

MORONI 1–6

John W. Welch Notes



Introduction

Moroni's first farewell, recorded in Mormon 8–9, was written “four hundred years” after the “the coming of our Lord and Savior” (Mormon 8:6). Notably, this was approximately fifteen years after the battle at Cumorah (see Mormon 6:5). Moroni's final farewell, contained in the book bearing his own name, was written “more than four hundred and twenty years” after “the sign was given of the coming of Christ” (Moroni 10:1). By this time, nearly thirty-five years had passed since the battle at Cumorah. So Moroni was at least middle-aged by this point and had wandered for many years to escape death at the hands of the Lamanites and also to fulfill the commandments of the Lord (Moroni 1:1–4).

In this book, Moroni opens his treasure box of ecclesiastical, spiritual, and personal records and brings forth some of the greatest written jewels found anywhere in the Book of Mormon. These include instructions for performing priesthood ordinances and conducting the meetings of the Church of Jesus Christ (Moroni 1–6), three personal letters from his father Mormon (Moroni 7–9), and Moroni's final set of powerful exhortations to the surviving descendants of Lehi (Moroni 10).

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[Why Did Moroni Write So Many Farewells?](#) (Mormon 8:1),” *KnoWhy* 233 (November 17, 2016).

Moroni 1–6 — The Book of Mormon as the Foundation of Church Organization

In Moroni 1–6, Moroni presents information about ordinances and statements about the manner in which the Nephites worshipped when they were righteous. These chapters

may be thought of as a priesthood handbook of the righteous Nephites, given under the guidance of the Savior during his visit. Moroni's instructions provide the *how-to* from the first part of 4 Nephi, giving specific instructions for how they were able to create such a wonderful Zion community.

Still today, we can go through the Book of Mormon and find much of the information that we would need to run the Church of Jesus Christ. Indeed, the leaders of the Church wisely use the Book of Mormon as a key source of inspiration and guidance. It is regularly cited in General Conference addresses counselling members of the Church in their personal lives and callings within the Church.

In fact, the value of the Book of Mormon as an authoritative source for Church administration was recognized immediately. A little-known document called *The Articles of the Church of Christ* was written by Oliver Cowdery in June 1829, shortly after the translation of the plates of Mormon was completed. With Moroni 1–6 in hand, Oliver began drafting what was a first effort to determine how he and Joseph should build up the Church, and what its organizational practices should look like. He wrote, "Listen to the voice of Christ and write the words which I shall command you concerning *my Church, my gospel, my rock.*" "My Church," "my gospel," and "my rock" are words used by the resurrected Jesus in 3 Nephi 11 and 3 Nephi 27. According to historian Scott Faulring, "more than half of Cowdery's Articles are either direct quotations or paraphrases with slight deviations from the Book of Mormon." The subsequent revelation now found in Doctrine and Covenants 20 likewise draws heavily on the Book of Mormon, especially details on priesthood offices and the administration of ordinances found in Moroni 2–6.

The original Book of Mormon manuscript is a long, hand-written manuscript. It had no verse numbers, no paragraphs, and, of course, no index. Oliver had written most of the book out by hand, word by word, and that dictation process had gone on from the beginning of April to the end of June—approximately three months. But Oliver Cowdery was able to go to the manuscript pages and locate this scattered information, which he then put together in an amazing condensation of the administrative affairs of the Church.

Oliver's "Articles" began with how to baptize people, and he quoted what we now have as 3 Nephi 11:23–27. Then he discussed ordaining priests and teachers using Moroni 3, and quoted how priests should be ordained. From there, he moved to the sacrament, inviting people to come and partake of the sacrament "often." Moroni 6:6 says, "And they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus." Moroni is not the only one to say that we should do this oft; Jesus himself blessed and broke the bread, and passed the sacrament to his disciples as they met together often with him. Jesus set the example, saying, "And behold, ye shall meet together oft" (3 Nephi

18:22) and “And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock” (3 Nephi 18:12). The actual words of the Sacrament prayers are then quoted as they are found Moroni 4 and 5. Oliver then went to Moroni 6:7–8, which discussed what was to happen if someone came and was not worthy to partake of the sacrament, as set forth by Jesus toward the end of 3 Nephi 18. Approximately half of Oliver’s administrative document is taken verbatim from the Book of Mormon text.

