



An Enthusiastic Desire to Share the Gospel

*Our brothers and sisters throughout the world
need the message of the restored gospel, and
it is our privilege to share it with them.*

From the Life of George Albert Smith

A close friend of George Albert Smith wrote: “President George Albert Smith is a natural missionary. From his youth he has had an ardent desire to share the teachings of the gospel with his fellow men, to make known to ‘the sons and daughters of God,’ all of whom he considers to be his brothers and sisters, the truths that were revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

“On several occasions I have had the privilege of traveling on the train with President Smith. Each time I observed that as soon as the journey was well underway, he would take a few gospel tracts from his bag, put them into his pocket, and then move about among the passengers. In his friendly, agreeable manner he would soon make the acquaintance of a fellow traveler, and in a short time I would hear him relating the story of the founding of the Church by the Prophet Joseph Smith or telling of the exodus of the Saints from Nauvoo and their trials and difficulties in crossing the plains to Utah or explaining some of the gospel principles to his new-found friend. Conversation after conversation would follow with one passenger after another until the journey was ended. In my entire acquaintance with President Smith, which has extended more than forty years, I have learned that wherever he is, he is first and foremost a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”¹

It was also written of President Smith: “He would talk religion with a chimneysweep who was working at his home. Seldom did

he miss an opportunity to explain the ‘eternal truths of the restored gospel’ to either friend or stranger. From his point of view, this was the ultimate kindness, for the message of Christ was the most significant gift he had to give.”² [See suggestion 1 on page 132.]

Because sharing the gospel was a topic that President Smith addressed often in his teachings, this is the first of three chapters on the subject in this book. This chapter focuses on the reasons we share the gospel; chapter 13 presents several ways in which we can participate in this important work; and chapter 14 describes how we can be most effective in our efforts.

Teachings of George Albert Smith

The world needs what we have—the gospel of Jesus Christ, restored in its fulness.

The world is in distress, in travail, from one end of it to the other. Men and women are looking here and there, seeking where they shall go to do the things that will bring them peace. . . . The gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored. The truth revealed from heaven is here and it is that truth, that gospel, which, if the world only knew it, will be a panacea for all their ills. It is the only thing that will bring them peace while they remain upon the earth.³

There is need for the people of this world to retrace their steps and get back to the foundation that was laid by the Master of heaven and earth, the foundation of faith, repentance and baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the reception of the Holy Ghost under the hands of those possessing divine authority. That is what the world needs. I am grateful indeed that many are looking that way. They have been going blindly along a pathway that has led to sorrow and distress, but there has been placed within reach a remedy for all ills—the gospel of Jesus Christ. There has been mapped out for all a path that, while it is narrow, and difficult to follow, leads back to the Father of us all; and there is no other path that leads there.⁴

The churches of the world are trying, in their way, to bring peace into the hearts of men. They are possessed of many virtues

and many truths, and accomplish much good, but they are not divinely authorized. Neither have their priests been divinely commissioned.⁵

The Latter-day Saints are the only ones who bear the authority of our Heavenly Father to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel. The world has need of us.⁶

There is a real famine in the world for the words of the Lord, and many honest souls are earnestly seeking to know what our Heavenly Father desires of them. I have met a number of the leaders of the churches of the world, and have found among them noble characters devoted to doing good, but I have rarely found among those who have been called to the ministry in the various church organizations, men who have an understanding of the purposes of their being, or who realize why we are here in the world. Men cannot teach what they do not themselves know. These good men, not understanding the gospel and the necessity for the ordinances of the same, confine their teachings very largely to moral lessons and to reading the psalms to their congregations. Isolated passages of scripture are chosen as texts for addresses on virtue, honesty, etc., all of which are helpful and uplifting, but few sermons are preached explaining the requirements made of every soul before we can enter the kingdom of heaven. It is this information of which the world is most in need. Few ministers have a message for their congregations that inspires in them the belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ and the necessity of partaking of the ordinances of the gospel prescribed by him.⁷ [See suggestion 2 on page 132.]

