

Haiti Trip Report

June 18 through June 30, 2018

Summary

Flew to Miami on Monday morning, June 18, 2018.

Met with Dr. Bill Jong-Ebot, Executive Director of the Foundation for Rural and Economic Development in Africa, and with Ria Lee, an engineer who was going to meet me in Haiti on Saturday, June 23, and stay until I left Haiti on Saturday, June 30, 2018.

Tuesday, June 19, 2018, met the SHLC team at the airport and flew to Port-au-Prince where we were met by Lophane Laurent.

Wednesday, June 20, 2018, to Colminy

Thursday, June 21, 2018, worked on the translation of *Quality Concrete from Crap* with Chaudry while the SHLC team worked in Colminy.

Friday, June 22, 2018, continued to work on the translation of *Quality Concrete from Crap* with Chaudry while the SHLC team worked in Balagué.

Saturday, June 23, 2018, Ria Lee arrived, and I spent time with her while the SHLC team was involved in feeding and distribution of food to the elderly and a teen girls' Bible Study.

Sunday, June 24, 2018, was the 22nd anniversary of the founding of Bon Berger Lutheran Church in Delmar, Haiti. That is Lophane's home church. It was a massive celebration with a 3-hour service, followed by a full meal.

Monday, June 25, 2018, SHLC team taught VBS in Balagué while Ria Lee and I examined the church, the encroaching river, and a potential site for a new church.

Tuesday, June 26, 2018, SHLC team departed for San Antonio and Helen Roenfeldt arrived in Port-au-Prince.

Wednesday, June 27, 2018, traveled to Kenscoff with Helen, Ria Lee, and Lophane to inspect structures and to purchase copies of the book, *God Is No Stranger*.

Thursday, June 28, 2018, continued to work on the translation of *Quality Concrete from Crap* with Chaudry. Helen, Lophane, and Ria Lee worked in Colminy and Balagué.

Friday, June 29, 2018, finished work on translation that needed to be done on this trip. Much still needs to be done to format the book before it can be reviewed for publication.

Saturday, June 30, 2018, Ria Lee and I caught the plane to Miami, and while she stayed in Miami, I traveled to San Antonio and arrived home about midnight.

Foundation for Rural and Economic Development in Africa

Dr. Bill Jong-Ebot, Executive Director of the Foundation for Rural and Economic Development in Africa, and Ria Lee, an engineer who was going to meet me in Haiti on Saturday, June 23, and I met for 3 hours at the Courtyard Marriott near the Miami

Airport for 3 hours. Besides acquainting each other with our backgrounds, we discussed what I am doing in Haiti and my goals there. Dr. Jong-Ebot related what we are doing in Haiti to the problems in some parts of Africa, especially Cameroon. Dr. Jong-Ebot would like to see my disaster-resistant class taken to Africa, but at the moment I do not have funding to do so. I furnished him the power point presentations which are used in teaching the class. We will continue to talk as we work on a way to spread the information.

Driving in Haiti

Occasionally someone who has never been to Haiti asks why I do not drive in Haiti. The question never occurs to those who have been to Haiti.

The drivers in Haiti are excellent drivers and know where the edges of their vehicles are to within a centimeter, so they can avoid collisions and scrapes. I am not that good. Also, there are hazards in Haiti which we do not have in San Antonio. This wheelchair pilot was holding on to the back of a tap-tap cab that cut in, in front of us. We missed him by inches. Then while traveling about 20 miles per hour, he turned loose from the cab and headed down a steep hill. I estimate his speed increased to about 30 miles per hour.



Translation of “Quality Concrete from Crap”



Completing the translation so we could publish *Kalite Beton Kaka* was the major priority of this trip. Jerry Cadet had translated much of *Quality Concrete from Crap* from English to Haitian Creole, but the front and back covers were not translated nor were a number of sections throughout the book. Of even more concern were the 31 figures within the book which were destroyed during the transmittal process.

Chaudry and I worked together on the translation. Initially we felt that we could work at various places where the SHLC team was working, so we could participate to some extent with their activities, but that did not work out. Much of the work needed to be done with computers, and with the variable light, often we could not determine where the cursor was located.