Oliver’s two-page draft was not adopted for use in the Church in June 1829 because the Church had not yet been organized. When the Church was organized about ten months later, on April 6, 1830, Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants was then revealed by Joseph Smith, expanding and refining Oliver’s document and likewise making good use of administrative directives found in the Book of Mormon.

Even today, in the Church’s Handbook of Instructions and in the general administration of the operations of the Church, it is easy to find many ways in which the Church is organized that specifically follow the directions given by Jesus Christ and the prophetic leaders of his Church found in the Book of Mormon. As Jesus told his twelve disciples, “Ye know the things that ye must do in my church ... for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do. Therefore, if ye do these things blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day” (3 Nephi 27:21–22). Obviously, the Book of Mormon gives us many things: revelation, doctrine, history, scripture, personal guidance, practical role models, political wisdom, literary inspiration, and much, much more. On top of all of that, it teaches us how to conduct the spiritual and temporal matters of the Church. Here is a list of some such policies and practices followed by the Church today that have scriptural authority behind them coming from the Book of Mormon:

- The name of the Church of Christ (3 Nephi 27:8–9)
- Acting in the name of Christ (3 Nephi 27:7)
- A single prophet-leader (2 Nephi 5; Alma 1; Helaman 7; 3 Nephi 7:25)
- A quorum of twelve (3 Nephi 12:1; 19:12), “give heed unto the words of these twelve” (12:1)
- Three leaders with exceptional powers (3 Nephi 28:2–12)
- Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 27:12; Ether 5:4)
- Presiding (Mosiah 26:37; “to preside and watch over,” Alma 6:1; 3 Nephi 28:18)
- Uniformity, “a regulation throughout the Church” (Alma 6:7; 45:21; 62:44)
- The process of making administrative changes (Mosiah 29; 3 Nephi 15:1)
- Dividing church members into smaller groups or congregations (3 Nephi 19:4; Mosiah 18:18; 25:19–23)
- The pastoral duties of church leaders (Mosiah 18:19–23)

- Consecration of righteous men as priests and teachers (2 Nephi 5:26; Mosiah 23:16–18; 25:19)
- Ordination of priests and elders (Alma 6:1)
- Ordination by the laying on of hands (Alma 6:1; Moroni 2:2)
- Procedures and words used in ordaining priests and teachers (Moroni 3:1–4)
- Priesthood authority to baptize (Mosiah 18:13; 3 Nephi 11:19–22)
- A higher priesthood authority needed to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost (3 Nephi 18:36–37; Moroni 2)
- Priesthood after the Holy Order of the Son of God, associated with Melchizedek (Alma 13:1–10)
- Faith as the first principle in joining the Church (Alma 32)
- Examples of study, prayer, change of heart in conversion (Alma 17–26)
- Repentance (Mosiah 4:10; 11; 26; Alma 5; 9; 12; 42; Helaman 7; 13; 3 Nephi 30:2)
- Confession (Mosiah 26:9; “did confess their sins and were baptized” Helaman 5:17; 16:1; Moroni 6:7)
- Covenant making, remembering, and keeping (Mosiah 5:1–10; Mosiah 18:13; 3 Nephi 18)
- Taking upon them the name of Christ (Mosiah 5:10–12; 25:23; 3 Nephi 27:25; Moroni 6:3)
- No infant baptism (Moroni 8:20–21)
- The words of the baptismal prayer (3 Nephi 11:26–27)
- Baptism by immersion unto repentance (Mosiah 18:14–17; Alma 6:2; 3 Nephi 11:26)
- Baptizing in the name of Jesus Christ (3 Nephi 18:11; 27:16; 30:2; 4 Nephi 1:1)
- Procedures and words used for giving the Holy Ghost (Moroni 2:2)
- Numbering the covenant members of the Church (Mosiah 6:4; 26:35; Alma 6:3; Moroni 6:4)
- The administration of the Sacrament (3 Nephi 18; Moroni 6:6)
- The priests kneel down with of the Church (Moroni 4:2)
- The words of the sacrament prayers (3 Nephi 18:7, 10–11; Moroni 4–5)
- Healing the sick (Alma 15:5–11; 3 Nephi 7:22; 17:7–9; 4 Nephi 1:5; Mormon 9:24)
- Patriarchal or father’s blessings (2 Nephi 1–4; Alma 36–42)
- Fasting in private (Mosiah 27:22; Helaman 3:35; Moroni 6:5)
- Praying in private (Enos 1:4; Alma 33–34; 3 Nephi 13, 19)
- Praying in the name of Jesus Christ (3 Nephi 18:19, 23, 30)
- Family prayer (Alma 34:21; 3 Nephi 18:21, “pray in your families unto the Father”)
- Marriage (4 Nephi 1:11)
- Blessing children and the fulness of joy as parents (3 Nephi 17:11–24)

