

Moroni - The Impact of One

There are many worrisome things going on all around us. We may worry about how they will affect us and our families. Many of them may appear to be totally out of our control. And indeed, although they may be, there is an important lesson to be learned from Captain Moroni:

Yea, verily, verily I say unto you, if all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men. (Alma 48:17)

The message here is that the devil only has power over the hearts of men as far as we allow it to him; therefore, if we turn from the darkness toward the light, there is no power for evil.

One application that I see of this in today's society is the problem of drugs. We see modern day Gadiantons taking control of nearly entire countries, installing their own judges, their own laws, and caring nothing for right and wrong. We see gangs that fight viciously over the control of the distribution of drugs. Even in our own country we fear problems from law enforcement being subverted by the insidious appeal of drug money. This is indeed a problem which admits to no easy solution.

But is that gloomy assessment true? "If all men had been ... like unto Moroni" this problem would simply go away. I am not talking about the drug lords suddenly wishing to do right; rather, if no one chose to take drugs, there would be no market, and no supply of money to fund all the evils we associate with drugs. Quite simply, the drug problem is the result of the sum of many, many misapplications of agency. If each individual would take responsibility for their actions, the problem would immediately cease.

Now it may well be that you do not take drugs, nor do you in any way facilitate their evil. And that is good. But are you similarly innocent on other fronts? Do you watch television and movies that are contrary to the standards established for the saints? Do you shop on Sunday, or do other business on the Lord's holy day? Do you know and observe traffic laws while driving? Are you scrupulously honest when filling out income taxes? Many have used the excuse in each of these areas "Everybody does it," but the reality is that not everyone does. If you fudge even a little in any of these areas, you are contributing to the

problems that flow from them. Even though the excuse is not warranted, you make it easier for others to assume that “Everybody does it” when they observe your example¹. On the other hand, if you are conscientious in each of these areas, you are strengthening the force of righteousness in society as a whole. Your good example is just as powerful for the right as a bad example is for evil.

Moroni had a very visible role in his society, and none of us may have so obvious a position in ours. However, we have the ability to bind Satan so that he cannot act in our own lives. Each time we do that, we decrease Satan's power overall. And, in the words of Elder Maxwell, “Such righteous individuals perform another vital but quiet service to mankind: they become part of the critical mass which can evoke God’s much-needed blessings on all humanity.”²

1 Alma 39:11

2 “Care for the Life of the Soul” April 2003