

AFRICA SOUTHEAST LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Love and Serve One Another— In the House of the Lord

By Elder S. Mark Palmer

President, Africa Southeast Area

“We rejoice in now having a second temple operating in the Africa Southeast Area. We invite all members to come and feel the love of God as they perform sacred service in His Holy House.”

In March of this year, my wife and I had the privilege of taking some invited guests on a tour of the new Kinshasa Democratic Republic of the Congo Temple during the open house prior to its dedication.

As we stood in the beautiful temple baptistry, one of these guests asked an intriguing question. He said something like this: “In our tribal traditions, our ancestors are so important to us—how is it that you connect your families together through the generations?” It was a beautiful teaching moment as we then shared how in a gift of love and service, many faithful members of the Church perform vital ordinances, such as baptisms, on behalf of loved ones who have died. We then took him to the sealing room where we showed him the altar where families are united for the eternities and had him look into the mirrors which face one another—symbolic of the eternal links made between past and future generations.

This good man had many follow up questions and left the temple deeply

affected by what he had seen and felt. He eagerly took a copy of the *My Family* booklet so he could collect names and stories of his own ancestors. With great sincerity he expressed gratitude for being in the temple and left with a new understanding of God’s plan for eternal families and the importance of sacred temples in that plan.

Another guest was so moved by the feelings of peace he had felt while sitting reverently in the celestial room that he asked: “I am a Catholic, but can I still come back to the temple to pray with your members, because I have felt so good in this special place of worship?” We invited him to bring his family as often as he wanted during the open house but explained that coming to the temple after it had been dedicated would require him to be a faithful member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A prominent politician also experienced a beautiful sense of worship in the temple. After we completed the tour, she literally shared her testimony of feeling closer to God while in the temple. She also said that she had a new understanding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She described how she had come to the



Elder S. Mark Palmer

temple open house with many misunderstandings about the Church and our temples, but left changed and with a great appreciation for how temples bring people closer to Christ.

Earlier in the day, we had taken about a dozen reporters and members of the media through the temple. Each had come to cover the temple open house as part of his or her work obligations and had a busy morning setting up cameras and microphones and testing equipment for a media

*A Selection of Comments from the Invited VIP Guests Who
Attended the Kinshasa Temple Open House
March 11, 2019*

*Je suis profondément touché
c'est paradisiaque*
“I was profoundly touched; this is paradise.”

*Extraordinaire. Du Jamais vu.
Le Seigneur Jésus Christ est ici.*
“Extraordinary. Never before seen. The Lord Jesus Christ is here.”