- Polygamy allowed but only if the Lord of Hosts commands his people (Jacob 2:27, 30; 3:5)
- Welfare and giving to the poor (Jacob 2:19; Mosiah 4; 18:27; Alma 1:27; 34:26–29; 35:9)
- Tithing (3 Nephi 24:8–10)
- Building Zion, the New Jerusalem, in this land (3 Nephi 21:22–25)
- Moving to new lands, flight into the wilderness (Lehi, Mosiah)
- Purposes and conduct of church meetings and worship (Moroni 6)
- Praying and fasting together (Alma 6:6; 3 Nephi 19; 4 Nephi 1:2; Moroni 6:5)
- Singing (Alma 5:9, 26; Ether 6:9; Moroni 6:9)
- Preaching, exhorting, as led by the Holy Ghost (Moroni 6:9)
- Meeting “one day in every week” (Mosiah 18:25)
- Keep the Sabbath day holy (Mosiah 18:23)
- Holding conferences (Mosiah 2–5; Alma 5, 7)
- Voice of the people, consent (Mosiah 29:25–29; Alma 2:3; 4:16; 27:21–22; Helaman 1:5–8)
- Inviting all to hear the word of God (Alma 6:5; “all are alike unto God,” 2 Nephi 26:33)
- Including the children in the congregation (Mosiah 2:5; 3 Nephi 17:25; Moroni 8)
- Volunteerism (2 Nephi 26:31, “the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion”)
- Unpaid ministers (2 Nephi 26:31, “if they labor for money they shall perish”)
- Temples and temple worship (2 Nephi 5:16; Jacob 2:11; Mosiah 2:1; 3 Nephi 11:1)
- Prohibited iniquities, worthiness list (2 Nephi 26:32; Alma 1:32; 16:18; Helaman 4:12)
- White and pure garments (1 Nephi 12:11; Jacob 1:19; Alma 5:27; 3 Nephi 19:30)
- Obedience (1 Nephi 22:30–31; Jacob 4:5; Mosiah 5:5, 8; 3 Nephi 12:18)
- Sacrifice (3 Nephi 12:19), “pointing to the great and last sacrifice” (Alma 34:14)
- Chastity (Jacob 2:28), no adultery (Mosiah 2:13; Alma 30:10; 3 Nephi 12:27–28)
- Consecration, dedicate wealth to the kingdom of God (Jacob 2:18–19; 3 Nephi 13:20, 24, 33)
- Sealing powers (Enos 1:5; Mosiah 26:20; Helaman 10:7)
- Keeping sacred things confidential (3 Nephi 28:16)
- Not imparting the holy thing to those unworthy or unprepared (3 Nephi 14:7)
- Missionary preparation (Alma 17:2–4)
- Missionary work (Alma 36:24, “labored without ceasing [to] bring souls unto repentance”)
- Patterns of missionary work (Mosiah 11; 18; Alma 4–15; 31–34; Helaman 6; 3 Nephi 27:1)
- Companions, two witnesses (Alma and Amulek)
- Church discipline and excommunication procedures (Mosiah 26:32; 3 Nephi 18; Moroni 6)