Chaudry, who serves as a translator when I am teaching, has an engineering degree and then went to the seminary and became a minister. We decided that the best way to address the figures was to separate out

the components of the English language figures, then translate the text, and reassemble the figures. We got the wording translated but did not get the figures reassembled and inserted in the book. A determination was made that the reassembly would work better when I had adequate light and my 24-inch screen, so that work will be done when I am in Texas.

The text is now highlighted and tagged wherever I must insert a figure or take other action. This will make the assembly of the book easier.

The copyright page will be easy to develop since much of it is very similar to the Kay pou Jubilee copyright page.

While an attempt was made to ensure that all text inserted into the draft Haitian Creole document was properly formatted for publication, the document will have to be examined line by line to ensure there are no errors. (While text may appear to be correctly formatted, once it is converted to the appropriate Adobe Acrobat form, when printed via print-on-demand technology, problems can suddenly appear.)

We completed what we needed to do in Haiti on Friday afternoon, and Ria Lee and I departed for Miami at noon on Saturday.

Bon Berger in Delmar

On Sunday, June 24, 2018, Bon Berger (Good Shepherd) Lutheran Church celebrated the 22nd anniversary of its founding. They pulled out all stops to celebrate. We arrived and were seated close to the back by 9:30 am. The church is designed to hold 400 people, but my estimate was that there were closer to 600 people present. There were people coming in until about the time the communion service started.

There were three choirs, each with over 50 members. The main choir in robes which Ria Lee and I decided were very hot. The youth choir with white shirts and black pants or skirts, and the Dames of Bon Berger which was a ladies choir. There were other smaller singing groups. All sang in 4-part harmony. I recognized some of the hymns, but not the words. Periodically I started to stand up because the keyboard player would play a few measures of the Hallelujah Chorus as an introduction.

With each choir singing several hymns and with the readings, it took a while to get to the sermon. The sermon was based on Psalm 145 which is a psalm of joy and hope.

After that there was the collection. The plate is a sack with a handle on each side. Each person can place their hand into the sack and no one can see if he contributes or how much he contributes. There was one collection sack for each side of the church, so we enjoyed singing while that was going on.

After prayers, we had the communion service. An announcement was made that one did not have to be a member of Bon Berger to commune. Visitors were also welcome. The qualification for those visitors was then given. Each table consisted of 24 to 30 people in a flat circle at the front of the church. Since there was extra equipment for the choirs and so forth, the circle was very flat with just barely room enough for the pastors to make their way through and deliver communion. There were 15 or 16 tables, and there were a number of people who did not go forward for communion. There was a group of women singing during communion. They made up the last table.

After a hymn various people were recognized. One man had just received his PhD in Geology. The head of the Society of the Lutheran Church in Haiti was recognized,

and several others who were asked to come forward with greetings. Candice was selected to go forward and speak.

Then there was the closing hymn and the benediction. The service was over at 12:30, so it was 3 hours long.

There was a meal afterwards; and as we worked our way to the school, there were hundreds of people with plates and takeout boxes. Lophane led us up to the third floor, no elevator, to a room with serving trays on the stage and 8 tables in the room. Each table could hold 8 people.

The Reverend Dr. Mayor Marky was there, and I got to talk to him for a bit. When I was sitting, Pastor Norris (I believe) came and asked me to place my name, phone number, and email address in his book. I was impressed that he knew me and wanted my contact information. Afterwards I noticed he approached each person in the room with the same request.

One of our Haitian team had an I-Pad or some other type of device and shot videos of the choirs' singing. Afterwards when he reviewed the videos, he found that none of it had been recorded.

Ria Lee

In April at a Monolithic workshop, I met Ria Lee Shue Ling, an engineer who has worked all over the world and is currently working in St. Croix in the US Virgin Islands. By the time I arrived at the workshop, she had purchased copies of each of my books which Monolithic sells. When I arrived, it did not take her long to introduce herself and start asking questions.