**There are many people who would embrace
the truth if given the opportunity.**

Our Father's children everywhere are anxious to know what they should do, but, by reason of the evil influences that have pervaded the earth, they have been deceived; honorable men of the earth are blinded to the truth. . . . The adversary is at work, and the only power that can neutralize his influence is the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁸

People have been suspicious of one another. They have not believed what they have heard, and they have not been willing to do as Philip, one of the disciples of the Savior, recommended to Nathanael who was visiting with him. Philip said, “The Lord has come.”

And he described him and Nathanael asked, “Where did he come from?”

And Philip answered, “Why, he came from Nazareth.” And then the good man said, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip said, “Come and see.” (See John 1:43–46.)

Nathanael had been taught to believe that no good could come from Nazareth, and yet he was the man whom the Savior later referred to as an Israelite without guile—a good man, but deceived because of the stories that he had heard.

But when he once learned, when he had accepted the invitation of the disciples to “Come and see,” he came to see.

We have had great joy under the influence of His Spirit. We would like everybody to enjoy that blessing, and so when they have asked, “What kind of people are these here?” our answer has been, “Come and see.”⁹

My Heavenly Father . . . has called me to go to many parts of the earth, and more than a million miles have been traversed since I was called into the ministry. I have traveled in many lands and climes, and wherever I have gone I have found good people, sons and daughters of the living God who are waiting for the gospel of Jesus Christ, and there are thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of them, who would be accepting the truth if they only knew what we know.¹⁰

There are many great church organizations in the world, many devout men and women living according to the will of our Heavenly Father as they understand it. . . .

All men who will live up to the light that the Lord has offered to them and seek him in earnest prayer will have their hearts touched, their minds will be influenced, and opportunity will be offered to them to know that God has spoken again.¹¹ [See suggestion 3 on page 132.]



“It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we bear. . . . And those who believe will follow the pattern given by the Savior when He said to His disciples, ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.’”

We are enthusiastic about sharing the gospel because we love our neighbors.

Perhaps it might appear to the outside observer that there is among the Latter-day Saints an unusual enthusiasm. As one man recently said: “It is strange to me how joyfully you people carry your work forward. It matters not whether I speak to a youth or to a mature man, to a gardener or a policeman among your people, they are all happy and satisfied and confident that they possess the gospel of Jesus Christ.” . . .

. . . Is it any wonder that there is enthusiasm in our worship, that we have a disposition to be anxious to divide these glorious truths with our neighbors? Is it to be wondered at, that when the time comes that our sons are called into the mission field, or we are asked to lay aside our duties and go out as servants of the living God, endued with power from on high, possessing authority that

has been conferred in this latter-day, in order that we may divide with all people this wonderful truth that has made our lives so rich, . . . that we respond willingly and gladly?¹²

It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we bear. It is the desire to save the souls of the children of men that burns in our hearts. It is not that we may build ourselves up and become a mighty people financially; it is not that we may have our names glorified in the earth for our accomplishments; but it is that the sons and daughters of God, wherever they may be, may hear this Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to all those who believe and obey its precepts. And those who believe will follow the pattern given by the Savior when He said to His disciples, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." [Mark 16:16.]¹³

Think of the responsibility that is upon us, if in carelessness or indifference we live our lives, not seeking to divide the truth with those whom the Lord loves as much as he loves us, and who are precious in his sight. I feel that there should be an awakening among some of the members of this Church. I think a greater effort should be made to divide with our Father's children all the truth that is deposited with this Church.¹⁴

When a man is sick, if he is our neighbor, we minister to him gladly; if there is a death in his family, we try to comfort him. But year in and year out we allow him to walk in paths that will destroy his opportunity for eternal life, we pass him by, as if he were a thing of naught.¹⁵

Do we realize that every man is in the image of God and is a son of God, and every woman his daughter? No matter where they may be, they are his children, and he loves them and desires their salvation. Surely as members of this Church we cannot sit idly by. We cannot receive the beneficent favor of our Heavenly Father that is bestowed upon us, the knowledge of eternal life, and selfishly retain it, thinking that we may be blessed thereby. It is not what we receive that enriches our lives, it is what we give.¹⁶

Let us be sufficiently interested in the salvation of men to exercise a holy zeal for their conversion: that we may enjoy their eternal

gratitude and love, and the appreciation of our Heavenly Father, because of our unselfish interest in His children.¹⁷