- Reactivate those cast out, encourage them to repent (Mosiah 26:29–30; 3 Nephi 18:28–32)
- Teachers and teaching (Jacob 1:19; Mosiah 18:25–26; 23:14)
- Teach no doctrine except what the prophets have spoken (Mosiah 18:19)
- Teaching youth (1 Nephi 1:1; Enos 1:1; Mosiah 1:2; Alma 57:21)
- Keeping historical records and annual reports (3 Nephi 23; Helaman 6:6, 13)
- Scriptures, keeping and guarding them (1 Nephi 6, 9; Mosiah 1–2; Alma 37:1–18)
- Military obligations (Alma 46:20–21) and support those in defensive combat (Alma 27:24)
- Rather simple conduct of funerals (2 Nephi 4:12; Mosiah 6:5; 29:45–46; Alma 62:52, 63:3)
- Simple church building decoration, not idolatrous or opulent (Mosiah 11:7–10; Mormon 8:37)

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[Why Did the Lord Quote the Book of Mormon When Reestablishing the Church?](#) (3 Nephi 11:24),” *KnoWhy* 282 (March 3, 2017).

Scott H. Faulring, “[An Examination of the 1829 ‘Articles of the Church of Christ,’ in Relation to Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants,](#)” *BYU Studies* 43 no. 4 (2004): 57–91; see also Scott H. Faulring, “[The Book of Mormon: A Blueprint for Organizing the Church,](#)” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 60–69, 71.

John W. Welch, “[The Book of Mormon as the Keystone of Church Administration,](#)” in *A Firm Foundation: Church Organization and Administration*, ed. Whittaker and Garr (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2011), 15–58; reprinted in *Religious Educator* 12, no. 2 (2011).

John W. Welch, “[From Presence to Practice: Jesus, the Sacrament Prayers, the Priesthood, and Church Discipline in 3 Nephi 18 and Moroni 2–6,](#)” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 120–129.

Evidence Central, “[Book of Mormon Evidence: Parallels between the Didache and Moroni 2–6,](#)” September 19, 2020, online at evidencecentral.org.

Moroni 1

One might wonder why (and be grateful that!) Moroni took up writing again after having twice written endings and farewells at the end of Mormon 9 and Ether 15. As his last days

approached, it becomes apparent what his primary concerns were. Perhaps we all can learn something from his use of his time, and from his final priorities.

Above all, Moroni states clearly that he will not deny the Lord, no matter the cost (1:3). He certainly knew the words of his father and perhaps he had even helped him record the series of “woes” that included the following: “Wo unto him that spurneth at the doings of the Lord; yea, wo unto him that shall deny the Christ and his works!” (3 Nephi 29:5). So often we express confidently that we would do as Moroni did, and refuse to deny Christ even at the pain of death. But we might well think: In what smaller things do we show less faith? In what ways are we leaving a legacy for future generations, as Moroni so admirably and so arduously did?

Moroni 1:1–4 — We Should Not Deny the Christ

When Moroni finished the abridgement of the Book of Ether, he probably did not expect to survive to be able to write more. With his faith still powerfully strong amid the death of his people, he stated, “I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ; wherefore, I wander whithersoever I can for the safety of mine own life” (1:3). Some Nephites had deserted and denied Christ to be spared (Moroni 9:24), and Moroni wanted his position to be clear to posterity.

We can learn a great deal from his courage and faith. Moroni knew what the Savior had taught at the temple in Bountiful. He understood the covenants he had made, and he knew what taking the name of Christ upon yourself meant. By his declaration, he tells his readers how he would handle being captured. He was not going to deny Christ, even at the expense of his own life.

