

What Attracts People to the Church? The Church in the DR Congo: A Personal Perspective, Part 4



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 eight 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 — Kisangani
6. Building from centers of strength — Wagenya and elsewhere
7. The temple: A light to the world
8. “The labourers are few”

With an average of 1,800 new investigators a month, DR Congo Kinshasa mission has a hard time supplying the local demand for copies of the Book of Mormon. Part 4 begins with an explanation of why the Congolese feel such a spiritual kinship with the Book of Mormon peoples. Interesting conversations with villagers, chauffeurs, security guards, police officers, and others — each with their own interests in Church doctrines and practices — are described. For example, a

local leader tells of how a government official's going-in assumptions are shattered during an investigation of the finances of the Church. The Congolese are inspired by Church teachings about the central role of the family in the plan of salvation. A member artist who is passionate about the resisting the fragmentation of the family shows off his work. The blessings the Church brings to Congolese families witnesses the truthfulness of President Spencer W. Kimball's well-known statement that "the Gospel solves [the] problems of the world."ⁱⁱ Videos of enthusiastic singing by villagers and Primary children are also included.

ⁱ 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.ldsismag.com) and the website of *The Interpreter Foundation* (<https://interpreterfoundation.org>). For more articles and videos by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, see www.templethemes.org.

ⁱⁱ S. W. Kimball, *The Gospel solves problems of the world* (Address given at a ten-stake fireside at Brigham Young University, 26 September 1971, pp. 1-13 with the title "Church is a cure-all for all problems").