Our mission to our Father's children . . . is a mission of peace, of good will towards all men. It is an intense and enthusiastic desire to divide with all our Father's children the good things that he has so generously bestowed upon us; and it is with the hope that they may understand, that we go upon our bended knees, day after day, and pray that their hearts may be touched, that the spirit of God may come into their souls, that they may understand the truth as it is given unto them.¹⁸

O that this great Church, with the power that has been given to it of God, might be able to more rapidly disseminate the truth, and save the nations from destruction. We are growing rapidly, as an organization, but I rejoice not so much in the increase numerically as I do in the belief that the influence that we radiate is being felt for good and that our Father's children, from the north to the south, and from the east to the west, are hearing the message of life and salvation, without which they cannot dwell in the presence of the Redeemer of mankind.¹⁹ [See suggestion 4 on page 133.]

**The Lord will hold us accountable for our efforts
to share the gift of the gospel.**

We have received a wonderful gift, but with that gift comes a great responsibility. We have been blessed of the Lord with a knowledge beyond our fellows, and with that knowledge comes the requirement that we divide it with His children wherever they may be.²⁰

Now, I do not understand that we are serving God with all our might if we forsake his children, or if we spend so much of our time selfishly building up ourselves, accumulating things of this life, and leave his children in darkness, when we could bring them into the light. My understanding is that the most important mission that I have in this life is: first, to keep the commandments of God, as they have been taught to me; and next, to teach them to my Father's children who do not understand them.²¹

There is no other Gospel of salvation, and we, my brethren who bear the holy priesthood, have the responsibility of carrying that

message, not only to the nations of the earth, but of exemplifying it in our lives and teaching it to those who are our neighbors, not of our faith. I warn you this day that the Lord holds us responsible to call His children to repentance and for the promulgation of His truth. If we fail to take advantage of our opportunities to teach the sons and daughters of God, who are not of our faith, who dwell in our midst, this Gospel of our Lord, He will require at our hands on the other side of the veil what we have failed to do.²²

After awhile we will have to meet our record, and if we have been faithful, I am sure the Father of us all in the world will thank us and bless us for bringing so many of his sons and daughters to an understanding of the purpose of life and how to enjoy it under the influence of his spirit.²³

When we have the spirit of the gospel our desire is that we may be able to teach just as many of our Father's children as it is possible for us to reach, the glorious truths that are necessary for their exaltation; that when the time comes that we shall stand in the presence of the Redeemer of mankind, that we may be able to say to him: "With such power as thou gavest me, with such wisdom and knowledge as thou has given unto me, I have sought in tenderness and with love unfeigned, and with determination and with kindness to bring as many of thy children unto a knowledge of the gospel as it has been possible for me to do."²⁴ [See suggestion 5 on page 133.]

If we share the gospel with God's children, our reward will be great joy with them in the celestial kingdom.

We spend most of our time, many of us, seeking the things of this life that we will be compelled to leave when we go from here, yet there are the immortal souls all around us whom, if we would, we could teach and inspire to investigate the truth, and implant in their hearts a knowledge that God lives. What treasure in all the world could be so precious to us, for we would have their gratitude here and their everlasting and eternal appreciation in the world to come. It is a most important mission.²⁵

Think what it will mean if, instead of having been selfish trying to save only our own little family, we can count by the dozens and



“When we have the spirit of the gospel our desire is that we may be able to teach just as many of our Father’s children as it is possible for us to reach.”

by the hundreds men and women that we have influenced to accept the Gospel of our Lord. Then will we feel blessed indeed and enjoy their love and appreciation forever.²⁶

What a joy it will be on the other side of the veil, to find these good men and women who are living up to such light as they have, trying to do their duty to God, and by reason of our contact, by reason of our anxiety and willingness to share with them, they will receive other information about the gospel of our Lord and accept the ordinances of His Holy House and be prepared for membership in the Celestial Kingdom. How happy it will make you, if when that time comes, when you stand in the presence of the great Judge to give an account of the few years of life that have been spent in mortality, if these our Father’s children that He loves as much as He loves us, standing by us, say, “Heavenly Father, it was this man, it was this woman who first brought to me the information of Thy glorious truth that provoked in me a desire to seek after Thee more fervently

than I had done before. It was this man or this woman who did this blessed thing for me.” And that is not all.

