



## Doing Our Part to Share the Gospel

*There are many ways we can participate in the great work of sharing the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.*

### **From the Life of George Albert Smith**

In addition to serving nearly 48 years as a General Authority, George Albert Smith served three full-time missions for the Church, including two years as president of the European Mission. He encouraged Church members to prepare spiritually for full-time missionary service and to accept such calls when they come. But he also taught them that they need not receive a formal mission call in order to preach the gospel. George Albert Smith was a missionary throughout his life, and he often reminded Church members of their many opportunities to share the gospel with their neighbors and friends and encouraged them to be good examples of disciples of Christ.

President Smith's service in the European Mission began shortly after the end of World War I. Because of the war, the number of missionaries in the mission had been drastically reduced, and efforts to increase that number were hindered because missionaries were being denied visas. In addition, enemies of the Church were spreading false stories about Latter-day Saints, creating prejudices that were difficult to overcome. Notwithstanding these limitations, President Smith was confident that the work would move forward because of the examples set by faithful Latter-day Saints. He noted that as the Church becomes more well known, "its members are esteemed for their virtues," and critics "are quickly divested of their unjustified prejudices, by coming in direct contact with the Latter-day Saints in their daily lives. . . . They then judge us by our fruits, from personal observation, and such information, as they impart it, can have but one effect, and that most favorable to us."<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after beginning his service as president of the mission, he wrote to the members of the Church in Europe, reminding them of their responsibilities to share the gospel and help the work progress:

“With full confidence that the Lord will incline the hearts of all worthy people to the gospel when they understand it, let us unitedly avail ourselves of the opportunity to labor while there is yet time. Let us disseminate the teachings of the Master for the salvation, both temporal and spiritual, of the good people of Great Britain and the other countries of the European mission.”<sup>2</sup>

A few months later he wrote: “Every member of the Church should delight in teaching the truth. We should each do something every day to bring the light to our fellow beings. All are precious in our Heavenly Father’s sight, and he will adequately reward us for enlightening them. Our responsibility cannot be shifted to other shoulders.”<sup>3</sup>

After returning from Europe in 1921, George Albert Smith reported in general conference, “The prejudice that has existed against us in the past has in large measure been dissipated and hundreds and thousands of men and women have been made aware of the labor we are performing.” He then admonished the Saints to constantly seek for ways to share the gospel with others: “Our problem is to find a way whereby we may present to all the people the gospel of our Lord. It is our problem, and with divine assistance we will find a way to solve it. It is incumbent upon us to ascertain if there is not some means whereby we may be able to do more than we have already done, if we would satisfy the requirements of our Heavenly Father.”<sup>4</sup> [See suggestion 1 on page 145.]

## Teachings of George Albert Smith

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**Every member of the Church has the responsibility to share the gospel.**

I feel so grateful for my privileges in the Church of Jesus Christ, for my companionship with the men and women of this Church and of other churches. I am grateful to have a host of friends in the various churches of the world, scattered in different places.

I am grateful for those friendships, but I will not be satisfied until I can share with them some of the things which they have not yet received.<sup>5</sup>

We send missionaries to the nations of the earth to proclaim the Gospel as revealed in this latter day. But that is not all our duty. Right at our doors, by the hundreds and thousands, are choice sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. They live among us, we become friends, but we fail to teach them to the extent we should, concerning the Gospel that we know is the power of God unto salvation. The Presidency of the Church are doing all that lies in their power; they devote their time during the day, and often into the late hours of the night, in the interest of the Church. The brethren who are associated with them give liberally of their time, traveling and teaching the Latter-day Saints and carrying the Gospel to our Father's children. The presidents of stakes, high councilors, bishops of wards, and their assistants, labor unceasingly to bless the people, and their reward is sure. But are we doing all we ought, so that when we stand before the bar of our Heavenly Father He will say we have done our full duty by our fellows, His children?<sup>6</sup>

One of the very first revelations . . . in the Doctrine and Covenants, reads as follows:

“Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men; . . .

“Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God, ye are called to the work.” [D&C 4:1, 3.]

