

CLOSED
COMMUNION

**A Response to Believers
of Administering Open Communion**

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I appreciate the help of Brother Joseph Lovalvo, who made some relevant suggestions and pointed out some pertinent Scripture in defense of *Closed Communion*.

Brother V. James Lovalvo

Preface

This short article is written to support the administering of *Closed Communion* by The Church of Jesus Christ and attest to its truth by quoting passages of Scripture in the Bible and Book of Mormon. It is also a vehicle to prove that *Open Communion* cannot be scripturally substantiated. Many churches have adopted this procedure as an accommodation, in fear of offending visitors.

During the past sixty-two years, I have asked several visitors to The Church of Jesus Christ, if not being permitted to partake of the Sacrament offended them. Only one of those asked took offense. The others respected the Church's custom.

A Response to Those Who Believe in Administering Open Communion

The Church of Jesus Christ has adopted *Closed Communion* as an ordinance taken from the Scriptures in the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

There are some that say that The Church of Jesus Christ should abolish *Closed Communion*, because many nonmembers (visitors) feel offended at being deprived of the Lord's Supper and, of a consequence, never return. To those who believe that *Open Communion* should be instituted, please answer the following questions:

1. If you say that the Church has lost many non-members because of *Closed Communion*, how many has it lost?
2. If some members of another Christian faith would want to become members of The Church of Jesus Christ without being baptized by its Priesthood, would you accept them?
3. If yes, then you are acknowledging that other churches have authority equal to The Church of Jesus Christ, thereby denying its profession of "sole authority."
4. If the answer is no, then you are judging the non-member of not being worthy of partaking the Lord's Supper because he/she is not baptized by the Priesthood authority of The Church of Jesus Christ. Consequently, your argument in favor of *Open Communion* is invalid.

REGARDING THE ADMINISTERING OF CLOSED COMMUNION

It must be recognized that Jesus Christ could do anything He wanted while He was on earth.

Jesus forgave sins without the person being baptized:

"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house" (Matthew 9:2-6 and Mark 2:5-11).

Jesus Christ saved the thief on the cross without being baptized:

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Christ could forgive sins and save men and women eternally without baptism while He was alive. But as soon as He died on the cross, His commandment that no one could enter or see the kingdom of god went into effect (John 3:1-5).

God gave the Ten Commandments, yet He (through His Spirit) commanded Nephi to kill Laban (1 Nephi 4:10-13). At times, the Lord also commanded Israel to destroy complete cities, killing men, women, children and animals.

God, who gave the law and His Son who gave commandments, can do anything They want because of Their eternal wisdom, knowledge and power. But when They command or give instructions, no person has the authority to change them, no matter what the heart says or how the mind rationalizes. It is written:

"Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?" (Isaiah 29:16).

It is also understood that the reception of the Holy Spirit was by the laying on of hands (Acts 8 and Moroni 2), yet the Lord allowed the Holy Spirit to fall upon Cornelius and his household before they were baptized. God could do anything He wanted, but what He or Jesus Christ commanded or commands, must be obeyed without question.

In the Old Testament, God gave strict commandments regarding a stranger who wanted to live among the Israelites. He could not partake of the ordinances-which were given solely for Israel - unless he was circumcised. This is a type and a shadow that one has to belong to the family of God before being permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper. The following Scriptures support this argument:

Exodus 12:43-45, 48-49

43 And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, this is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof:

44 But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof.

45 A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof.

48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

49 One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.

Exodus 29:31-33

31 And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place.

32 And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

33 And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy.

Leviticus 22:9-10

9 They shall therefore keep mine ordinance, lest they bear sin for it, and die therefore, if they profane it: I the LORD do sanctify them.

10 There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest, or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing.

Leviticus 24:22

22 Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I am the LORD your God.

Numbers 9:14

14 And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

Numbers 15:15-16

15 One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD.

16 One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.

SCRIPTURE TO CONFIRM THAT COMMUNION WAS TO BE GIVEN ONLY TO
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OF MORMON

3 Nephi 18:5-7

5 And when the multitude had eaten and were filled, he said unto the disciples: Behold there shall one be ordained among you, and to him will I give power that he shall break bread and bless it and give it *unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name.*

6 And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread and blessed it and given it unto you.

7 And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

As the Son of God, it was Christ's prerogative to give the Sacrament to the multitude, baptized or not, because He knew that all of them would be baptized soon. He also gave a strict commandment to His disciples, to give the Holy Communion only to baptized members of His Church (as stated above).

MORE SCRIPTURE TO CONFIRM CLOSED COMMUNION

Moroni 4:1-3

1 The manner of their elders and priests administering the flesh and blood of Christ unto the Church; and they administered it according to the commandments of Christ; wherefore we know the manner to be true; and the elder or priest did minister it

2 And they did kneel down with the church, and pray to the Father in the name of Christ, saying:

3 O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it; that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

Acts 2:41-42

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The above passages of Scripture could be misconstrued to mean eating together, and not necessarily the Lord's Supper, but The Church of Jesus Christ believes that the subject matter was the Holy Communion.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Church in Comish admonishes them concerning the Lord's Supper (*Closed Communion*):

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. (See also 1 Corinthians 11:25 ff.)

1 Corinthians 11:23-30

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

As stated earlier, under the law, a non-Israelite who wanted to become a member of Israel had to be circumcised. It was a very *closed ordinance*, and such a person was now obligated to observe all covenants pertaining to the Mosaic Law. No uncircumcised person would be accepted or allowed to participate in any of the Israelitish customs.

Accordingly, when a non-member desires to be baptized and make a covenant with Christ, he/she has to be baptized by the authority of The Church of Jesus Christ. Then, and then alone, they may participate in the Lord's Supper and partake of other ordinances which are permitted to members of the Church.

Jesus laid down His life for all mankind, but He gave inflexible commandments how one could enter the kingdom of heaven. Dying for all mankind means that all mankind has the privilege to partake of the resurrection and inherit life eternal, only if mankind obeys His commandments. In these last days, Christ has restored His Church as an entity and a vehicle by which mankind may be saved. The following Scriptures are as relevant today as they were when the Lord spoke them in Palestine and on the land of America:

Mark 16:16

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

John 3:3-5

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

MEMBERS OF ONE BODY

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

If The Church of Jesus Christ would allow non-members to partake of the Holy Communion, it would have to allow professing Christians who claim to have been baptized to become its members without being baptized by its authority. This would create a disorderly and confusing situation.

The Book of Mormon states that Alma the Elder baptized at the Waters of Mormon approximately 81 BC. From then on, believers in the coming of Christ were added to the Church by baptism. Hence, when Jesus appeared to the Nephites (3 Nephi ch.11 ff.), the *more righteous ones* were in all probability baptized persons. All of them, including Nephi, et al, were rebaptized because Christ had made His appearance on earth and established His Church, initiating the *Christian Dispensation* on the land of America.

Following are some passages of Scripture to support the theological argument that those to whom He administered the Sacrament must have been baptized members of the Church started by Alma, many years before His appearance to them.

Mosiah 18:10-17

10 Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?

11 And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed: This is the desire of our hearts.

12 And now it came to pass that Alma took Helam, he being one of the first, and went and stood forth in the water, and cried, saying: O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart.

13 And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said: Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.

14 And after Alma had said these words, both Alma and Helam were buried in the water; and they arose and came forth out of the water rejoicing, being filled with the Spirit.

15 And again, Alma took another, and went forth a second time into the water, and baptized him according to the first, only he did not bury himself again in the water.

16 And after this manner he did baptize every one that went forth to the place of Mormon; and they were in number about two hundred and four souls; yea, and they were baptized in the waters of Mormon, and were filled with the grace of God.

17 And they were called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward. And it came to pass that whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church.

Mosiah 25:17-18

17 And it came to pass that after Alma had taught the people many things, and had made an end of speaking to them, that king Limhi was desirous that he might be baptized; and all his people were desirous that they might be baptized also.

18 Therefore, Alma did go forth into the water and did them after the manner he did his brethren in the waters of Mormon; yea, and as many as he did baptize did belong to the church of God; and this because of their belief on the words of Alma.

Mosiah 26:22

22 For behold, this is my church; whosoever is baptized shall be baptized unto repentance. And whomsoever ye receive shall believe in my name; and him will I freely forgive.

Alma 4:4

4 And they began to establish the church more fully; yea, and many were baptized in the waters of Sidon and were joined to the church of God; yea, they were baptized by the hand of Alma, who had been consecrated the high priest over the people of the church, by the hand of his father Alma.

Alma 4:5

5 And it came to pass in the seventh year of the reign of the judges there were about three thousand five hundred souls that united themselves to the church of God and were baptized. And thus endeth the seventh year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi; and there was continual peace in all that time.

Alma 6:2

2 And it came to pass that whosoever did not belong to the church who repented of their sins were baptized unto repentance, and were received into the church.

Alma 7:14

14 Now I say unto you that ye must repent, and be born again; for the Spirit saith if ye are not born again ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness.

Alma 8:5

5 And it came to pass that the people came to him throughout all the borders of the land which was by the wilderness side. And they were baptized throughout all the land;

Alma 15:12-14

12 And Alma baptized Zeezrom unto the Lord; and he began from that time forth to preach unto the people.

13 And Alma established a church in the land of Sidom, and consecrated priests and teachers in the land, to baptize unto the Lord whosoever were desirous to be baptized. 14 And it came to pass that they were many; for they did flock in from all the region round about Sidom, and were baptized.