As we partake of the sacrament and renew our baptismal covenants, we take upon ourselves the name of Christ and promise to remember him always. Remembering infers that we will not deny—in other words, forgetting or pretending that we cannot remember what we once knew. There is a covenantal dimension to Moroni’s statement. He wants us to remember that life will be difficult. There will be real challenges. We need to be prepared to stand with Christ no matter what. This is typical of Moroni’s masterful style of understatement, where you have to stop and consider each of his words.

Moroni 1:2 – Why Were the Lamanites Fighting?

Why were the Lamanites now fighting amongst themselves? They ought to have been dancing in the streets. They had finally gotten rid of the pesky Nephites. The world should have been wonderful for them, but what was happening?

Is this part of human nature? Has this ever happened in history before? The Lamanites were probably not a single group of people with one king. There were many tribes, and

their world had deteriorated. When everything collapsed at the end of 4 Nephi, Mormon makes a point of noting that the people became tribalized, regionalized, and divided. There had been great unity and there were no manner of *ites*, but then corruption entered. Everyone split off into their own social, economic, or ideological groups.

Many of these groups had a common enemy—the Nephites. They were ready to get rid of them. However, once they had, we see the occurrence of a familiar pattern. If a political group is only brought together by an enemy, once that enemy is gone, there is not much to hold them together any longer. They begin dividing up the spoils and wondering who would get what. They inevitably turn on each other and start fighting. If a civilization is not a peaceful one to begin with, they are likely not going to become peaceful when they achieve power and success.

Moroni 1:4 – “Perhaps They May Be of Worth”

Moroni decided to write what he could that “perhaps they may be of worth unto my brethren, the Lamanites, in some future day” (Moroni 1:4). He understood that having the priesthood and the Holy Ghost is foundational. There is nothing more important than that.

He started his instructional episode with the authority to give the Holy Ghost. If you do not have the Holy Ghost, how are you going to know how to choose the right? How can you have the spirit of “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27)? Moroni knew that, and he knew it was important to start with the Gift of the Holy Ghost, given by proper priesthood authority in a manner prescribed by and authorized by the Savior.

Following this, the Church must have priesthood holders (Moroni 3) so that the saints can partake of the sacrament (Moroni 4 and 5). Moroni gave us the prayers that the Nephites were using for blessing and partaking of the sacrament. Moroni really knew about the importance of covenant renewal: he placed the Holy Ghost at number one and priesthood at number two. We can see how he was starting with the most important points. Then chapter 6 is about meeting together, having a community, observing the Sabbath day, fasting and praying together, and teaching. Oh, how Moroni must have missed the blessings of meeting together! His being solitary and lonely is not altogether different from what we are missing these days (due to the pandemic in 2020) by not being able to enjoy the sociality of worship and serving together in our wards, classes, and quorums!

Moroni 2

Moroni 2:1–3 — Authority to Bestow the Holy Ghost

The first guidance that Moroni records is how the Nephite disciples were given the authority to give the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the manner in which that ordinance should be performed. These instructions were given by the resurrected Savior in his first appearing. In 3 Nephi 18:36–37, Jesus touched the twelve, but the multitude did not hear what he said. The disciples witnessed that he gave them the power to give the Holy Ghost.

Mormon, or whoever recorded the final version of that incident, added a note that said, “And I will show unto you hereafter that this record is true.” One wonders if Mormon reminded Moroni to be sure to add that actual information. We are not sure, for he could have received that information from the Three Nephites, who had visited him, and if so, they would have been first-hand witnesses. Nevertheless, Moroni’s report leaves us procedural guidance for administering that ordinance.

Joseph Smith was once asked by U.S. President Martin Van Buren, “wherein” Latter-day Saints “differed from other religions of the day.” His answer was that we have the gift of the Holy Ghost and that it is given by the laying-on of hands, and “all other considerations were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Joseph’s letter to Hyrum, December 5, 1839). That most important factor really does differentiate Zion people from other people.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[Why Did Moroni Keep Writing? \(Moroni 2:3\)](#),” *KnoWhy* 249 (December 9, 2016).

