



How to Share the Gospel Effectively

Our efforts to share the gospel are most effective if we love our brothers and sisters and have the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

From the Life of George Albert Smith

In his tireless efforts to share the gospel with others, George Albert Smith followed this statement from his personal creed: “I would not seek to force people to live up to my ideals but rather love them into doing the thing that is right.”¹ He felt that the most effective way to share the gospel was to look for the good virtues in people of other faiths and then, with boldness but kindness, offer to share the additional truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. He related the following experience he had while presiding over the European Mission:

“I was riding on the train one day. My companion in the compartment was a Presbyterian minister, a very pleasant, fine gentleman, and when he gave me the opportunity to do so, I told him I was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was amazed and he looked at me with astonishment. He said, ‘Aren’t you ashamed of yourself to belong to such a group?’

“I smiled at him and said, ‘My brother, I would be ashamed of myself not to belong to that group, knowing what I know.’ Then that gave me the opportunity I desired to talk to him and explain to him some of the things we believe. . . .

“There was a good man who had no conception of what we were trying to do. We were not there to give him sorrow nor distress; we were trying to help him. And as we talked the situation through I said to him: ‘You have a misconception of the purpose of the Church



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of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in this land. I am here as one of its representatives, and if you will just let me tell you a few things, I think you will feel better towards us.’ I said, ‘First of all, we are asking all you fine people over here to keep all the glorious truths that you have acquired in your churches, that you have absorbed from your scriptures, keep all that, keep all the fine training that you have received in your educational institutions, all the knowledge and truth that you have gained from every source, keep . . . everything that is good in your character that has come to you as a result of your lovely home; keep all the love and the beauty that is in your heart from having lived in so beautiful and wonderful a land. . . . That is all a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Then let us sit down and share with you some of the things that have not yet come into your lives that have enriched our lives and made us happy. We offer it to you without money and without price. All we ask you to do is hear what we have to say, and if it appeals to you, accept it freely. . . .’

“That is the attitude of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”² [See suggestion 1 on page 155.]

Teachings of George Albert Smith

Missionary work is most effective when we do it with love and kindness, not coercion or criticism.

Our Heavenly Father . . . has sent us, his representatives, into the world, not to drive or coerce, but to invite. “Come follow me,” is what the Savior said, “And I will give you peace.” That is what the Gospel teaches, and that is our ministry.³

It is not the purpose of this Church to make statements that would hurt the feelings of those who do not understand things. This Church is not one that goes about criticising and finding fault with others, but in the spirit of loving kindness and the desire to be helpful, its representatives carry the Gospel message to the nations of the earth.⁴

In all . . . churches there are good men and good women. It is the good that is in these various denominations that holds them together. It has been my privilege to be with people in many parts of the world and to be in the homes of many people of the various denominations of the world, both Christian and Jew. I have been with the [Muslims]; I have been with those who believe in Confucius; and I might mention a good many others. I have found wonderful people in all these organizations, and I have the tremendous responsibility wherever I go among them, that I shall not offend them, not hurt their feelings, not criticize them, because they do not understand the truth.

As representatives of the Church we have the responsibility to go among them with love, as servants of the Lord, as representatives of the Master of heaven and earth. They may not altogether appreciate that; they may resent that as being egotistical and unfair, but that would not change my attitude. I am not going to make them unhappy if I can help it. I would like to make them happy, especially when I think of the marvelous opportunities that have come to me because of membership in this blessed Church.⁵

Our ministry is one of love and forbearance, and we desire to do good to all, and to assist all to understand the plan of life and salvation that the Lord revealed in this latter day.⁶

We cannot drive these young people, and our neighbors and friends into the kingdom of heaven by scolding them and finding fault with them, but I want to tell you that we can love them into the direction of our Father in heaven, and by and by, perhaps, lead them there too.

That is our privilege. Love is the great power to influence this world.⁷

Let us who know, those of us who have a testimony, go forth day by day and with love and kindness unfeigned go among these men and women, whether they be in the Church or out of the Church, and find a way to touch their hearts and lead them into that pathway that will insure them a knowledge of the truth.⁸

How I pray that we as the servants of the Lord may have charity for mankind, may have patience with those who err, and in kindness and love go forward teaching the simple principles of the gospel of our Lord to the blessing of every soul with whom we come in contact.⁹ [See suggestion 2 on page 155.]