She has joined the effort of Our Lady Queen of Peace in Arlington, VA, to go on their 2018 trip to St. Joseph Church in Medor, Haiti. Medor is in the central highlands and is off the beaten path. It is off the electrical grid and does not have running water or any of the modern conveniences. Roads are impassable to vehicular traffic for much of the year. Most of the people are subsistence farmers. Medor covers 74 square miles and has a population of about 40,000 people. Teams from Our Lady Queen of Peace have been going there since 1997.

During breaks Ria Lee and I talked a great deal. She wondered if she could join me on my next trip to Haiti. Arrangements were made, and she did.

Colminy

Background

Colminy is located at the end of a long dirt road north of San Marc, Haiti. When Mission: Haiti first got involved with Colminy, Helen and Lophane asked the leaders of Colminy what they needed and wanted.

- They wanted a medical team since many had never seen a doctor.
- They wanted a church as the church they had was a brush arbor.
- They wanted a pump and pipe, so they could pump water from the river and grow vegetables during the dry season.

Within a few years all these requests have been achieved.

Mr. Orlas was the patriarch of Colminy, and at the time had some children who were over 100 years of age. Rather than sell his land and move to the city and more comfortable

surroundings, he deeded his land to the church for the benefit of all the residents and continued to live in a mud hut.

SHLC Team at Work



On Wednesday, June 20, 2018, Chaudry and I accompanied the SHLC team to Colminy.

The plan was for the team to be involved with VBS and other activities, and Chaudry and I would find a quiet corner and work on the translation of *Quality Concrete from Crap* and inspect the construction of the school that was in progress.

The SHLC Team's plans were successful, as can be seen in the photos

related to VBS in Colminy, but Chaudry and I found we could not work on the translation while traveling in a vehicle, nor was there a place in Colminy where we could sit down in the shade and open the computer and be able to read the computer screen.



Inspection of the School Construction

We were able to inspect the construction of the school. One of my students was leading the construction team.



While I prefer that mortar be mixed in a mortar box using a concrete hoe, it was being mixed on the ground using shovels. This is a common way mortar is mixed in Haiti and often results in poorly mixed mortar. The crew was doing a much better job of mixing the mortar on the ground than is usually done.

The masonry sand was some of the best masonry sand I have seen in Haiti. Lophane made arrangements to have it trucked-in from a distance.

The concrete block did not meet US standards, but they were some of the better block that I have seen in the San Marc region of Haiti. The block walls were being laid up vertical and straight.

Walls were going up and form board were being installed to pour columns.

When the walls are complete, the footing (exposed rock) and the walls (block) will be plastered to provide the structure with protection from the elements.



Later, while Chaudry and I were working on the translation of *Quality Concrete* in Port-au-Prince, Ria Lee came back after some of the columns and beams had been poured. While most of the concrete was well consolidated, there were several voids in the concrete. These voids weaken the structure in the event of an earthquake and thus should be avoided, but there were nowhere as many such voids as in found in most Haitian construction.

Balagué

On Monday, September 25, 2018, Ria Lee, the SHLC Team, and I went to Balagué. Balagué is in flat irrigated land with rice being the main crop. There is a well-designed and well-constructed concrete canal system in the areas.

The Road

The road to Balagué starts off at the turnoff to Colminy but at the first fork one takes the right fork rather than the left fork. The road is a much-improved gravel road that is often near the water table. With the high-water table, if the gravel road were not much improved, the road would be impassable. There are periodic holes that need repairs, but not much likelihood that it will happen soon. The gravel is a soft

limestone; and if there is water in a hole, the limestone wears away and a limestone paste is formed and carried out of the hole (making it deeper). If the road is dry, the turning of the wheels in the holes tends to dislodge stone and make them available to being crushed by the road traffic. After what seemed like forever we arrived.

SHLC Team

Soon the ladies from SHLC were involved in a soccer game with the children and other activities. Hannah, of course, was holding an infant.

Inspection of the Church



Ria Lee and I inspected the church to see if there had been substantial deterioration since the June 2017 and the December 2017 visits. We did find some attempts at repair.

The photo to the left was taken of the right side of the front door in June 2017.