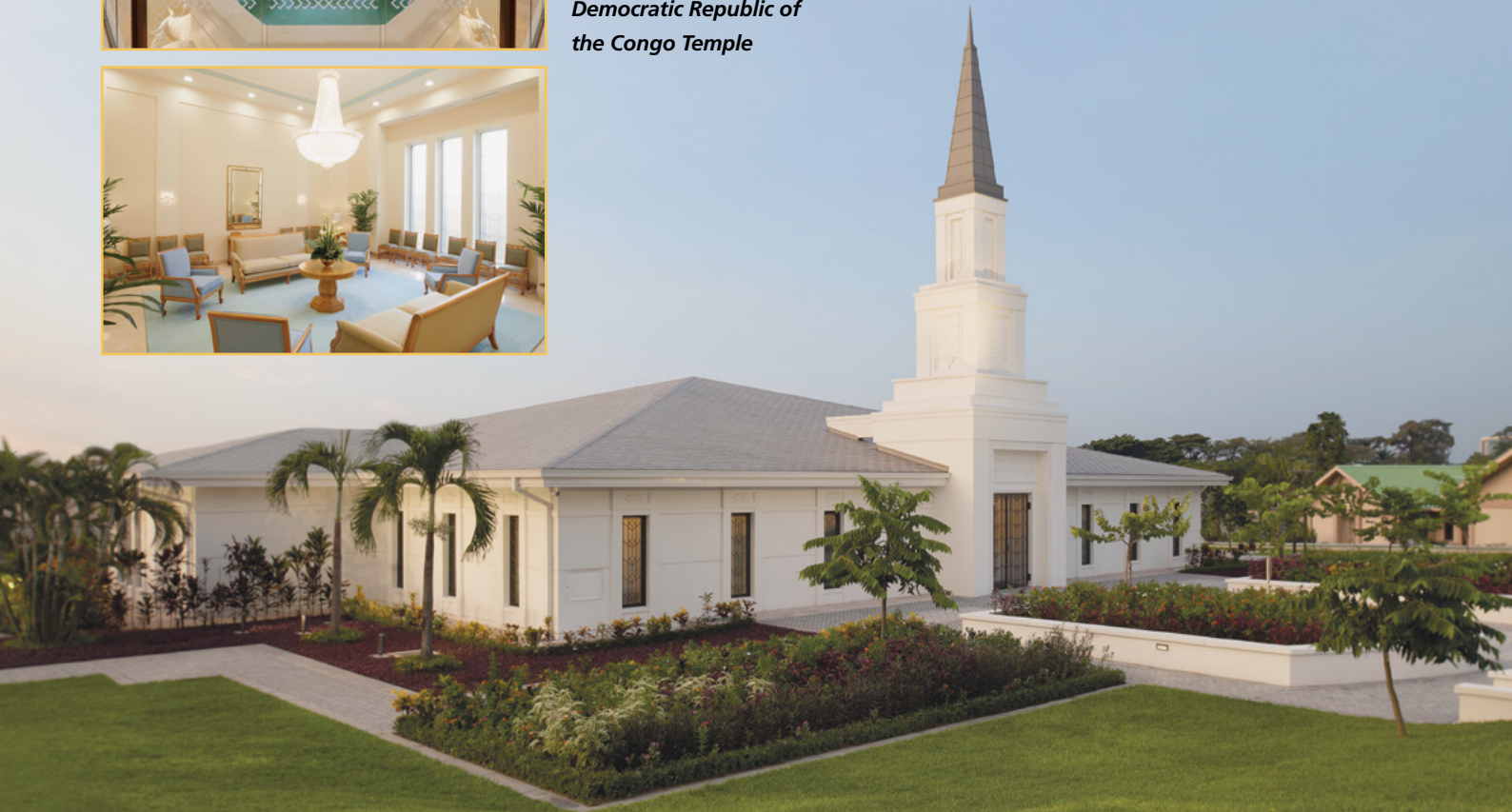
*Je confirme aujourd'hui
que le temple et le temple
du Seigneur.*
“I can confirm today that the temple is the temple of the Lord.”

*J'ai senti une paix qui m'a fait
croire que j'étais dans la présence sainte.*
“I have sensed a peace that makes me believe that I was in a holy presence.”

*Le calme dans le temple inspire
la présence de Dieu.*
“This calm in the temple inspires the presence of God.”



Photos of the Kinshasa Democratic Republic of the Congo Temple



event to follow. So initially they entered the temple out of a sense of duty, with mild curiosity and perhaps a little skepticism as to why they should take the time when they had so much else to do. However, as we progressed from room to room, the curiosity gave way to respect and to a feeling of profound reverence and peace. Before entering the celestial room, we invited them to take time to consider their personal feelings about God and, if they wished, to meditate or pray. To our amazement, almost every member of that group of worldly professionals then sat in the

celestial room with heads bowed. A beautiful feeling came over all present. We felt impressed to share our personal testimonies of how wonderful it is to come to the temple and to leave outside the cares and worries of the world as we focus on the Savior and feel the presence of His Spirit.

Such are the blessings of the holy temple, that even these visitors not of our faith were able to feel and recognize the purpose of temples:

- To connect families together with eternal links through the sacred sealing ordinance.

- To allow us to perform selfless service as a gift of love for those who have died and cannot perform this service for themselves.
- To help us make sacred promises or covenants and to draw closer to Christ.
- To help us leave the world outside and to find a place of peace where we can receive personal revelation.

We rejoice in now having a second temple operating in the Africa Southeast Area. We invite all members to come and to feel the love of God as they perform sacred *service* in His

LOCAL PRIESTHOOD LEADER MESSAGE

Holy House. Consider these beautiful promises from President Russell M. Nelson:

“Building and maintaining temples may not change your life but spending your time in the temple surely will.”¹

“I promise you that the Lord will bring the miracles He knows you need as you make sacrifices to serve and worship in His temples.”²

For those who have already received their ordinances but live too far to attend a temple regularly, we invite you to show your selfless *love* for others by preparing names of your ancestors to receive temple ordinances. And we invite every youth and adult to show your *love* for God by having a current temple recommend. This will be a constant reminder and symbol of your commitment to the holy purposes of sacred temples.

It is my testimony that all who come to the temple, whether now in Johannesburg or Kinshasa—or in the coming years in Durban, Nairobi or Harare—will receive the miracles our beloved prophet has promised. And that these holy temples will be a light and a beacon to all the world. ■

S. Mark Palmer was named a General Authority Seventy in April 2016. He is married to Jacqueline Ann Wood; they are the parents of six children.

NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints”, *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 114.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints”, 114.

Perfected in Christ through Love and Service —One to Another

By Elder Artur J. Miranda

Area Seventy



Elder Artur J. Miranda

“Many of the challenges we face today are related to which perspective we use to live the gospel. One will certainly draw us near to the influence of the Holy Ghost, and the other will lead us down a path that can result in losing the influence of the Spirit.”

When we think of the servants of the Lord who lived before our time, we think many times of the great prophets and heroes of the Bible or the Book of Mormon.

All had in common a desire to serve the Lord and their people. We remember Moses—who forsook a life as prince of Egypt to guide and deliver the people of Israel from bondage—with all the difficulties, trials and blessings associated with that choice.

We remember Abraham—who walked with the Lord and his example as he sought the blessings of the priesthood and to be a righteous man until he became the father of nations.

We remember Nephi—his obedience and faith, as well as the search for personal testimony about the revelations given to his father, Lehi.

We see them from this spiritual perspective and learn from their examples

and choices. Their experiences help us to grow spiritually, to serve better, to be more loving, faithful, obedient and to be instruments in the Lord’s hands wherever we are and within our sphere of action and influence. In other words, we come unto Christ and we strive to be perfected in Him.

On the other hand, we could choose as well to look at their lives from a different perspective; one that looks for flaws to justify our own faults or our lack of faith and commitment to the Lord.

Many of the challenges we face today are related to which perspective we use to live the gospel. One will certainly draw us near to the influence of the Holy Ghost, and the other will lead us down a path that can result in losing the influence of the Spirit, because of our poor perspective and choices, lack of repentance, pride and worldly desires.

The Lord taught us in Matthew 6:24: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Centuries before, Joshua said to Israel: “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: *but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*” (Joshua 24:15, emphasis added).

We live in an amazing time of revelation to help us become the best we can be. From ministering in a “new and holier way” to home-centered and Church-supported gospel living, we are being invited to grow spiritually, draw nearer to our Savior and His example, and live and practice His gospel. In

other words, to love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves.

Sister Ivone Armada from the Luanda Stake in Angola decided to use the Savior’s perspective as a guide for her gospel living. With her permission, I am sharing her comments. She wrote:

“*At some point in my life, I was finally able to stop working to keep up with my children’s growth and home management. But I wanted to do something more, to contribute to the growth of one’s life.*

“I prayed to the Lord, and at the end of the prayer an ‘angel’ was placed in my life—a friend who would help me become a facilitator to teach literacy classes.

“We started the training for this and when it ended, I divulged the project in the Church and in the community and thus formed a class where I could teach during a school year for children and adults with literacy needs.

“It was a great gift in my life, indeed for my whole family, since the preparation of the classes became a family project. It became a beacon—not only in the students’ lives but also in mine—I learned a lot about sacrifice with them and about perseverance.

“Three years later, on the day of the creation of the Angola Stake, I had the great blessing of meeting with several of these students (an adult and the rest—young people) and how wonderful it was to hear them say that they had never failed school again, they were so excited. My heartbeat fired and I remember looking up and saying in silence: ‘Thank you Father in Heaven’.

“Upon hearing one of the adult sisters that attended the class say that because of these classes she was able to start a small business that has provided for her family’s needs, we embraced each other, and we began to weep with gratitude. My husband and the people around me were perplexed to see this. My husband realized what was happening.

“With this experience, what is found in Doctrine and Covenants 81:5 and 84:106 gained tremendous



The Armada Family (left to right) Ivone, Miriam, Daniel, Lucas, and Sergio

weight in my personal and spiritual growth. I became a humbler person and had the purpose of leaving a legacy of greater service to my neighbor.”

Thanks to this experience, Sister Ivone continues to contribute in training and developing others. She went over and beyond what was being asked and used her time and talents to help others at Church and in her

community. She indeed ministered to those in need and was blessed far beyond her expectations for that.

I invite all of us to do the same and to seek for opportunities to serve our God and our fellow man, showing through service and love our love for God and for his children. May the Lord Jesus Christ fill us with His love as we humbly seek Him through

prayer, faith and good works—so we can be refined by the Master and fulfill His invitation to become more like Him. I testify that He lives. He loves us. He is mindful of us and His arms are always open to receive us back home again one day. ■

Artur J. Miranda was named an Area Seventy in 2017. He is married to Mónica Tulia Granja Cardoso; they are the parents of two children.

