

What Can We Learn About Patriarchal Blessings from a Congolese Patriarch?

A Photo Essay and Video Shorts for Gospel Doctrine Lesson 12: “Fruitful in the Land of My Affliction” (Genesis 40-45) (JBOTL012B)

Summary: This photo essay with accompanying video shorts are intended to supplement the study of Jacob’s blessings to his twelve sons as recorded in Genesis 49. As part of an assignment to gather oral histories for the Church History Library in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), I was accompanied by Brother Daniel Tusey Kola on a visit to Laurent Clément Shambuyi Biaya Katembwe, one of the first members of the Church in the DRC. Brother Shambuyi has served diligently in many leadership assignments and has now been called as a stake patriarch. The video shorts, subtitled in English, Brother Shambuyi’s answers to three questions: “What is a patriarchal blessing?” “What is the significance of the declaration of lineage?” And “What is the role of revelation in patriarchal blessings?”

The visit to Brother Shambuyi required us to follow a long, confusing route along dirt backways full of water and debris. I frequently paused before driving through some of the deeper water, but President Kola knew the roads well. Each time he would say, “The dirt is hard here, you’ll be fine.” He was right. In other, more sandy, places in the city we would have gotten stuck.



Finally, we got to the home and business of the Shambuyi family. Inside, they had copy machines, printers, and computers they could rent to people to use. But they were all idle, because there was no electricity. As you can see from this photo, the inside of the building was dark.



Fortunately, once we went inside, the camera was able to compensate for the darkness. Brother Shambuyi's business and home was large by Congolese standards, a blessing to his many children.



Brother Shambuyi filled out the consent form slowly and deliberately. He was a powerful man in every sense of the word. Kind and pleastant, yet one who seemed always to be feeling the gravity of the purpose of life.



To our right was a curtain leading to the family area of the building. The portrait above the curtain left no doubt about who presided over this home.



An elaborate version of the Plan of Salvation was drawn on the blackboard behind me. Brother Shambuyl knew it by heart, and took the time to explain its every detail to us fluently and convincingly. Here was a man who knew who he was and where he was going.



We talked a bit about Brother Shambuyi's personal history, but spent most of our time discussing his calling as a patriarch. He told us about the revelation that comes as he lays his hands on people's heads to bless them. He said that revelation is absolutely key in declaring the lineage of the individual. "The descendants of Abraham are everywhere in our day," he testified as he spoke of how these declarations anticipate assignments that pertain to our lives now and in the hereafter.

Having witnessed the beginnings in the DRC, when there were just a handful of members, Brother Shambuyi marveled and rejoiced that the Church had grown to include so many stakes and branches in this part of French-speaking Africa.



Brother Shambuyi has been married three times. His first two wives passed away prematurely, after having been sealed in marriage to him in the Johannesburg temple. His recently returned missionary son Hénoch [Enoch] joined us for a photo after our interview.



The home was an island of calm, peace, and kindness in a noisy, surrounding ocean of turbulence. You will hear some of the sounds of the neighborhood as Brother Shambuyi speaks in the videos.

Video Shorts

Video 1: “What is a patriarchal blessing?” ([link](#))

Video 2: “What is the significance of the declaration of lineage?” ([link](#))

Video 3: “What is the role of revelation in patriarchal blessings?” ([link](#))

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