When that time comes, when you go down through the ages of eternity, that is a long time, you will have the love and the gratitude of every man, woman and child to whom you have been instrumental in bringing eternal happiness. Isn't that worth while? We may spend our lives here and acquire a few hundreds or thousands of dollars, we may have flocks, herds, houses and lands, but we cannot take these with us to the other side. They are not necessary to eternal life, they are only necessary for us here, but if we have earned the gratitude and the love of God's other children, that will flow to us forever. Think what that will mean! When the time comes that this world shall be cleansed and purified by fire and becomes the celestial kingdom, all impurity, and everything that is not desirable having been swept away how gratifying it will be to find that we have companionship with those we have served in mortality, have inheritance with, and be directed by Jesus Christ our Lord forever—is not that worth while? Isn't it a joyful opportunity?²⁷ [See suggestion 6 on page 133.]

Suggestions for Study and Teaching

Consider these ideas as you study the chapter or as you prepare to teach. For additional help, see pages v–vii.

1. Review “From the Life of George Albert Smith” (pages 123–24). Why do you think President Smith was so enthusiastic about missionary work? What does it mean to you to be “first and foremost a missionary for the Church”?
2. What does the restored gospel offer the world in addition to the “moral lessons” offered in most religions? (For some examples, see pages 124–25.)
3. Read the section that begins on page 125 (see also D&C 123:12). What examples have you seen of people overcoming misconceptions about the Church by accepting the invitation to “come and see”? What are some effective ways to extend such an invitation?

4. Read the last two full paragraphs on page 128. Why do you think we are sometimes reluctant to share the gospel with our neighbors? As you study pages 127–29, think about what we can do to overcome that reluctance.
5. As you read the section that begins on page 129, ponder whether you are doing what the Lord expects you to do to share the gospel. Prayerfully consider how you might keep this commandment more fully.
6. Review the last section of teachings (pages 130–32) and think about the person who first introduced you or your family to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. What can you do to show or express your gratitude to that person?

Related Scriptures: Amos 8:11–12; Mosiah 28:1–3; Alma 26:28–30; Doctrine and Covenants 4:4; 18:10–16

Teaching help: “It’s better to take just a few good ideas and get good discussion—and good learning—than to be frenzied, trying to teach every word in the manual. . . . An unrushed atmosphere is absolutely essential if you are to have the Spirit of the Lord present in your class” (Jeffrey R. Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 91).

Notes

1. Preston Nibley, “Sharing the Gospel with Others,” *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1950, 270.
2. Merlo J. Pusey, *Builders of the Kingdom* (1981), 240.
3. In Conference Report, June 1919, 43.
4. In Conference Report, Apr. 1922, 54–55.
5. In Conference Report, Apr. 1922, 53.
6. In Conference Report, Apr. 1916, 47.
7. In Conference Report, Oct. 1921, 38.
8. In Conference Report, Apr. 1922, 53.
9. In Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 5.
10. In Conference Report, Oct. 1945, 120.
11. In Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 43–44.
12. In Conference Report, Oct. 1927, 46–47.
13. In *Proceedings at the Dedication of the Joseph Smith Memorial Monument*, 55.
14. In Conference Report, Apr. 1934, 28.
15. In Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 50.
16. In Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 46.
17. “Greeting,” *Millennial Star*, July 10, 1919, 441.
18. In Conference Report, Oct. 1927, 49.
19. In Conference Report, Oct. 1922, 98.
20. In Conference Report, Apr. 1922, 53.
21. In Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 50.
22. In Conference Report, Apr. 1916, 48.
23. In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 7–8.
24. In *Deseret News*, Aug. 20, 1921, Church section, 7.
25. In Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 50.
26. In Conference Report, Oct. 1941, 102.
27. *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, sel. Preston Nibley (1948), 214–16; address given Nov. 4, 1945, in Washington, D.C.



*George Albert Smith served as president of the European Mission
from 1919 to 1921.*