resistant housing. This led to my teaching and building in the slums of Haiti and moving up to teaching at the univer-



Lophane (Fld. Dir., Mission: Haiti), Chaudry (Instructor), Nedjie (Instructor), Herb, Sem (Instructor), and Ronald (Instructor).

sity level. So the technology can be spread further, “a program was started to train and certify instructors to teach the intense 5-day course. Today we certify 4 instructors, and we also present certificates to the students who this week completed the course. What started as an impossible challenge has become a reality where Haitians are taking over the teaching of the course.”

Lophane gave certificates to the Instructors who were being certified.

After Lophane shook each hand, Pastor Thomas, Chaudry, and I congratulated each Instructor. As this was going on, Rony took a photo of each Instructor receiving a certificate.

Then Lophane gave certificates to the students who had completed the course. The same procedure was followed; however, with all of the students, things got crowded at the front of the church, I had to reach over shoulders to shake hands, and Rony had problems getting some of the photos.



Lophane, Pastor Thomas, the new Instructors, and a portion of the students who completed the course.

After the congregation was dismissed, there were many more photos taken, and many members of the congregation offered congratulations.

Afterwards there was lunch, which was a blur for me, and then a nap.

Some of the pastors who attended the Pastors' Workshop left immediately after the workshop was dismissed on Friday. Others, who had further to go, departed on Saturday. The pastors going to Jerome had a 10 hour or so trip, so they did not depart until Saturday morning. They were traveling in a bus and had clothing and other things from the container shipped from Canada which Wally had helped to unload during the week. Near Jerome is a bridge over a river. Officials determined that the bridge was not strong enough for the bus to cross over. Arrangements were made to bring a bus to the other side of the river, and the pastors had to carry everything across the bridge and load it into the replacement bus. This delayed their arriving home.

Monday, October 29

Wally was leaving on Monday morning to head back to Canada. I believe it was Jet Blue. Since I was concerned about my departure time on Tuesday, I rode with Lophane as he took Wally to the airport.

Sometimes Haiti follows the east coast by adopting Daylight Savings Time, and sometimes they do not. In coming to Haiti, my itinerary, furnished by American Airlines, said we would land at Port-au-Prince at 12:50. We actually landed before 11:50. To ensure that I was at the airport in time to catch my plane, I confirmed at

the airport that the time on my phone was Haitian time and that the time on my ticket was also Haitian time.

Much of the rest of the day was spent storing things to store and trying to reduce what I was taking home, so it would fit in a carry-on suitcase. Finally, I made it happen, but before I celebrated, I checked with Candice to ensure she was not ordering metal art at the last minute for me to bring back. She was not.

Tuesday, October 30

Lophane delivered David and me to the airport. David was on another airline, I believe Jet Blue, so we said good-bye and headed to our respective ticket counters.

After going through the initial screening without a problem, I made it to the American Airlines screening, which is much stricter. Their scanner was down, so they had to sort through all my dirty laundry by hand.

I had told Lophane's wife that David and I could get breakfast at the airport, so she did not have to get up early. Once in the waiting area, and since David was in a different waiting area, there was no one to leave my suitcase with, so I ate two granola bars for breakfast.

As soon as the plane was ready, I boarded along with a few other old codgers.

Watching the others board, I noticed that there was an extraordinary number of ladies in their late teens to early thirties. I had a window seat. A lady in her thirties had the aisle seat. I commented that there seemed to be more young ladies boarding than usual. She said, "Yes, they have been on a medical mission, and I'm in charge of all 44 of them." I suspect she was going to be glad when she got them all back home.

We landed in Miami, and with my Global entry and not having to pick up checked bags and take them through customs, I arrived at my gate about an hour before boarding time. There was a sit-down restaurant within about 100 feet of the gate, so I went there to eat. Service was slow, so the plane was ready for boarding when I got to the gate.

Flight to Dallas/Ft Worth was uneventful. Scheduled time between landing and boarding the flight to San Antonio was brief. When I walked up to the gate, I boarded immediately.

Landed in San Antonio, Judy picked me up, and since it was San Antonio rush hour, we went to Good Time Charlie's and had supper, and then headed home.