

Opposition to the Truth

I had a rather unsettling experience at work today. A co-worker came to my office, wanting to discuss an idea for improving how our work was done. During the conversation she asked about the map of Nauvoo I have hanging on the wall. As I attempted to tell her about Nauvoo, she started interjecting more questions. At first I thought she just wasn't following my discussion, but it rapidly became apparent that her questions were designed to attack the church – and my faith.

At first I was just a little shocked. Why would a co-worker, for whom I have respect and with whom I thought I enjoyed a friendship, attack me in this way? Then I was a little disappointed. She has obviously spent a lot of effort and time to learn the things she was discussing with me, and yet she was discussing very insubstantial details as if they were the whole. Finally, I felt insulted. She knows I am well involved in my religion. Why would she believe that I understand so little of it that a few minutes of doubting questions could shake me from my convictions?

As I said, it was an unsettling experience. Now I wonder if her trip to my office was a ploy for attacking me, rather than a genuine effort to improve things at work. But most deeply of all, I wonder why such an obviously intelligent person would dedicate so much effort to attacking my religion.

It is simple to say that there will always be opposition to the truth, and I agree with that statement. But how do people become so confused. What I would like to ask her is if she truly believes in revelation from God to man. Has she read the Book of Mormon and tested Moroni's promise? Has she taken the time to understand what she is attacking? Ultimately, there is only one explanation that I can see to explain her behavior:

*For there are many yet on the earth among all sects, parties, and denominations, who are blinded by the subtle craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, and who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it--
Therefore, that we should waste and wear out our lives in bringing to light all the hidden things of darkness, wherein we know them; and they are truly manifest from heaven--
These should then be attended to with great earnestness.*

D&C123:12-14

I do not believe that my friend has consciously chosen to follow evil, but she has been blinded and deceived to the point that she now serves the very being she most wishes to oppose. It is a sad state, and I would like to avoid dealing with the issue as much as I can. However, what is the prophet's phrase? "...[W]aste and wear out our lives...". He seems to place upon me a great responsibility to expend my energies in helping this person.

So I am left with the question of how to proceed. I am certainly not going to return to work tomorrow and challenge her to a debate. In fact, she does not appear to be in the least open to receiving religious information from me. So I need now to attempt to treat her as the Savior would, with love, patience, compassion, and respect. The only clear path I can see is to show an example of a believer, and trust that her native intelligence can lead her to question the gap between what she has been told about my faith, and my actions as an adherent to that faith. Perhaps then she can open her eyes far enough to analyze the truth honestly, and discover for herself its worth.