

**Taking the Gospel to the “Ends of the Earth”**  
**The Church in the DR Congo: A Personal Perspective, Part 7**



*Emmanuel Issamba, an investigator from the remote city of Bunia, DR Congo. Left to Right: Elder Luzayadio, Emmanuel Issamba, Elder Lokpo, and Elder Ga<sup>1</sup>*

In a presentation at the 2018 *FairMormon Conference*,<sup>2</sup> 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 ten 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: A light to the world
10. “The labourers are few”

In this episode, I will tell the story of how a new branch came to be formed in Boma, and the situation of isolated members and investigators of the Church who live in cities where groups and branches have not yet been organized. Illustrating the challenges and opportunities of these individuals, we will share the story of Emmanuel Issamba, who traveled at great personal sacrifice a distance equivalent to halfway across the United States to learn more about the Church, only to be told that he could not be baptized because he was 436 miles away from the nearest organized Church unit.<sup>3</sup> We explore current efforts in social media to help such individuals stay in touch.

In his call for a “home-centered, Church-supported” approach to Gospel living,<sup>4</sup> President Russell M. Nelson has signaled the urgency of an oft-repeated theme while significantly expanding its rationale. He has made it clear that rebalancing our efforts to ensure a “home-centered, Church-supported” approach will not only increase the simplicity and effectiveness of Church programs, but will also be a key development that will enable the Gospel to be taken to the “ends of the earth.”

Complementing the policy of building up centers of strength *geographically*, we summarize the teachings of Elder Joni L. Koch of the Seventy, who explained to our missionaries how they should focus their finding efforts in light of the fact that we could currently teach only a fraction of those who were interested in the Gospel in the DR Congo. Echoing the promises of scripture and modern apostles and prophets, he testified that the day will eventually come when “the Gospel will have been preached everywhere, to all people; and this will occur before the second coming of the Son of Man.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 0200.

<sup>2</sup> 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](http://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](http://www.templethemes.org).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 7. See, e.g., D&C 1:11; 65:2; 72:21; 90:9; 105:39; 109:57; 112:4; 133:3.

<sup>4</sup> R. M. Nelson, Opening Remarks (October 2018), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> B. R. McConkie, *Revelation on Priesthood*.