John W. Welch, “[From Presence to Practice: Jesus, the Sacrament Prayers, the Priesthood, and Church Discipline in 3 Nephi 18 and Moroni 2–6](#),” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 119–139.

Moroni 3

Moroni 3:1–4 — Ordaining Priests and Teachers

In chapter 3, Moroni provides the instructions and words for ordination to the priesthood. Jesus told the disciples who were soon “called the elders of the church” (3:1) that they should first “call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer” (2:2) and then “after they had prayed unto the Father” (3:2), they should place their hands on the heads of the persons being ordained and ordain them. This manner of conducting ordinations can

certainly remind us of the importance of preparing prayerfully before performing any priesthood ordinance or service unto the Lord.

The main charge that was then given to the priests and teachers was that they should “preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the endurance of faith on his name to the end” (3:3).

Note that the giving of the authority to give the gift of the Holy Ghost, the actual giving of the Holy Ghost, and the ordination of priests and teachers, all required the laying on of hands. This is reminiscent of Moses laying hands upon Joshua: “And Moses did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses” (Numbers 27:23).

In Deuteronomy 34:9, we read of the effect that this had on Joshua; “And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him.” This was also the common practice of early Christians, especially in the New Testament. See *Guide to the Scriptures*, “[Hands, Laying on of.](#)”

Further Reading

John W. Welch, “[From Presence to Practice: Jesus, the Sacrament Prayers, the Priesthood, and Church Discipline in 3 Nephi 18 and Moroni 2–6](#),” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 119–139.

Moroni Chapters 4–5

Where did the Nephites get the words of the sacrament prayers? They were “according to the commandments of Christ; wherefore we know the manner to be true” (Moroni 4:1). The followers of Christ continued in righteousness to use the words the Savior taught in 3 Nephi 18, when the people were ready to enter into a covenant to remember him and obey his commandments that he had just given them. The following table compares the words that Moroni recorded with the words in 3 Nephi 18, on which the sacrament prayers were based. In 3 Nephi 18, Jesus of course spoke in the first and second person (“I, my” and “you, your”). Notice how, with necessary and appropriate adjustments, the words of Jesus have been carefully preserved and reformulated so that they can be spoken by the priests (“we ask,” etc.) with references to the people (“they,” “them”) and to Jesus (“he, his, him”) as follows:

Moroni 4–5	3 Nephi 18
O God, <i>the</i> Eternal <i>Father</i> , we <i>ask thee in the name</i> of thy Son, Jesus Christ,	<i>ask the Father in my name</i> (3 Nephi 18:20)
to <i>bless</i> and sanctify this <i>bread</i>	he took of the <i>bread</i> and break and <i>blessed</i> it (3 Nephi 18:3)
to the souls of <i>all those who</i> partake of it; that	<i>unto all those who</i> shall believe (3 Nephi 18:5)
they may eat <i>in remembrance of the body</i> of thy Son	this shall ye do <i>in remembrance of my body</i> which I have shown unto you (3 Nephi 18:7)
and <i>witness unto</i> thee, O God, <i>the</i> Eternal <i>Father</i>	it shall be a <i>testimony unto the Father</i> (3 Nephi 18:7)
<i>that</i> they <i>are willing to</i> take upon them	<i>that ye are willing to</i> do (3 Nephi 18:10)
the name of thy Son, and <i>always remember</i> him,	that ye do <i>always remember</i> me (3 Nephi 18:7)
and keep his <i>commandments which he hath given</i> them,	that <i>which I have commanded</i> you (3 Nephi 18:10)
that they may always <i>have his Spirit to be with</i> them, Amen.	ye shall <i>have my Spirit to be with</i> you (3 Nephi 18:7)
O God, <i>the</i> Eternal <i>Father</i> , we <i>ask thee in the name</i> of thy Son, Jesus Christ,	<i>ask the Father in my name</i> (3 Nephi 18:20)
to bless and sanctify this <i>wine</i> to the souls of	take of the <i>wine</i> (3 Nephi 18:8)
<i>all those who</i>	<i>all those who</i> (3 Nephi 18:5)
<i>drink</i> of it, that they	they did <i>drink</i> (3 Nephi 18:9)
may <i>do it in remembrance of the blood</i> of thy Son,	<i>do it in remembrance of my blood</i> (3 Nephi 18:11)
<i>which</i> was <i>shed for</i> them;	<i>which</i> I have <i>shed for</i> you (3 Nephi 18:11)

