

# Missionary Work

## Chapter 33

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### **The Lord's Church Is a Missionary Church**

- In what ways is missionary work part of God's plan for His children?

The Lord revealed the gospel plan to Adam: "And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning" (Moses 5:58). Later, Adam's righteous descendants were sent to preach the gospel: "They . . . called upon all men, everywhere, to repent; and faith was taught unto the children of men" (Moses 6:23).

All the prophets have been missionaries. Each in his day was commanded to preach the gospel message. Whenever the priesthood has been on the earth, the Lord has needed missionaries to preach the eternal principles of the gospel to His children.

The Lord's Church has always been a missionary church. When the Savior lived on the earth, He ordained Apostles and Seventies and gave them the authority and responsibility to preach the gospel. Most of their preaching was to their own people, the Jews (see Matthew 10:5–6). After Jesus was resurrected, He sent Apostles to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. He commanded the Apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

The Apostle Paul was a great missionary sent to the Gentiles. After he was converted to the Church, he spent the remainder of his life preaching the gospel to them. At different times during his mission he was whipped, stoned, and imprisoned. Yet he continued to preach the gospel (see Acts 23:10–12; 26).

Missionary work began again when the Lord's Church was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Today the Apostles

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**For teachers:** Sharing experiences with gospel principles can invite the Spirit. You may want to contact a few class members or family members in advance, asking them to prepare to share experiences that are meaningful to them and that may help others.



and Seventies have been given the chief responsibility for preaching the gospel and seeing that it is preached in all the world. The Lord told Joseph Smith: “Proclaim my gospel from land to land, and from city to city. . . . Bear testimony in every place, unto every people” (D&C 66:5, 7). In June 1830, Samuel Harrison Smith, the Prophet’s brother, began the first missionary journey for the Church.

Since that time, over one million missionaries have been called and sent forth to preach the gospel. The message they take to the world is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Savior. They testify that the gospel has been restored to the earth through a prophet of God. The missionaries are given the responsibility to preach the gospel to all people, to baptize them, and to teach them to do all things that the Lord has commanded (see Matthew 28:19–20). Latter-day Saint missionaries go at their own expense to all parts of the world to preach the gospel message.

### **The Gospel Will Be Preached to All the World**

- What are some different ways the Lord has prepared for us to share the gospel?

We have been told in latter-day revelation that we must take the restored gospel to every nation and people (see D&C 133:37). The Lord never gives us a commandment without preparing a way for us to accomplish it (see 1 Nephi 3:7). The Lord has prepared ways for us to teach the gospel in nations that were once closed to us. As we continue to pray and exercise faith, the Lord will open other nations to missionary work.

The Lord is also “inspiring the minds of great people to create inventions that further the work of the Lord in ways this world has never known” (Russell M. Nelson, in “Computerized Scriptures Now Available,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1988, 73). Newspapers, magazines, television, radio, satellites, computers, the Internet, and related technology help give the gospel message to millions of people. We who have the fulness of the gospel need to use these inventions to fulfill the Lord’s commandment: “For, verily, the sound must go forth from this place

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into all the world, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth—the gospel must be preached unto every [person]” (D&C 58:64).

- In what ways have you seen technology used effectively to share the gospel?

### **Missionary Work Is Important**

- Why is it important for each person to hear and understand the gospel?

“This is our first interest as a Church—to save and exalt the souls of the children of men” (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 151; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 104). Missionary work is necessary in order to give the people of the world an opportunity to hear and accept the gospel. They need to learn the truth, turn to God, and receive forgiveness from their sins.

Many of our brothers and sisters on earth are blinded by false teachings and “are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it” (D&C 123:12). Through missionary work we can bring them the truth.

The Lord has commanded, “Labor ye in my vineyard for the last time—for the last time call upon the inhabitants of the earth” (D&C 43:28). As we teach the gospel to our brothers and sisters, we are preparing the way for the Second Coming of the Savior (see D&C 34:6).

### **We Should All Be Missionaries**

- In what ways can we actively seek opportunities to share the gospel with others? In what ways can we prepare ourselves for such opportunities?

Every member of the Church is a missionary. We should be missionaries even if we are not formally called and set apart. We are responsible to teach the gospel by word and deed to all of our Heavenly Father’s children. The Lord has told us, “It becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor” (D&C 88:81). We have been told by a prophet that we should show our neighbors that we love them before we warn them (see *Teachings*

*of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 262). They need to experience our friendship and fellowship.

The sons of Mosiah willingly accepted their responsibility to teach the gospel. When they were converted to the Church, their hearts were filled with compassion for others. They wanted to preach the gospel to their enemies the Lamanites, “for they could not bear that any human soul should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble” (Mosiah 28:3). As the gospel fills our lives with joy, we will feel this kind of love and compassion for our brothers and sisters. We will want to share the message of the gospel with everyone who desires to listen.

There are many ways we can share the gospel. Following are some suggestions:

1. We can show friends and others the joy we experience from living the truths of the gospel. In this way we will be a light to the world (see Matthew 5:16).
  2. We can overcome our natural shyness by being friendly to others and doing kind things for them. We can help them see that we are sincerely interested in them and are not seeking personal gain.
  3. We can explain the gospel to nonmember friends and others.
  4. We can invite friends who are interested in learning more about the gospel into our homes to be taught by the missionaries. If our nonmember friends live too far away, we can request that missionaries in their areas visit them.
  5. We can teach our children the importance of sharing the gospel, and we can prepare them spiritually and financially to go on missions. We can also prepare ourselves to serve full-time missions in our senior years.
  6. We can pay our tithing and contribute to the missionary fund. These donations are used for furthering missionary work.
  7. We can contribute to the ward, branch, or general missionary fund to give financial support to missionaries whose families are unable to support them.
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8. We can do family history research and temple work to help our ancestors receive the full blessings of the gospel.
9. We can invite nonmembers to activities such as family home evenings and Church socials, conferences, and meetings.
10. We can give copies of Church magazines. We can also share gospel messages by using features available on the Church's official Internet sites, LDS.org and Mormon.org.

Our Heavenly Father will help us be effective missionaries when we have the desire to share the gospel and pray for guidance. He will help us find ways to share the gospel with those around us.

- Think about people you can share the gospel with. Decide how you will do so. Consider setting a goal to share the gospel with these people by a certain date.

### **The Lord Promises Us Blessings for Doing Missionary Work**

The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith that missionaries would receive great blessings. Speaking to elders who were returning from their missions, the Lord said, "Ye are blessed, for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you" (D&C 62:3). He has also said that those who work for the salvation of others will have their sins forgiven and will bring salvation to their own souls (see D&C 4:4; 31:5; 84:61).

The Lord has told us:

"If it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:15–16).

- When have you experienced the joy of missionary work?

### **Additional Scriptures**

- D&C 1:17–23 (Joseph Smith commanded to preach)
- D&C 24:12 (Lord strengthens those who always seek to declare His gospel)
- D&C 38:41 (share the gospel in mildness and meekness)
- D&C 34:4–6; Acts 5:42 (gospel to be preached)
- D&C 60:1–2 (Lord warns those who are afraid to preach the gospel)
- D&C 75:2–5 (those who declare the gospel and are faithful will be blessed with eternal life)
- D&C 88:81–82 (all those who have been warned should warn their neighbors)
- Matthew 24:14 (gospel to be preached before the end shall come)
- Abraham 2:9–11 (gospel and priesthood to be given to all nations)