
Spread Good Gossip

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,
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Spread good gossip?

Yes, that was one of the twelve principles of Christian leadership I described in a presentation about three months ago. The other principles were good (at least I thought they were good), but it was this one that seemed to provoke people. It gathered more attention when I mentioned it this past Sunday.

Part of the gospel for this past Sunday was Jesus' marvelous kingdom principle: "nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known" (Matthew 10.26). Therefore, Jesus continued, "What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops." (Matthew 10.27).

We are accustomed to gossip being something bad and naughty. Hence, many of us are reminded daily of the dangers of gossip. Stay away from it, we are told. It will kill churches, we are told. Of course, the more we are warned not to traffic in gossip, the more we are attracted to it!

But I do not think Jesus wants us to stay away from gossip in its healthy sense. Wait! Does gossip have a healthy sense? Yes, the roots of the word "gossip" have to do with "good news," and with "gospel" itself. What if our gossip, those sly little things we tell about people and life, were sly little pieces of good news, and not bad news?

In the kingdom of heaven, there will be no secrets. What energy we expend on this earth trying to avoid our secrets, or trying to hide them! By hiding them, we internally give them all that much more power over us. Jesus, however, proclaims that nothing remains hidden in the kingdom; all truth will be open and available.

Of course, the grace of that uncovering is that it will be God doing the uncovering - not one of us doing the uncovering! When God deals with secrets, God redeems them. God even sanctifies them! God uncovers our secrets, always, with amazing grace. With amazing grace, we are freed from the shame of our past; we are redeemed for new life in Christ.

Yes, we are meant to refrain from spreading lies, and we are meant to refrain from uncovering the shame of folks without grace. But we are meant, positively, to spread good gossip, to spread good news.

Leadership of any organization or family or system, is about learning the channels of conversation within that system, and then delivering the right information into those channels. If we are exasperated with what the gossip circuits are saying about us, or about someone we care about, then it is up to us to insert the right information into that communication channel. Spread good gossip!

Jesus certainly did not mind people passing on what he said to them. In fact, he commanded it. "What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops!" What we learn in secret need not be a bad thing at all. Spread the good gossip; let somebody know something good about another person. Let the bad gossip die on the vine.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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