It is not necessary for you to be called to go into the mission field in order to proclaim the truth. Begin on the man who lives next door by inspiring confidence in him, by inspiring love in him for you because of your righteousness, and your missionary work has already begun,

“For behold the field is white already to harvest.” [D&C 4:4.]<sup>7</sup>

Disseminating the truth is not the responsibility of someone else, but it is your responsibility and mine to see that the gospel of Jesus Christ in its purity is taught to the children of men. Doesn't it make you feel grateful?<sup>8</sup>

There is great opportunity for every one of us. I would like to emphasize individual missionary work by each of us among our neighbors. We will be surprised, if we do our best, how many will be interested, and not only will they be grateful to us because of our bringing to them the truth, and opening their eyes to the glories and the blessings that our Heavenly Father has prepared, but they will love us and be grateful to us throughout the ages of eternity.

There are so many things that the Lord has bestowed upon us that other people have not yet received. Surely we are not going to be selfish. There should be in our hearts a desire to share with every other soul as far as possible the joyous truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup>

So, as we go forward, each of us, each having an influence with our neighbors and our friends, let us not be too timid. We do not need to annoy people, but let us make them feel and understand that we are interested, not in making them members of the Church for membership, but in bringing them into the Church that they may enjoy the same blessings that we enjoy.<sup>10</sup> [See suggestion 2 on page 145.]

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**If we are living exemplary lives, our influence may encourage others to learn about the gospel.**

Remember, we all have responsibilities. We may not be called to some definite duty, but in every neighborhood there is opportunity for each of us to radiate a spirit of peace and love and happiness to the end that people may understand the gospel and be gathered into the fold.<sup>11</sup>

Only a few days ago, one of our sisters, visiting in the east, in a conversation with an educated man, was told by him, "I cannot believe as you do but I wish that I could. It is beautiful." And so it is with many of our Father's children, who, observing the character of this work, watching the actions of the men and women who have embraced the truth, they are filled with amazement at what has been accomplished, and the peace and happiness that follows the sincere believer, and wish that they too might have part in it; and they could if they had faith.<sup>12</sup>



*“In every neighborhood there is opportunity for each of us to radiate a spirit of peace and love and happiness.”*

I have often observed, and I think most of you who have had missionary experience will bear me out, that no good man or woman can come under the influence of the faithful members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and withhold their commendations of what they observe while with us. When they leave us, sometimes it is different, but while they are under that influence that comes from the Lord, possessed by His servants, who are serving him, they are usually pleased to commend what they have seen and felt.<sup>13</sup>

The adversary has used his strongest efforts to prevent the spread of the truths of the gospel. And it is your duty and mine, by tact and brotherly love and faith, to overcome the prejudice that the adversary has sown in the hearts of our Father’s children, to break down the false impressions that exist in some cases even in the minds of good men and good women, and to teach them the gospel of our

Lord, that it is the power of God unto salvation unto all those who believe and obey it.<sup>14</sup>

I think this great organization we belong to ought to be able to set such an example that people in our neighborhoods, not members of the Church, seeing our good works, would be constrained to glorify the name of our Heavenly Father. That is the way I feel with regard to that. All that we need to do is to set an example, be good men and good women, and they will observe it. Then perhaps they will afford us the opportunity to teach them the things that they do not know.<sup>15</sup>

If we, as members of the Church, were keeping the commandments of God, if we put upon the truth the value that we ought, if our lives conformed to the beauties of its teachings, so that our neighbors, observing our conduct, would be constrained to seek after the truth, we would be doing splendid missionary work.<sup>16</sup> [See suggestion 3 on page 145.]

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**We participate in missionary work by helping prepare future missionaries and by supporting them on their missions.**

It is not only our mission to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and live it, but it is our mission to send into the world our sons and daughters as they are called upon from time to time to labor in the ministry of the Church. As they go they should have been so trained that they would be adamant against the temptations of the adversary; they should be as pure and virtuous and righteous in their lives as it is possible to be, and then the influence of their very presence will be felt by those whom they contact. The Spirit of God will not dwell in unclean tabernacles, but his Spirit will dwell with those who keep themselves clean and sweet.

Therefore, let us [rear] our boys and girls under the influence of the Spirit of God.<sup>17</sup>

Don't let your children grow up without teaching them the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Don't wait to send them into the mission field to learn what the gospel means. I remember when I was in the South [as a missionary] fifty-five or sixty years ago, a

man who came from a large family said, "I don't know what to say. I don't know what to tell these people."

