

The Temple 1: “Turning the Hearts of the Children”
The Church in the DR Congo: A Personal Perspective, Part 8



Primary children from the Buima branch in the city of Matadi, DR Congo

In a presentation at the 2018 *FairMormon Conference*,¹ I shared stories of some of the faithful Saints in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa). In this new series of presentations, I would like to speak from a more personal perspective, reflecting on the meaning of that experience for Kathleen and me, and pondering some of the dynamics of numerical and spiritual growth of the Church in that country.

The series is organized into eleven parts:

1. Prologue: What brought us to Africa?
2. Snapshot of the Church in the DR Congo
3. The missionaries
4. What attracts people to the Church?
5. Building from centers of strength 1 — Kisangani
6. Building from centers of strength 2 — Wagenya
7. Taking the Gospel to the “ends of the earth”
- 8. *The temple 1: “Turning the hearts of the children”***
9. The temple 2: “Holiness to the Lord”
10. The temple 3: A light to the world
11. “The labourers are few”

In this episode, we touch on the excitement that is running high in the DR Congo this week in view of the elections scheduled for December 23rd. Since its independence in 1960, the country has never known a peaceful transition of power through elections. Last week, an arsonist set fire to 8,000 of the 10,000 voting machines that had been stored in Kinshasa. We contrast this disaster to the positive influence of the local “Light the World” campaign of the Church that kicked off a few weeks ago.

The story will be told of the unfolding of an inspired project that was close to the heart of Sister Kriss Gates. With her husband Ed, she had been called as a temple construction missionary. Sister Gates wanted all Primary children and their families to not only know about the temple but also to feel that they were a personal part of it. At the heart of her plan was the Congo River, the vast artery that runs between the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

¹ The video version of the entire FairMormon presentation is available on the FairMormon YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJl9FvLkmjw>. The seven segments of this presentation, in an edited and somewhat expanded form, are available for reading at *Meridian Magazine* (www.ldsMag.com) and the website of *The Interpreter Foundation* (<https://interpreterfoundation.org>). For more articles and videos by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, see www.templethemes.org.