

# George Albert Smith

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President of the Church, 1945–51

George Albert Smith was the fourth generation of his family to serve as a General Authority. He and his father, John Henry Smith, served in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the same time—the only time in Church history for this to occur.

He developed a creed that included the following ideals: “I would be a friend to the friendless and find joy in ministering to the needs of the poor. . . . I would not seek to force people to live up to my ideals but rather love them into doing the thing that is right. . . . I would not knowingly wound the feeling of any, not even one who may have wronged me, but would seek to do him good and make him my friend. . . . I would not be an enemy to any living soul” (quoted in Bryant S. Hinckley, “Greatness in Men: Superintendent George Albert Smith,” *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1932, 295).

He served the youth of the Church as superintendent of the YMMIA for over a decade and as a member of the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America.

He repeated many times these words of his grandfather George A. Smith, for whom he was named: “There is a line of demarcation, well defined, between the Lord’s territory and the devil’s. If you will stay on the Lord’s side of the line you will be under his influence and will have no desire to do wrong; but if you cross to

the devil’s side of the line one inch, you are in the tempter’s power, and if he is successful, you will not be able to think or even reason properly, because you will have lost the spirit of the Lord” (*Sharing the Gospel with Others*, sel. Preston Nibley [1948], 42–43).

1870 Born on April 4 to John Henry Smith and Sarah Farr Smith in Salt Lake City

1878 Age 8, baptized in City Creek, Salt Lake City

1892 Age 22, marries Lucy Emily Woodruff; she dies in 1937

1892–94 Ages 22–24, serves a mission to the southern United States, where Lucy joins him in the work

1903 Age 33, ordained an Apostle by President Joseph F. Smith on October 8

1919–21 Ages 49–51, serves as president of the European Mission

1945 Age 75, sustained as President of the Church on October 5, with J. Reuben Clark Jr. and David O. McKay as counselors; dedicates the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple on September 23; plans the Church’s massive welfare assistance to Europe following World War II

1951 Age 81, dies on April 4, his 81st birthday, in Salt Lake City after six years as President of the Church

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## Summary

George Albert Smith was the eighth President of the Church. His father, grandfather, and great-grandfather also served as General Authorities. He enjoyed Scouting and camping.

He developed a creed that was a guide for his life: “I would be a friend to the friendless. . . . I would not be an enemy to any living soul.”

THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS