



## **The Origin of Aggressive Proselyting** - *The Miracle of Member Missionary Engagement*

As related by Ikechukwu Charles Ekwurube and Amarachi Njoku. Compiled by Elder Carling Bernell Taylor, Canada Winnipeg Mission.

Charles had a huge problem with no apparent solution. As a newly called Bishop, he and his two counselors were in their first meeting to discuss how to help the Church grow in Aba, Nigeria.

The challenge came from decades of misinformation and superstition throughout Nigeria, largely caused by preachers from other faiths who taught that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was a cult, a secret society, that they worshiped Joseph Smith, and that they had their own bible that did not include Jesus Christ as the Son of God. This negative influence had grown so intense that few were willing to listen to the full time missionaries and investigate the Church.

“Suddenly an idea just dropped,” says Charles, as he remembers that first meeting. “I felt very peaceful about it, so I wrote it down: Aggressive Proselyting.”

“The keys for baptism lie with the Mission President. But the keys for missionary work in our ward, lies with the Bishop,” Charles explained. “We cannot expect the full time missionaries to solve this problem on their own. ‘Every member a missionary’ includes all of us, every one.”

And so, the Aggressive Proselyting approach to missionary work was launched in the Aba ward by Bishop Ekwurube and his ward. Every quarter for the next several years, members old and young ventured into the streets of Aba to overcome opposition and invite their neighbors to hear the glad news of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The results of this initiative were dramatic at many levels; positively helping the full time missionaries, ward members, and especially members of the Aba Nigeria community. Many curious neighbors attended ward sponsored symposiums, and several joined the Church through baptism as a result.

Today, as President of the Lagos Ikeja stake, Charles continues the effort of Aggressive Proselyting by supporting wards in implementing its process. And several members of his stake, who were baptized as a result of Aggressive Proselyting, hold key leadership roles and continue to help the Church grow.

## **Aggressive Proselyting** - *Creating New Member Missionary Sharing Opportunities*

This is not an official program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, not endorsed by it. It is simply a shared experience of one Nigerian Bishop within his ward. It may be used as a pattern for creating your own member missionary outreach program.

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The following is a step-by-step description of how the Aba ward planned and carried out Aggressive Proselyting under the direction of their bishop.

### **Planning**

1. Choose one quarterly event during the year:
  - Symposium with Q&A
  - Ward conference
  - Special open house
2. Events are planned on a Sunday, and the Aggressive Proselyting is done on the Saturday previous.
3. Invite all members of the ward (possibly excluding primary age children) to participate on the selected day.
4. Get approval from the Mission Leader for full time missionaries to participate with ward members.

### **Documents**

1. Divide the ward into neighborhoods that can be canvassed in two hours by several small sub-groups (3-4 people each).
2. Prepare worksheets to collect information from people willing to share it:
  - Name
  - Address
  - Phone
  - Email
3. Assemble materials for sub-groups to distribute within their assigned area:
  - "The Restoration" pamphlet
  - Letter of Invitation to the event

### **Spiritual Preparation**

Help ward members and missionaries prepare spiritually prior to the event:

- Begin fasting on Friday prior to Saturday Aggressive Proselyting

- Attend the temple on Friday in connection with the fast if possible

### **Proselyting Saturday**

1. Meet in the Chapel wearing Sunday dress:
  - Opening hymn and prayer
  - Instructions from the Bishop or assigned person
  - Divide into sub-groups of 3-4 persons led by a full time missionary, ward officer, or returned missionary.
  - Distribute maps of assigned canvassing areas.
  - One person in each sub-group enters information of those contacted.
2. Sub-groups go to their areas and canvas streets, homes, businesses and pedestrians until they are finished.
3. Upon returning to the Church building:
  - Everyone gathers to share their experiences.
  - Submit contact information sheets.
  - Share a potluck to break their fast and have fun.

### **Follow-up**

1. Ward Aggressive Proselyting coordinator immediately:
  - Contacts each new friend to express thanks for their interest and remind them of upcoming event details.
  - Shares contact information with the full time missionaries, who then reach out to each new friend to answer questions and begin teaching.