

The Temple 3: A Light to the World
The Church in the DR Congo: A Personal Perspective, Part 10



The DR Congo Kinshasa Temple Shining At Nightfall

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, I discuss why the temple is a light to the DR Congo — and to the world.

It was said anciently that God's light filled the place of His presence in the heavenly temple. On earth, that light is symbolized by the Holy of Holies in the House of the Lord. In the symbolism of the temple, the Holy of Holies, corresponding to the celestial room of modern temples, is not only a place of light, but also the source of light for the entire universe.

Some may wonder, if temples are places of light, why the window openings of the Salt Lake Temple are relatively small and narrow, giving its exterior the appearance of thick battlements. As it turns out, there is a scriptural explanation for both the thick walls and the narrow windows. It seems clear that the purpose of the reversal in temples versus ordinary homes in Old Testament times must have been meant to be symbolic rather than practical. Designing ancient temples that differ in obvious ways from buildings of ordinary construction would have allowed the Israelites to reflect on why such an anomalous design was required.

After providing the context for these architectural features, we will describe what they specifically have to do with the DR Congo Kinshasa temple, and what counsel Elder David A. Bednar implored the Congolese Saints to remember during a visit to the temple site.

We conclude the episode by an impromptu version of "Jesus of Nazareth" by Elder Rafarahavotra of Madagascar.

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.