

Joseph W.B. Johnson

1934-2012

“There is a chorus of God’s love inside every member of the Church today. We can’t express our gratitude for the blessings we have received.”

As a young man in Ghana, Joseph longed for spiritual peace. He prayed that God would help him find it. Then, in 1964, a friend gave him a copy of *The Book of Mormon* and other Church materials. He studied them and gained a testimony that they were true. That knowledge changed his life.

At the time, Church missionaries had not yet come to Ghana. Even more, those with Black African ancestry were not yet authorized to hold priesthood authority. Yet, Joseph felt called of God to preach the gospel. One morning he heard a voice call his name three times and say, “If you will take up my work as I will command you, I will bless you and bless your land.” With tears in his eyes, Joseph replied, “Lord, with thy help I will do whatsoever you will command me.” From that moment on, Joseph dedicated his life to preaching the gospel. He went door to door and street to street. Yet the work was not easy. Many people rejected his message and treated him harshly. They printed pamphlets attacking the Church. Some tried to bribe Joseph with money to join different churches. Others said The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would never officially come to Ghana and that Joseph was wasting his time. Sometimes Joseph felt discouraged, but he continued preaching, praying, fasting, organizing church meetings, and trusting God. Though many rejected his message, many also believed and gained testimonies of their own.

Joseph continued preaching, hoping, and receiving guidance from God for over a decade until official missionaries finally arrived. When they did, Joseph and 1,000 other people in Ghana were ready for baptism. Joseph went on to serve as the first branch president in the Church and lived to see the dedication of the first temple in Ghana. Of the dedication, Joseph said, “My heart is burning with love and appreciation. When I started preaching with the *Book of Mormon*, everyone said, they won’t come. Leave the Church. I said, ‘I know they will come because the Lord has told me.’”

Sources to Explore:

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