that they <i>may witness unto</i> thee, O God, <i>the Eternal Father</i> ,	that ye <i>may witness unto the Father</i> (3 Nephi 18:11)
<i>that</i> they <i>do always remember</i> him,	<i>that</i> ye <i>do always remember</i> me (3 Nephi 18:11)
that they may <i>have</i> his <i>Spirit to be with</i> them. Amen	ye shall <i>have</i> my <i>Spirit to be with</i> you (3 Nephi 18:11).

On the left-hand column, we have the words from Moroni 4 and 5—the bread and the wine prayers. On the right-hand column we have the words that Christ spoke when he administered the Sacrament as recorded in 3 Nephi 18. The difference arises from the fact that Jesus himself spoke the Sacrament prayers in 3 Nephi, while for the Nephites, and for us, ordained priesthood holders do it on his behalf. Thus, we get Jesus saying, “ask the Father *in my name*,” but in our prayer, the officiator says, “*we ask thee in the name of thy Son*.” Jesus’ words are all in 1st and 2nd person, “*I—you*” language, or more formally “*I—thou*.” In addition, as Jesus was no longer present, the prayers are directed to the Father.

We do not know when the sacrament prayer was taken from Jesus’ 1st and 2nd person pronoun formulation and recast into the 3rd person as we see it in Moroni. It probably happened very early, because the very next day in 3 Nephi 19, Jesus came back. Each of the twelve disciples presided over one large group and administered the sacrament to them. What prayer were they using there? Jesus was not speaking the words that he used in 3 Nephi 18, but the prayer must have been revoiced so that it made sense for a priest to say these words. But the content remained the same until Moroni’s day, and the Restoration brought these sacred words into our lives today.

One particularly noteworthy phrase appears in the prayers as found in Moroni 4–5 that was not included in the recorded words of Christ in 3 Nephi 18: “that they are *willing to take upon them* the name of thy Son” (Moroni 4:3) That phrase parallels King Benjamin’s words as he put his people under covenant to take upon themselves the name of Christ (Mosiah 5:8) about 150 years before the appearance of Christ at the temple in Bountiful. It seems that Nephite texts and traditions have combined and coalesced beautifully into the final sacrament prayers in Moroni 4–5. Elder Dallin H. Oaks emphasized the word *willingness*, pointing to a future consummation. Elder Oaks said: “[B]y partaking of the sacrament we witness our willingness to participate in the sacred ordinances of the temple and to receive the highest blessings available through the name and by the authority of

the Savior when he chooses to confer them upon us.” Dallin H. Oaks, “Taking upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign* (May 1985): 81.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “Where did Moroni Get the Sacramental Prayers from?” (Moroni 4:1), *KnoWhy* 250 (December 12, 2016).

John W. Welch, “Benjamin’s Covenant as a Precursor to the Sacrament Prayers,” chapter 10 in John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks, editors, *King Benjamin’s Speech: That Ye May Learn Wisdom* (Provo, UT, F.A.R.M.S., 1998), 295–314.

John W. Welch, “From Presence to Practice: Jesus, the Sacrament Prayers, the Priesthood, and Church Discipline in 3 Nephi 18 and Moroni 2–6,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 119–139.

John W. Welch, “Our Nephite Sacrament Prayers,” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: A Decade of New Research*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 286–289.