**We need not be ashamed in sharing what
we know to be true.**

I feel sometimes that we do not sufficiently sense the importance of [the gospel], that we do not teach it with the earnestness it demands.¹⁰

This gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation, as the Apostle Paul declared [see Romans 1:16]. It is the Redeemer's work. It is the only way whereby we may attain the highest exaltation that the Savior of mankind intended that those who followed him should enjoy. I do not say that egotistically, I say it with charity for our Father's children who belong to other churches. I say it with love for his sons and daughters who do not understand, but he has commanded that we should say this thing. It is his will that people should know.¹¹

I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the Lord. I have never been anywhere that I have been ashamed to testify to these truths. I do not know why a man should be ashamed of knowing the truth because somebody else does not know it, especially when it pertains to the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation.¹²

It should not be considered boastful if we know the truth for us so to express ourselves. It should not be considered egotistical so far as we are concerned if we can say to our Father's other children: "This I know, and you too may know it if you desire."

That is the beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not for a few individuals, but it is for every soul that is born into the world to know. . . . Today there are those who know that God lives, and there are thousands of others who could know it if they would. . . . These people are not dependent upon us to know, but they are dependent upon us to teach them how they may know.¹³

I know that our Heavenly Father has spoken in this day and age of the world, that his Gospel is upon the earth, and while I would not compel any soul to accept it, I pray that we may have power and wisdom and strength to reach out after these neighbors of ours who do not understand the truth. Let us do our duty, and draw them into the fold of the Master, that they, with us, may know that he lives.¹⁴ [See suggestion 3 on page 155.]

**We seek to add to the happiness and goodness
that God's children already possess.**

When [people] have asked me, "What is there about this organization that you belong to? What is it that you are so concerned about, that you send your missionaries all over the world?" I have replied sometimes, "We want you all to be happy. We want you all to rejoice as we rejoice."¹⁵

Thousands upon thousands of missionaries . . . have gone out into the world, and in love and kindness they have gone from door to door saying to our Father's other children:

"Let us reason with you; let us explain to you something that we are sure will make you happy as it has made us happy!"

That is the history of the missionary work of the Church with which we are identified.¹⁶

I remember, upon one occasion, a man said to me, after we had talked some time, "Well, from all I can learn, your church is just as good as any other church." I presume he thought he was paying us a great compliment; but I said to him: "If the Church I represent here is not of more importance to the children of men than any other church, then I am mistaken in my duty here. We have come not to take away from you the truth and virtue you possess. We have not come to find fault with you or to criticize you. . . . Keep all the good that you have, and let us bring to you more good, in order that you may be happier and in order that you may be prepared to enter into the presence of our Heavenly Father." [See suggestion 4 on page 155.]

. . . In the time that the Savior was on earth, in the meridian of time, there were other churches; there were numerous denominations and sects, and they believed that they were serving the Lord. The great synagogues of Judea were filled with men who believed they had the authority of the priesthood. They had been following the teachings, as they thought, of Abraham and Moses. They continued to proclaim the coming of the Savior of the world. They had encouraged men and women to works of righteousness. They had builded a temple, and houses of worship. They had erected monuments to the prophets who had borne testimony of the existence of God, and some of whom had been slain and had sealed their testimony with their life's blood. These were the people to whom the Savior came. . . . There was much good in them. There were many good men and women among them. There was much righteousness among that people. The Savior did not come to take away any of those good things from them. When he appeared among them it was not to condemn them, but it was to call them to repentance, it was to call them from their error and to encourage them to retain all the truth that they possessed.

. . . When we proclaim to the human family, as we do, that man has apostatized from the gospel, we are not proclaiming something that has not occurred in the world before. When we say good men and women have been led to do and believe things that are not

correct, we do not say that in condemnation, we do not speak with a desire to wound, but we speak with a desire that men may pause sufficiently long to examine themselves, to see where they are going and what will be their final destiny.¹⁷

Oh! that we might be able to give mankind an understanding of our feelings, that they might realize that we do not desire to curtail their opportunities, but that they might feel that our hearts reach out to them in love and kindness, not with any desire to hurt. Our mission in the world is to save souls, to bless them, and to place them in a condition that they may go back into the presence of our Father, crowned with glory, immortality, and eternal life.¹⁸

**If we teach with the Holy Ghost, He will bear witness
of the truth to those we teach.**

Missionaries have been sent to the four corners of the earth by this Church and they have proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many have not had training in the great universities of the world. Their education has been largely limited to the practical experiences of life, but they have had what is more potent in inspiring the human family, the companionship of the Holy Ghost.¹⁹

As I go to and fro in the mission field I see the development of these fine young men and women who are unselfishly serving, and realize that not only do they learn the language of the countries in which they labor, but they know that they have a gift from the Lord to disseminate a truth that the people may not obtain in any other way.²⁰

Many of you or your forebears have heard the gospel as it has been taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . . Sometimes you have heard it on the street where there was a humble missionary, teaching what the Lord had called him to teach.

