

Go Ye Therefore

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We can all participate in missionary work. This is the Lord's work, and He will help us do it.



The Lord taught that “except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”¹ Baptism is, therefore, essential for our salvation.

Before the resurrected Savior ascended to heaven, He instructed His disciples, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”²

At the time of the Restoration, He repeated His mandate: “Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.”³

The Lord’s Church has the responsibility to preach the gospel in the world. This is the foundation of missionary work, and the duty of our missionaries is to “invite others to come

unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”⁴

I would like to speak and testify of the significant impact and the blessings of missionary work in the lives of converts, future generations, and missionaries and of how we can participate in missionary work.

When I was 14 years old, on a beautiful August morning, Elder Prina and Elder Perkins knocked at our door. They began teaching our family about the true nature of God. In the visits that followed, they taught us how to pray. They also taught us about the Restoration and the plan of salvation. After the third or fourth visit, most of my family stopped listening to the missionaries, except for my 17-year-old sister, Dina, and me. We both felt the witness of the Holy Ghost in our hearts and received the spiritual confirmation that the message was true.

We bought a copy of the Book of Mormon and began reading it. Every day after school, we would race home to get to the book first. While the first one home was reading, the other one impatiently waited until mealtime, ate in a hurry, and then took her turn reading until bedtime. Such was the excitement we felt. We started attending church, and soon we asked to be baptized. Our father readily gave his



Full-time missionaries in Rome, Italy, invite others to come unto Christ with the Book of Mormon.

permission, but our mother was hesitant, and it took one more month to persuade her to sign the permission slip. On the day of our baptism, she and the rest of our siblings went to church for the first time. She felt the Spirit. After hearing our testimonies, she went to the missionaries and asked them to start teaching her again. A few weeks later, Mother and our younger sister and brothers were baptized. My life changed forever, and the gospel of Jesus Christ became the compelling force in my life.

Words fail to express the deep feelings of gratitude for the Lord and the missionaries He sent to our home. The Lord blessed me with the knowledge of the restored gospel, and I felt an urgency to share this knowledge with others. I wanted to be a missionary.

Within months, my sister Dina and I were called as local missionaries in San Salvador. This calling gave us the opportunity to go door to door to share the glad news of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and bring many people to the waters of baptism. In

due time, we both served full-time missions in the Central America Mission.

My mission had a great impact on my life. I learned to rely more on the Lord, to seek the guidance of the Spirit, and to feel an overwhelming love for God's children. My knowledge of the scriptures and my understanding of the doctrines increased. So did my desire to be obedient and to keep the commandments with exactness. My testimony of the Savior and His infinite Atonement was strengthened. My missionary experiences became part of who and what I am. Missionary work became my passion. It has impacted my life and that of my family more than anything else.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland describes the impact his mission has had in his life with these words: "My mission means everything to me 47 years after the fact. There may have been one day in those 47 years that I have not thought of my mission; I'm just not sure what day that would have been."⁵

A couple of years ago, my grandson Christian was turning eight and

planning his baptismal service with great anticipation. He asked his mother if I could be one of the speakers and share my conversion story. When I asked him why he wanted me to do that, he replied, "Grandma, that is so important. Do you realize that if you hadn't accepted the gospel, I wouldn't be getting baptized? I wouldn't even be who I am."

I don't know if missionaries realize the far-reaching impact of their work. In my own family, the blessings of the gospel have now touched four generations. Didn't President Gordon B. Hinckley say that "when we save a girl, we save generations"?⁶ I got married in the temple and have eight children. They are all faithful members of the Church, endowed in the temple. Six of them are now married and have their own children. At present there are 34 of us. And that is not all. Both my husband and I served missions, and our two sons and three of our six daughters have also served missions. Collectively we have helped hundreds embrace the gospel in many countries.



A missionary couple shares a message in Nigeria.

Some of those converts and their children have also served missions.

Missionary work is the lifeblood of the Church. There is no greater work, no more important work. It blesses the lives of all those who participate in it. It will continue blessing future generations.

You might be asking yourself: How can I assist in missionary work? In what ways can I participate? There are two fundamental truths to keep in mind as you embark on the work. First, have a clear understanding that God loves all His children and desires their salvation. In Doctrine and Covenants 18:13 we read, “And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth.” Second, our message of Christ and His restored gospel is the most important gift you have to give.

As outlined in *Preach My Gospel*, missionary work is a four-fold endeavor: finding investigators, teaching and baptizing, fellowshiping new members, and fellowshiping and teaching less-active members.⁷ Every member of the Church—children, youth, and adults—can assist in any or all of these efforts.

Begin by being a good neighbor and a good friend. Set an example of righteousness and kindness. Let your

smile radiate love, peace, and happiness. Live a gospel-centered life.

Then, be more specific in your missionary efforts. Let me suggest some ideas. You might find two or three that work for you:

- If you have children at home, help prepare them for missionary service.
- Prepare yourself for missionary service.
- Invite family and friends to listen to the missionaries or to attend our Church meetings and activities.
- Accompany the missionaries to investigators’ homes, or invite the missionaries to teach nonmembers in your home.
- Invite people to a family home evening in your home.
- Invite people to a family history center, or help them do family history research.
- Give referrals to the missionaries. Members can be the greatest and best source of referrals.
- Share your beliefs and testimony with nonmember friends and family.
- Seek for opportunities to reach out to others.
- Extend friendship to investigators and new converts.

- Give your best efforts to finding those who are seeking the truth.
- If you have family members or friends on missions, send them letters of love and encouragement, and pray for them.

You will experience joy in the fruits of your labor. A greater enthusiasm for missionary work will strengthen your entire ward or branch. The whole Church will feel the effects of your labor.

When our daughter Margie was in the second grade, she invited her best friend to go with her to Primary. Both were assigned parts for the sacrament meeting presentation. Her friend’s father had rejected the missionaries in the past, but when Margie showed up in his house with a handful of Church pamphlets, he listened carefully to her simple explanations and testimony of Joseph Smith and the First Vision. He not only allowed his daughter to continue going to Primary but also gave her permission to receive the lessons from the missionaries and be baptized. He and his wife attended the baptismal service.

We can all participate in missionary work. This is the Lord’s work, and He will help us do it. His gospel has to go to every nation, and we can be instruments in His hands to bless the lives of others by sharing with them His truth. We will be greatly blessed in the process.

We are the children of a loving Heavenly Father. He sent His Son to open the way so we can live with Him forever. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. John 3:5.
2. Matthew 28:19–20.
3. D&C 18:14.
4. *Preach My Gospel* (2004), 1.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Atonement” (seminar for new mission presidents, June 26, 2007), 1.
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Our Responsibility to Our Young Women,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1988, 10.
7. See *Preach My Gospel*, 219.