“CHOOSE A MEANINGFUL SABBATH” SERIES

A Refuge from the Storms of Life

By Susan Gregory

“Honour the Sabbath as a form of righteousness—let it bless and strengthen our families—let it increase our happiness—let it separate us from the things in our lives which are frivolous, inappropriate, or immoral.”

As we look around us, we see sad and shocking events: accidents, natural disasters, and the consequences of man’s inhumanities against one another. The world today seems busier, more complicated, and less stable. As we witness such events it is easy for us to become fearful and troubled—but the calming words of Psalm 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God” bring comfort and reassurance to us.

Even the routines of everyday life can be daunting as we provide

the necessities for our families, care for and teach our children, perform the duties of our Church callings, and find time to learn and grow as a son or daughter of God. We may frequently feel overwhelmed and challenged. Elder Quentin L. Cook, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught one way to find peace and calm in troubling times, when he said: “Keeping the Sabbath day holy is a refuge from the storms of this life.”¹

Could it be that simple?

The fourth commandment, as recorded by Moses in Exodus 20:8, reads, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” We know that this



When we step into the chapel and prepare to receive the sacrament, we should think of ourselves as being in a sanctuary, a sacred and special place where we can contemplate Christ.

commandment was first given to Adam and Eve—and it remains in force even today. But it is more than a commandment. It is a covenant: “Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

“It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.” (Exodus 31:16–17)

How do we incorporate the refuge of this covenant into our lives?

First, we should remember that the most significant, most unique, and most refreshing event of any week should be when we partake of the Sacrament—renewing our baptismal covenants and completing our week’s efforts to repent of our shortcomings. Elder M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “Sacrament meeting is a wonderful and glorious time. When we step into the chapel and prepare to receive the sacrament, we should think of ourselves as being in a sanctuary, a sacred and special place where we can contemplate Christ and His great and glorious mission. We put aside the things of the world and think instead of what is eternal. We need to put aside our cell phones and ponder about Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.”²



Honour the Sabbath as a form of righteousness—let it bless and strengthen our families—let it increase our happiness—let it separate us from the things in our lives which are frivolous, inappropriate, or immoral.

Secondly, we need to find delight in the Sabbath, when sometimes it seems difficult to find. Chat with many teenagers (and some adults) and it seems that *delight* is not the word they would select to describe the day. For many, the positive aspects include going to church and seeing their friends—especially for those who are the only members of the Church in their school or neighbourhood. For families who are actively involved in appropriate activities, time on the Sabbath seems to fly by. That is one of the reasons for the new two-hour Sunday church meeting schedule—freeing up more time for family togetherness and personal worship.

Unfortunately, there are those who do not adequately plan and prepare for this special day of *delight*, and who are left to amuse themselves with less important or even inappropriate Sabbath activities. In the end, the Lord leaves decisions to us. We can either advantage ourselves and partake in the refreshment and delight of this sacred day, or we can press on with heavy burdens—and miss the sweet peace and calm that the day could otherwise bring to our souls.

The Saviour, when challenged by the Pharisees for breaking Jewish tradition on the Sabbath, responded: “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

LOCAL PAGES

So, how to *celebrate* this day made for us?

President Russell M. Nelson, in the April 2015 general conference, explained how he approached the Sabbath: “In my much younger years, I studied the work of others who had compiled lists of things to do and things *not* to do on the Sabbath. It wasn’t until later that I learned from the scriptures that my conduct and my attitude on the Sabbath constituted a *sign* between me and my Heavenly Father [see Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12, 20]. With that understanding, I no longer needed lists of dos and don’ts. When I had to make a decision whether or not an activity was appropriate for the Sabbath, I simply asked myself, ‘What *sign* do I want to give to God?’ That question made my choices about the Sabbath day crystal clear.”³

Honour the Sabbath as a form of righteousness—let it bless and strengthen our families—let it increase our happiness—let it separate us from the things in our lives which are frivolous, inappropriate, or immoral.

Let this holy day become a refuge from the storms of this life. ■

NOTES

1. Quentin L. Cook, “Shipshape and Bristol Fashion: Be Temple Worthy—in Good Times and Bad Times”, *Liahona*, November 2015, 42.
2. M. Russell Ballard “Our Sabbath Sanctuary”, *Liahona*, June 2018, 80.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight”, *Liahona*, May 2015, 130.