There was something that touched the hearts of those who heard. I have had experiences in the mission field. I have seen groups of people stand and listen to a humble missionary explain the purpose of life and talk to the people and encourage them to repent of their sins, and I have sometimes heard people say, "I have never before felt an influence like I feel while I hear that man talk."²¹



“Let us labor day by day that our Father may bless us. If we have His Holy Spirit, the people with whom we come in contact will feel it.”

No matter how gifted we may be, or how choice our language, it is the Spirit of our Father that reaches the heart and brings conviction of the divinity of this work.²²

This is the Lord’s work. Men could not have carried it forward successfully as it has been done by the simple means employed by us. Ordinary man could not have brought into your souls the knowledge that you possess. Neither can we as men inspire those in the world with the assurance that God lives and that this is his Church, but if we will do our part, our Heavenly Father will bless our effort.²³

Let us labor day by day that our Father may bless us. If we have His Holy Spirit, the people with whom we come in contact will feel it, because it will permeate the atmosphere in which we live, and they will partake of it and drink it in.²⁴

There are only a few comparatively who have accepted the gospel as it has been revealed in the latter day; but there are millions

of our Father's children who are desirous of knowing His will; and when the truth shall be brought to them, and the convincing influence of the Spirit shall bear witness of the truth to them, they will rejoice in accepting it.²⁵ [See suggestion 5 below.]

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. Study the last two paragraphs of “From the Life of George Albert Smith” (pages 147–49). Think of someone you know who is not a member of the Church. What qualities do you admire in this person? What truths of the gospel does he or she already believe? What additional gospel truths would be especially helpful to him or her? How does thinking about people in this way affect the way we share the gospel with them?
2. As you read the first section of teachings (pages 149–50), think about a time when you were influenced for good by the love someone showed for you. Why is it so important to avoid being critical of those whose beliefs differ from ours?
3. Read the section that begins on page 150. What does it mean to share the gospel with “earnestness”? How can we share our testimonies of the restored gospel without sounding boastful or egotistical?
4. What do you think President Smith meant when he said, “If the Church I represent here is not of more importance to the children of men than any other church, then I am mistaken in my duty here”? (page 152). What does the Church of Jesus Christ offer that can add to the happiness in a person's life?
5. As you read the last section of teachings (pages 153–55), think about an experience you have had in which you shared the gospel with someone. What made the experience successful? What can you do to improve in your efforts to share the gospel?

Related Scriptures: John 13:34–35; 2 Timothy 1:7–8; 2 Nephi 33:1; Alma 20:26–27; Doctrine and Covenants 50:13–22

Teaching help: Consider dividing class members into small groups of three to five individuals. Designate a leader in each group. Assign each group a different section. Ask them to read as a group their section and discuss the corresponding questions at the end of the chapter. Then have class members share with the entire class what they learned in their groups. (See *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 161.)

Notes

1. "President George Albert Smith's Creed," *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1950, 262.
2. *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, sel. Preston Nibley (1948), 199–201; address given Nov. 4, 1945, in Washington, D.C.
3. In Conference Report, Oct. 1930, 67–68.
4. In Conference Report, Oct. 1931, 120.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 1945, 168.
6. In Conference Report, Oct. 1927, 47.
7. In Conference Report, Apr. 1950, 187.
8. In Conference Report, Apr. 1934, 30.
9. In Conference Report, Oct. 1928, 94.
10. In Conference Report, Apr. 1916, 47.
11. In Conference Report, Oct. 1927, 48.
12. "At This Season," *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1949, 801, 831.
13. "Opportunities for Leadership," *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1949, 557, 603–4.
14. In Conference Report, Oct. 1930, 69.
15. In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 7.
16. In Conference Report, Oct. 1946, 5.
17. In *Deseret News*, Aug. 20, 1921, Church section, 7.
18. In Conference Report, Oct. 1904, 66.
19. In Conference Report, Apr. 1940, 85.
20. In Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 45.
21. In Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 7.
22. In Conference Report, Oct. 1904, 66.
23. In Conference Report, Oct. 1929, 25.
24. In Conference Report, Oct. 1906, 50–51.
25. In *Deseret News*, Jan. 12, 1907, 31.