"Why," one of the brethren said, "teach them the Bible. Go and get your Bible and read Genesis." He said, "I don't know where Genesis is in the Bible," and yet he had gone from a . . . Latter-day Saint home to carry the message of life and salvation to those people in the South. However, it was not very long after that until his mind was changed. He had received a testimony of the truth through study and prayer, and he knew that the gospel was here, and he was able to stand on his feet and freely bear testimony that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the truth.<sup>18</sup>

I am impressed with the importance of preparing for the work. It is not sufficient merely that a boy signify his desire, because of his confidence in his parents, to do what they would have him do, go into the world and preach the gospel; it is not sufficient that he answer the calls that our Heavenly Father makes from time to time through his servants for mission service; but it is also necessary that he qualify for the work, search the scriptures, and learn what the Lord would have him know. It is important that our sons and daughters become established in their faith and know as their parents know, that this is our Father's work. . . .

A dozen men qualified for the work are worth more in the mission field than a hundred who are ignorant of the truth and who themselves have to be taught before they are capable of explaining it to others.

This is our Father's work and is not to be trifled with. It is of the utmost importance to us. Let us . . . endeavor to establish faith in our children, that they may be willing to respond to every call, and feel in the depths of their souls to say, "I am ready to go wherever my Heavenly Father desires me to go."<sup>19</sup> [See suggestion 4 on page 145.]

A plea has been made . . . that we send our sons and daughters into the mission field. . . . It has been a joy to me to see men and women economize and plan in order that their children may go into the world. Within the last few weeks a young man . . . left to go into the mission field, and his two sisters . . . are sending him part of

their small salaries that he may enjoy the blessing of a mission. He is the first of a large family of children to go into the mission field to disseminate the truth. . . . I know the joy that will come into the hearts of those two fine women who have faith to give their means to their brother in order that he may serve the Lord in the field. They will receive the blessing that comes from teaching the Gospel, as far as it is possible to receive it without personal service.<sup>20</sup>

I am thinking . . . of our representatives in the missionary field, scattered throughout the different sections of this country and in some foreign lands. Pray for them, brethren and sisters. They need the help of the Lord and they need our faith and prayers. Write to them and encourage them, that when they get a letter from home they will know that they are remembered all the time.<sup>21</sup>

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**We participate in missionary work by preparing  
to serve missions ourselves.**

It will not be long until there will be a demand for capable men and women in this Church to teach the truth in portions of the earth where heretofore we have been excluded: and if we would have eternal joy in the kingdom of our Father with those he has blessed us with here, let us be unselfish in our lives: let us prepare for the work, and go out into the world and proclaim the truth, when the opportunity comes, and be the means in the hands of our Father of drawing his children back to him by teaching them the beauties of his gospel.<sup>22</sup>

Only a few years ago many of my friends were well-to-do, they had the necessities of life, and many of the luxuries, and when it was intimated that they might go into the mission field some of them would say: "I can not leave my business, I can not get along if I go off and leave what I have." But their business has gone off and left them. The things that they thought they could not get along without have disappeared from their control, and many of these very men today would be happy if they could go back ten years, and if they were then called to go into the service of the Lord, they could say: "I will adjust my affairs, I am happy at the opportunity that is offered me to be a minister of life and salvation."





*“There are in this Church thousands of men and women who are capable of teaching the gospel and who can become more capable by doing their duty in the mission field.”*

. . . Think of our opportunities and privileges, to be able to sit down in homes of the honorable men of the world and teach them the Gospel of Jesus Christ; think what it might mean to sit down with men who do not possess divine authority, and teach them the plan of salvation and explain to them the manner by which they too may enjoy the blessings of divine authority which you enjoy.

I feel that some of us are selfish. We are so glad to enjoy our blessings, we are so happy to be surrounded by the comforts of life and to have the association of the best men and women that can be found in the world, that we forget our duty to others. How happy we could be if we would strive to be more potent for good in the world by ministering to those who have not yet understood the Gospel of our Lord.