The photo at the right shows the same area in June 2018. Notice a patch has been installed to stabilize the metal door frame, the patch does not go up to the top of the door frame and it does not tie into the overhead beam.



The closeup of the repair (to the left) shows the low quality of the concrete and the deterioration that has taken place since that repair was made.

Other repairs were also noted which with the deteriorated condition of the building did not increase its structural integrity.

We then moved to the river and looked at the condition of the erosion.

The Artibonite River

The river flows over alluvial material which can be washed if it is not well anchored with vegetation. The strong brown color of the river indicates that it is carrying a large amount of silt. Much of that silt is picked up by the river in areas of erosion.



The white strip parallel to the river and to the left of the river is the gravel road through the area. The brown strip next to the road is a concrete irrigation canal.

There is another road and another irrigation canal on the other side of the river.



The photo at left was taken in June 2017 and is a few feet downstream from the church. Note the taller vegetation on the far side of the levee which helps to stabilize the levee.

The photo on the right was taken while sitting on the top of the levee behind where the oldest boy was standing in the previous photo. I held the camera out over the river and aimed the camera down and shot the photo.

The river bank at this point is close to vertical and there are few roots stabilizing the bank.

The area just beyond the levee top where the tall vegetation had been in the previous photo no longer exists.



The photo on the left was taken on church property but near the upper edge of the church property. Again, I sat on the levee and held my camera out over the river and shot down.

The levee had been eroded back, but not quite as far back as it had been eroded in the previous photo. There are not sufficient roots and other vegetation to keep the river bank from eroding when the flow rate of the river increases.

Immediately downstream from the church property is a large tree growing on the levee. Approximately a meter of the roots is exposed from erosion at water level.

Along the entire church property, the river bank was straight down and consists of bare clay with a few roots showing, rather than angling down and covered with vegetation as most of it had been in June 2017. It appeared that the riverbank had moved back a meter or a meter-and-a-half in one year.

The bank is located about 10 meters from the back of the church. If erosion continued at a one meter per year rate in 10 years the river would be under the edge of the church. The apparent rate of erosion appears to be about 1.5 meters per year. The only thing we know for sure is the rate of erosion over each of the next few years will be different than the rate of erosion during the past year.

We briefed the leaders who were present on our conclusions, and they stated they had selected a piece of property and asked us to look at it. We agreed and walked to the property.

The property is located downriver, below the aggressive eroding area and across the canal from the current church. It appeared to be a good piece of property, but concrete footings needed to be placed to raise the building up to the level of the top of the canal. They indicated that they were planning on this. Lophane assured us that Vanessa Darbouze would design the footings and the church.

Ria Lee and I recommended that additional money not be invested in the current church because it is subject to failure during a strong storm and no amount of repairs will make it safe. All efforts should be aimed at replacing the existing church at a new location.

After we departed, the church leaders talked to the owner of the property, and he is willing to sell the property to the church at a discount because he wants a church and a school located in that area.

During all the discussions, Lophane learned that the church does not own the property where the church is located. The owner of the property simply allowed the members of the church to build there.

Ria Lee located a video which explains what is happening along the property where the current church is located and confirms that the decision to move the church is prudent.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8a3r-cG8Wic>

Helen at Work

Helen did not accompany us during the first part of our time in Haiti. She had been asked to speak at the Florida/Georgia District Convention of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. She did.

The President of the District introduced a resolution that memorialized all that Mission: Haiti has done over the past 20 years and asked that each member church support the activities of Mission: Haiti. The resolution passed with about 98 percent of the voters voting in favor of the resolution.

After Helen got to Haiti, besides ensuring I got to Kenscoff to eat one of their hamburgers, she spent time in Colminy and Balague working on a couple projects she is involved with in those villages.

Kenscoff and the Baptist Mission

When we get a chance, we go to Kenscoff. It is in the mountains behind Port-au-Prince. The trips involve several goals. We look at failing buildings. We check buildings we have been involved in repairing; we stop at the Baptist Haiti Mission for a hamburger. I believe the bun makes them some of the best hamburgers made. We buy copies of *God Is No Stranger*.