Alma 19:35

35 And it came to pass that there were many that did believe in their words; and as many as did believe were baptized; and they became a righteous people, and they did establish a church among them.

Alma 49:30

30 Yea, and there was continual peace among them, and exceedingly great prosperity in the church because of their heed and diligence which they gave unto the word of God, which was declared unto them by Helaman, and Shiblon, and Corianton, and Ammon and his brethren, yea, and by all those who had been ordained by the holy order of God, being baptized unto repentance, and sent forth to preach among the people.

Alma 62:45-46

45 Therefore, Helaman and his brethren went forth, and did declare the word of God with much power unto the convincing of many people of their wickedness, which did cause them to repent of their sins and to be baptized unto the Lord their God.

46 And it came to pass that they did establish again the church of God, throughout all the land.

Helaman 3:24

24 And it came to pass that in this same year there was exceedingly great prosperity in the church, insomuch that there were thousands who did join themselves unto the church and were baptized unto repentance.

Helaman 5:17

17 And it came to pass that they did preach with great power, insomuch that they did confound many of those dissenters who had gone over from the Nephites, insomuch that they came forth and did confess their sins and were baptized unto repentance, and immediately returned to the Nephites to endeavor to repair unto them the wrongs which they had done.

Helaman 5:19

19 Therefore they did speak unto the great astonishment of the Lamanites, to the convincing them, insomuch that there were eight thousand of the Lamanites who were in the land of Zarahemla and round about baptized unto repentance, and were convinced of the wickedness of the traditions of their fathers.

Helaman 16:1

1 And now, it came to pass that there were many who heard the words of Samuel, the Lamanite, which he spake upon the walls of the city. And as many as believed on his word went forth and sought for Nephi; and when they had come forth and found him they confessed unto him their sins and denied not, desiring that they might be baptized unto the Lord.

Helaman 16:3-5

3 Now when they saw that they could not hit him, there were many more who did believe on his words, insomuch that they went away unto Nephi to be baptized.

4 For behold, Nephi was baptizing, and prophesying, and preaching, crying repentance unto the people, showing signs and wonders, working miracles among the people, that they might know that the Christ must shortly come

5 Telling them of things which must shortly come, that they might know and remember at the time of their coming that they had been made known unto them beforehand, to the intent that they might believe; therefore as many as believed on the words of Samuel went forth unto him to be baptized, for they came repenting and confessing their sins.

3 Nephi 7:24-26

24 Now I would have you to remember also, that there were none who were brought unto repentance who were not baptized with water.

25 Therefore, there were ordained of Nephi, men unto this ministry, that all such as should come unto them should be baptized with water, and this as a witness and a testimony before God, and unto the people, that they had repented and received a remission of their sins.

26 And there were many in the commencement of this year that were baptized unto repentance; and thus the more part of the year did pass away.

3 Nephi 9:20

20 And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not.

Starting at the appearance of Jesus Christ, the Nephites enjoyed almost two hundred years of a *Peaceful Reign* condition where no economic class distinction existed. The beginning of an apostasy occurred when pride entered among them. Consequently, many churches were established which immediately changed the ordinances of the Gospel to accommodate their own selfish interests. Foremost among these changes was the total disregard for the sanctity of the Sacrament. It is recorded:

4 Nephi vv. 27-28

27 And it came to pass that when two hundred and ten years had passed away there were many churches in the land; yea, there were many churches which professed to know the Christ, and yet they did deny the more parts of his gospel, insomuch that they did receive all manner of wickedness, and did administer that which was sacred unto him to whom it had been forbidden because of unworthiness.

28 And this church did multiply exceedingly because of iniquity, and because of the power of Satan who did get hold upon their hearts.

It is logical to assume that the 27th verse (above) is referring to the Lord's Supper which was being administered indiscriminately, by an apostate church (or churches).

There are many churches, since the Restoration of the Gospel, which claim authority to administer the ordinances of the Gospel. This begs the relevant question, "Which church has the true, divine authority to administer the ordinances of the Gospel, including the Lord's Supper?" The answer is found in the Book of Mormon:

3 Nephi 27:7-8

7 Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my sake.

8 And how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses' name then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel.

The Church, per se, is a community of believers, forming the body of Jesus Christ. It is endowed with power and authority to administer all the ordinances of the Gospel. It is empowered to *preach and teach all things whatsoever Christ commanded* (Matthew 28: 18-20).

If a church doesn't preach and teach all that He commanded, it is not built on His Gospel, and of a consequence cannot be His Church. *Open Communion* falls into the category of disobedience to His word.

There are many honest clergymen and people in the world. To gainsay that would be unwise. Being honest and dedicated to certain religious persuasions is commendable, but it must be remembered that the words of Jesus Christ take precedence over the teaching and/or rationalization of any person.

In conclusion, The Church of Jesus Christ has administered the ordinances of His Gospel (including *Closed Communion*) and will continue to do so according to His commandment.