Many of us have passed middle life, many of us are completing our work. The Church needs missionaries in the field. Men who

understand the Gospel and who are willing to give their lives for it if need be, and when I say we need missionaries I mean that the world needs them.<sup>23</sup>

Our missionary field is before us. Our Father's sons and daughters need us. . . . There are in this Church thousands of men and women who are capable of teaching the gospel and who can become more capable by doing their duty in the mission field. They will be blessed with means, sufficient to take them to perform the work that the Lord wants us to perform.<sup>24</sup>

Now that the time is near at hand when the bars will be let down and the barriers overthrown that have been raised to the spread of the gospel, when the sound of the voice of the Lord shall come to you, through his servants, "Prepare to go into the world and preach the gospel," do not do as Jonah did, do not try to hide or run away from your duty; do not make excuses that you do not have the necessary means to go; do not set up foolish things in the way of your vision that will prevent your seeing eternal life in the presence of our Heavenly Father, which can come only by reason of faith and devotion in his cause. Let every man set his house in order; let every man who bears the priesthood, set himself in order, and when the call comes from the servants of the Lord, telling him to go into the world to teach the truth, to warn the children of men, as our Father requires they shall be warned, let no man hide behind some foolish thing, to be swallowed up, if not by a great fish, by the foolish things of the world. [See Jonah 1:1-17.]<sup>25</sup>

It is not an easy task; it is not a pleasant thing, perhaps, to be called out into the world, to leave our dear ones, but I say to you it will purchase for those who are faithful, for those who discharge that obligation as they may be required, peace and happiness beyond all understanding, and will prepare them that, in due time, when life's labor is complete, they will stand in the presence of their Maker, accepted of Him because of what they have done.<sup>26</sup>

I pray that his Spirit may be throughout [the Church], that the love of our Father's children may be in our hearts, that we may sense the importance of our mission in the world, while we are grasping for the things that are not ours, that are only loaned to us as stewards, that we may not forget the priceless gift, the priceless privilege,

within our reach, of teaching the gospel and saving the souls of the children of men.<sup>27</sup> [See suggestion 5 below.]

## Suggestions for Study and Teaching

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

1. Ponder President Smith’s words in “From the Life of George Albert Smith” (pages 135–36). Why do you think he was so optimistic about missionary work in Europe despite the opposition he faced? How can his example help you if your family members or friends decline your invitation to learn about the gospel?
2. Review the first section of teachings (pages 136–38). What methods have you found most effective in your efforts to share the gospel with neighbors and friends?
3. As you read the section that begins on page 138, think about an instance you know of when the example of a Church member has led someone to learn more about the Church. What are some other reasons that living the Church’s standards is so important in missionary work?
4. On pages 140–41, look for things prospective missionaries need to do to prepare spiritually for their missions (see also D&C 4). What can parents do to help their sons and daughters prepare? How can priesthood quorums and Relief Society sisters help?
5. Review the last section of teachings (pages 142–45). What are some of the “foolish things” that might keep us from serving a mission? What are some of the blessings that come through the service of senior missionaries? Ponder what you need to do to prepare yourself for missionary service.

*Related Scriptures:* Matthew 5:14–16; Mark 16:15–16; 1 Timothy 4:12; Alma 17:2–3; Doctrine and Covenants 31:1–8; 38:40–41

*Teaching help:* “When you use a variety of learning activities, learners tend to understand gospel principles better and retain more. A carefully selected method can make a principle clearer, more interesting, and more memorable” (*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 89).

## Notes

1. "New Year's Greeting," *Millennial Star*, Jan. 6, 1921, 2.
2. "Greeting," *Millennial Star*, July 10, 1919, 441.
3. "New Year's Greeting," *Millennial Star*, Jan. 1, 1920, 2.
4. In Conference Report, Oct. 1921, 37–38.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 1950, 159.
6. In Conference Report, Apr. 1916, 46.
7. In Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 50–51.
8. In Conference Report, Oct. 1929, 23.
9. In *Deseret News*, June 25, 1950, Church section, 2.
10. In Conference Report, Apr. 1948, 162.
11. In Conference Report, Apr. 1950, 170.
12. In Conference Report, Oct. 1913, 103.
13. In Conference Report, Apr. 1922, 49.
14. "The Importance of Preparing," *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1948, 139.
15. In Conference Report, Apr. 1941, 26.
16. In Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 49.
17. In Conference Report, Oct. 1932, 25.
18. In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 166.
19. "The Importance of Preparing," 139.
20. In Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 45.
21. In Conference Report, Oct. 1941, 98.
22. In Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 51.
23. In Conference Report, Oct. 1933, 27–28.
24. In Conference Report, Apr. 1946, 125.
25. In Conference Report, June 1919, 44.
26. In Conference Report, Apr. 1922, 53.
27. In Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 51.