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## ***From Toe-Blake Roy - July 12, 2017 Report on the BLF Canada Outreach to Haiti***

**Good morning in our Savior's name,**

Thank you so much for your faithful prayers as I minister in Gonaives, Haiti this week. Because of the dial up network connection I have access to in Haiti, I will not be sending pictures with this report but pictures will follow when I am back in Canada.

I praise the Lord for a safe trip to Gonaives. The accommodations are getting better every year and it provides an easier time of preparation for the next day of teaching. I arrived last Wednesday evening at 9:30 PM and a good night rest was certainly welcome.

The first day of teaching was Thursday morning from 8:30-3:30 PM. The classes are done at 3:30 PM because of the heat that even the Haitian people have difficulty supporting. I had to make a major adjustment on the first day. I had come well prepared with a laptop and my projector and an out of this world PowerPoint that my dear wife had put together, but when I powered on the projector the fans in the building and the PA system went off because the generator could not handle the fans and the projector at the same time. I went old school with my Bible in hand and the class notes so the fans would stay on for the teacher and the students.

I was quite impressed with the organization that went into the preparation to welcome the people to the course. Everyone was registered ahead of time and had a name tag. The name tag was very helpful to me for interacting with the students. The course was on personnel finances as well as how to run the church finances. What is common in a good number of churches in Haiti when the offering is collected on Sunday services, the pastor counts the offering and decide what his salary should be from the offering. The idea of a church budget and the pastor as a paid employee has caused much trouble with church members in many Haitian churches. During the course, we took several hours to explain the merits of pastoral accountability, transparency, integrity and credibility. I knew I had hit a very sensitive nerve with this topic, but I also saw the Spirit of God at work as I was answering some questions. Many of them had been operating on the basis of their cultural tradition rather than on the basis of Biblical sound financial principles. I encouraged them to obey God's principles rather than the tradition of their culture which does not inspire the membership to have confidence in the church leadership.

Because this was a course on personnel finances as well, we had a hand full of bankers, financial advisors, accountants and bank workers who were Christian but desired to know what God possibly had to say about finances. They were greatly surprised. The majority of the people who took the course had the same concern. How can we in Haiti ever hope to have our own home for our family when the banks charge up to 24% interest on a mortgage and requires a few co-signers to be approved? The financial challenges for our brothers and sisters in Haiti are great and the cost of living is going up greatly every year. What use to cost \$5.00 a day US to feed one pastor coming to these courses last year now cost \$8.00 US a day and the food is good but very basic.

For this first course, we had 6 staff members from Word of Life Haiti who also took the course along with 124 pastors making a total of 130 people who took the course. This coming week, I will be teaching a second course in La Chapelle, about 3 and half hour's drive from Gonaives. We are expecting 40-50 pastors. I was in La Chapelle last year to give a seminar on Sunday school and distributed Sunday School material that BLF Éditions and BLF USA had generously donated. It was reported to me by a pastor who took the course on finances and was also present at the Sunday school material presentation last year, that the material has been a great blessing in the churches in the area. I asked this pastor to write me a report on this blessing for the Sunday school material so I can pass it on to the donors in Canada and the US.



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Of a common accord, the pastors got together after the course on finances to ask me if they could have permission to translate the course notes in Créole and distribute them throughout Haiti so even their church members could benefit from this Biblical approach to finances. I happily granted my permission in writing. This is certainly a blessing I did not see coming.

Toe-Blake Roy, Director, BLF Canada