

LIBERTY PARK INN®

A Syndicated Column

Name: *Twinkies*

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“Tell me it’s not true,” John moaned with a pitiful sigh.

“Tell you what’s not true,” I replied?

“Tell me they’ve not stopped making Twinkies,” John replied. “My whole family loves them.”

“Oh,” I replied. “Yes. I heard about that. Apparently it’s true. Twinkies are no more.”

“Ahhhh, No,” John exclaimed!

“It can’t be all that bad,” I replied.

“Besides, most likely the recipe and name will be sold to another company and they will begin making Twinkies again.”

“Yes, David,” John replied. “But it won’t be the same. Everybody knows that different people baking from the same recipe will not get exactly the same results.”

“That’s true,” I replied. “And different companies have attempted to make Twinkie clones, but they never taste as good as the original.”

“How could this have happened,” John asked?

“Well,” I replied, “from what I’ve been reading Hostess has been having financial problems in recent years and they filed reorganizational bankruptcy. Competition in the snack food industry has been increasing and also more people are becoming health conscious so apparently overall sales are down for snack foods.”

“That’s not much consolation,” John replied. “But I do understand. We’ve been trying to eat better at our house too. So we’ve been eating less snack foods.”

“We’re cutting back on snacks too,” I replied. “The amazing thing to me is that the union called for a strike while they knew Hostess was in bankruptcy. They were warned that the company would shut down. It’s almost like they were trying to shut the company down. Didn’t they know or care what would happen to the employees they were representing?”

“Unions,” John replied, “what good

are they? I hope we never have one here at this hotel. I would rather work for a lower wage than to have no income at all.”

“I bet that’s how a lot of people feel who used to work for Hostess,” I replied. “For my part I’ve always made it a policy to pay my employees more than other employers pay for comparable jobs. I couldn’t sleep at night if I didn’t pay my people a fair wage.”

“I appreciate that, David,” John replied. “When I was job hunting I applied at a number of hotels before I accepted this position working with you. And one of the reasons I chose to come here is because you have a reputation for paying your employees more.”

“I’m glad to hear that,” I replied. “And I pay them more without a union forcing me to do it. I treat my employees with respect and I pay them a fair wage. And in return they respect me and they give me a fair day’s work.”

“Yes. I think you’ve accurately described the atmosphere here” John replied. “We enjoy working at this hotel.”

“Obviously,” I continued, “I have to make a profit or I can’t stay in business. But I’ve always felt that the people who work for me and make me successful should share in that success. That’s why I’ve always taken part of the profit and passed it on to my employees in the form of bonuses. More companies should operate under the same philosophy that I work under.

But I only have direct control over what happens at my hotel. I guess if more people ran their businesses the way I run mine, there wouldn’t be any need for unions.”

“We would probably be better off if there were no unions at all,” John commented.

“That may be true,” I replied. “But I do understand that unions came into existence because employers were mistreating their employees. And in that sense those companies deserve the problems they have from the unions. It’s also probably true that those

workers years ago needed relief from their dangerous and unfair working environments. But now the unions have become so strong that they no longer seem to care about the people they are representing. As the unions grew more powerful, they became as bad if not worse than the employers had been. Now labor unions are among the wealthiest organizations in America and they’re just as likely to trample on the needs of the workers as the employers are. Essentially, there’s no one left to represent the workers anymore.”

“I wonder,” John asked, “wouldn’t it be better if everyone operated their businesses the way the Bible teaches instead of operating them based on greed?”

“Well,” I replied, “the Bible certainly does have some pretty harsh things to say about greedy employers who withhold wages from their employees. But the problem is not just the employers. The workers need to put in a full day’s work for a full day’s pay and with a good attitude. And they need to do their work ‘as unto the Lord.’ But on the other hand employers need to treat their employees with respect. And they need to provide a safe working environment and pay their employees a livable wage without having to be forced to do it. They need to remember that ‘they too have a master who is in heaven.’”

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It is seldom true that guilt is found only on one side or the other. Usually both sides share the blame for the problems they are facing. In the case of businesses, it’s a sad fact that this blame game and its accompanying distrust and lack of cooperation have turned American businesses into adversarial enterprises that have, in a sense, crippled our whole economy.

Liberty Park Inn® is a syndicated column about issues and current events featuring conversations in an imaginary hotel. You may contact the author through his website at www.libertyparkinn.com.