600 Kilometers of Faith

By Africa Southeast Area Church History Department

“I have waited for this event for 38 years, anticipating this happening for me. Do you think I will fall away? I will never turn away.”

On a rainy Saturday morning prior to a Kolwezi district conference in 2013, President Ellie Monga, Counselor in the Lubumbashi Democratic Republic of the Congo Mission and Elder Jeffrey Wright, the mission finance secretary, welcomed two strangers at the mission office. Their clothes were muddy, and they were exhausted. They arrived pushing a single, beat-up bicycle and carrying a parcel that was wrapped in a torn and dirty plastic.

President Monga and Elder Wright inquired about their journey and learned that these two tired pilgrims, Brothers Yumba Muzimba Paul and Muba Wa Umbalo Delphin, had arrived from Kinkondja, a city located 600 kilometers (375 miles) north of Kolwezi. They had departed eight days earlier as part of a larger group that was traveling to attend the district conference. En route, most of the group fell sick and decided to return to their homes—but these two brothers were determined to complete the journey by themselves, taking turns between pedaling the bicycle and riding on the back. They said that they

had travelled the last three days continuously through the night without stopping and without food—and after a tire went flat, they pushed the bicycle through the rain along the muddy roads. Their bicycle was broken, and these brothers had no money for tools or parts. They had not eaten for three days. They did not know how they would fund a return to their homes.

Brother Paul and Brother Delphin explained that they represented the roughly 60 Saints living in the Kinkondja area and had come to bring tithing from those Saints and to attend the district conference. This came as a surprise to President Monga and Elder Wright as there was no officially organized Kinkondja branch of the Church. Elder Wright recorded in his journal, “It was my honor to receive [the tithing envelopes]. It was my honor to process them.” Elder Wright continued, “I have never felt like I had handled such sacred money before in my whole lifetime.”

Brother Paul related that he was one of three men from Kinkondja who had begun writing to then-Church President Spencer W. Kimball in 1975, asking for missionaries to be sent to the DRC—known as Zaire at the time—and especially to their own village. Brother Delphin added

that his deceased father was one of those same three men. (This was well before the Church had been formally organized in the country and before the first missionaries arrived in 1986.) These brothers said that years before, both had been baptized and ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood. But in earlier instructions from Church leaders, they were told that they could not be ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood because at that time they lived too far away from an organized Church unit.

For the next two days, President Monga and Elder Wright taught and trained Brother Paul and Brother Delphin in the duties and obligations of the Melchizedek Priesthood. During his interview with Brother Paul, Elder Wright stressed the obligations associated with priesthood ordination, and reminded Brother Paul that “the priesthood is an irreversible event with heavy consequences based on the

oath and covenant of the priesthood.” Speaking through President Monga as translator from Kiluba, his native language, Brother Paul replied, “I have waited for this event for 38 years, anticipating this happening for me. Do you think I will fall away? I will never turn away.”

Both brothers were sustained to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood in the district conference, and afterward ordained by Elder Wright with President Monga translating his words into Kiluba. After their ordinations, they were further authorized by President Monga to baptize their wives and children and to administer the sacrament to the Saints upon their return to Kinkondja. Brother Delphin, the younger of the two brothers, was given an additional instruction to dedicate the grave of his father to “honor him as one of the original converts and pioneers of the great work in the Congo.”

Elder Wright recorded in his journal: “I told the mission president [President Phillip McMullin] that night about the condition of their bike and mentioned that I was going to recondition it, buy them [a second] bike and buy them some tools to fix the bikes.” He and President McMullin also funded a ride home for them along with their bikes in one of the big trucks that travel the route to Kinkondja. Before departing, the brothers were given Church materials to take back to their village—among those materials were a sacrament tray and cups so that these newly-ordained and authorized priesthood holders would be able to conduct the ordinance of the sacrament each week.

That Kolwezi district conference in 2013 was memorable for all involved. The district president asked the Kinkondja brethren, to share their powerful testimonies in priesthood meeting and in the Sunday session of conference. They had arrived very tired and very early on Saturday morning. By the end of the conference, they—and all who heard their stories and their testimonies—left refreshed, fulfilled, and feeling God’s love in their hearts. ■

SOURCES

Johannesburg, South Africa Record Preservation Centre, from the journal of Elder Jeffrey Warren Wright, Lubumbashi Mission, May 2018.

Personal interview with Ellie Monga by Khumbulani Mdletshe, Church History Adviser, January 2019.



Brother Paul and Brother Delphin with their bicycle