



Construction crew — DR Congo Kinshasa Temple

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 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 — Kisangani
6. Building from centers of strength — Wagenya and elsewhere
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 discuss the holiness of the temple and of the people who are preparing for it.

At the temple groundbreaking, Elder Neil L. Andersen reminded his listeners that everything has to be “near perfection” in temple construction. A strenuous effort to meet that high standard was made by the construction crew. Over and beyond this professionalism, the essential construction skills learned through patience and persistence, there was a soberness of loving submission in the task of building a temple, a quality of the soul that added an intangible, spiritual element to the work being performed.

Eventually, we witnessed the culminating work begin around the temple doorway in preparation for the inscription plaque, a reminder to everyone who would be worthy to enter to continually cultivate holiness in their hearts: “Holiness to the Lord. The House of the Lord.”

Significantly, so far as we know, the phrase “Holiness to the Lord” never appeared on buildings in Old Testament times. It was, however, applied to high priests who had been consecrated to the Lord’s service through sacred ordinances. This did not mean that the high priests were themselves already holy and pure in every respect, for they had not yet completed the process of sanctification.^[2] Rather, it meant that they had been “chosen” or “set apart” to take upon themselves solemn covenants, covenants that put them under divine obligation “to live up to the holiness to which they [had] been set apart.”^[3]

The Congolese saints have been preparing through their faithfulness for a temple for more than three decades. The construction of the temple is a witness that the Lord has found them ready for it.

[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.

[2] D&C 84:33-39.

[3] J. E. Faulconer, *Life of Holiness*, p. 82.