Moroni 6

Moroni 6:2–3 — Moroni Expounds the Requirements of Baptism

The requirement for repentance and baptism are given in 4 Nephi 1:1: “As many as did come unto them, and did truly repent of their sins, were baptized in the name of Jesus; and they did also receive the Holy Ghost.” Moroni 6:2–3 clarifies the expectations: “Neither did they receive any unto baptism save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and witnessed unto the church that they truly repented of all their sins. And none were received unto baptism save they took upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end.” Moroni’s people also helped all Church members remain faithful to their baptismal covenant: “As oft as they repented and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven” (6:8).

Moroni 6:5–9 — Saints Meet Together Oft

4 Nephi 1:12 discussed how and why the saints met together: “[T]hey did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.” Moroni 6:6, now mentions additionally that they did “meet together oft to brake of bread and wine in remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ.” They were strict about how

they behaved and who could participate (see verse 7). We are blessed in our own worship practices to know how to worship in a Zion manner the way they did.

When they met together, it says in verse 9 that their meetings were conducted by the church after the manner of the workings of the spirit and by the power of the Holy Ghost: “[F]or as the power of the Holy Ghost led them, whether to preach or to exhort or to pray or to supplicate or to sing, even so it was done.” Of course, it may not have been so open a meeting as to be a free-for-all. However, there are often changes in our meetings, and spontaneous speakers are occasionally asked to participate, and testimonies are borne. If one person presides and is influenced by the power of the Holy Ghost, and everyone else has that same gift, it is not a chaotic situation. There have been some spontaneous parts in Sacrament meetings that have been very effective. Sometimes spontaneity is even more effective because it occurs within a framework or structure in which people are not expecting it.

Singing and music was also a part of their worship services. This carried over the traditional uses of the Old Testament Psalms and other hymns of praise and joy that were long-standing parts of ancient Israelite family and temple worship. Singing and praising God (see 3 Nephi 4:31) was endorsed by Jesus as he quoted Isaiah in 3 Nephi 16:18–19; 20:32–34; and 22:1.

In addition, at the end of verse 5, it says that when they met, it was “to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls.” Is that a clear enough part of our pattern today? One may hope that in the study of scriptures, in priesthood and Relief Society classes, concentration is on the welfare of souls, and how well everyone is doing, and that the lessons are pulled together to focus on the real purpose of getting together. In that case, the Spirit can guide us more specifically.

That is how ministering contacts, training sessions, and Ward Council meetings are handled, by relying on the Spirit. For Family Home Evening, it is good to have a lesson planned, but if the lesson turns out to not be what the Spirit says needs to be said, the teacher needs to be flexible enough to adjust for the welfare of the family.

Some years ago, President Boyd K. Packer was presiding at a regional training meeting that I attended. He asked the people to move closer to the front, and no one moved. After asking several times, he abruptly ended the meeting. When later asked by the stake presidents, as my stake president reported to us, about why he did that, President Packer replied, “Because revelation stopped.” He explained to them that the disobedience of the brethren in not moving down caused revelation to cease; therefore, he stopped the meeting, and that was the appropriate thing to do. This gave new meaning to me of the

passage in Doctrine and Covenants 42:14, “If you do not have the spirit, ye shall not teach.” That does not just mean you *will not* teach; it means that you *cannot* teach and *should not* teach.

Moroni and his predecessors maintained and provided the means for us to do as Jesus had commanded his twelve disciples: “Ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do *that shall ye also do*” (3 Nephi 27:21, emphasis added). Using the methods given for ordinances and meetings, and applying the guidance in Moroni 1–6 will give us the means to become closer to being a Zion society, as it did the people in 4 Nephi.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[What Can an Ancient Christian Text Tell us About the Book of Mormon?](#) (Moroni 6:5), *KnoWhy* 450 (July 17, 2018).

Book of Mormon Central, “[Why Was Singing Hymns a Part of Nephite Worship Services?](#) (Moroni 6:9), *KnoWhy* 251, (December 13, 2016). “Evidently, the Nephite church, as Moroni knew it, made singing a part of their worship services, as guided by the Holy Ghost. Although the text does not indicate when this practice was officially instituted, there is a long history of the use of music and hymns in Judeo-Christian worship. Nephite worship practices fit nicely into this tradition.”