The Catholic Church where 85% of the roof was lost and both long walls were severely damaged is still holding services. Repairing the damage would be expensive, and it would probably be cheaper to tear



the structure down and start over.

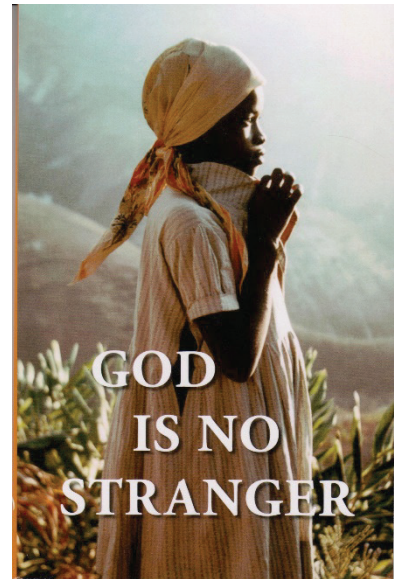


While purchasing copies of *God Is No Stranger* (Haitian prayers and accompanying photographs), I left copies of *Kay Pou Jubilee* and *Quality Concrete from Crap* with the clerk at the bookstore. He said he would pass them on to the appropriate person.

While there, we had the opportunity to spend time with Eleanor Turnbull, one of the founders of the Baptist Haiti Mission. This is a group that does great things.

When she found out about the books we had left, she latched on to them and gave them a quick study. While the discussion was wide-ranging, we talked about developing a time when I can go there and present the 5-day, disaster-resistant construction course and teach some of their people to present the course.

Later, as we were eating our hamburgers, she came back and joined us and talked more about how our organizations can work together. She says that Christianity is **To Know** and **To Show**. When God opens doors, floods come pouring through.



Teaching

Currently we have a number of classes requested, but do not have any scheduled. Both the American University at Les Cayes and the City of Jacmel would like to have me back. Lophane has a request for a class to be held in Port-au-Prince. Cameron Parker is trying to arrange with a number of groups who are involved with building in Haiti to hold a class. Eleanor Turnbull has expressed interest in a class at the Baptist Haiti Mission and training people to teach the class. Dr. Jong-Ebot would like a class in Cameroon. Several groups want a class in the US.

Lophane and I have agreed that several of my students are at a stage where they can start teaching with some supervision. As they gain experience, they can take over the classes. To do this, I need to edit the slides, so they flow when they are teaching rather than flow when I am relating my experiences. I also need to develop a script they can follow until they are comfortable with making the presentations.

Due to shootings in Jacmel and in Les Cayes, Lophane stated that it may not be safe for me to go to those cities to teach this fall. If that is the case, we have started discussions to hold extra classes in Port-au-Prince. Students would be invited to come to Port-au-Prince to attend the classes.

The shootings come close to home. One of Lophane's uncles was shot and killed last year. My translator, Chaudry, is a minister. His cousin was shot and killed in late June of this year.

It is up to Lophane and Helen to schedule the classes in Haiti and make the arrangements for me to be there.

AT&T Phone Service in Haiti

Even though I paid for AT&T International Service, so I could use my phone while in Haiti, AT&T chose not to allow me to use that service. When people called AT&T to get my service established, the conversations with AT&T International were like a conservative talking to a group of radical left wingers. After I got back, an AT&T agent told me that if I want phone service in Haiti I should buy a phone in Haiti.

TED Talk

With all the things on my agenda, I have been nominated to give a TED Talk concerning Rebuilding the Third World. The first point in the draft is, "Listen to the people even if you have to use duct tape to keep from telling them what you think they need." If you are interested in commenting on this project as it develops, send me an email and ask to be added to the list.

The first 5 minutes of presentations to Bible Classes, Civic Groups, Schools, and other groups would be greatly improved if I covered some of the points which will be in the TED talk.

Hearts of Concrete

We are a step closer to having the Hearts of Concrete LLC a going concern and an active website, but I have quit suggesting to people when I think that it will be a reality.

<https://www.heartsofconcrete.org/>