

The Devil May Care

When folks discuss the Devil they usually imply that the fellow is evil. Hell, even the Devil's name is "evil" with a capital "D." Reality check! Wake up call! Look really carefully at the dogma.

The Devil was, in truth, the first political protester, the first advocate for the poor and disenfranchised. Many eons ago, God (with a capital "G" and capitalized personal pronouns), having destroyed all the other gods, became a sole dictator who held a monopoly on the gathering of immortal souls. As with all monopolies, He wasn't providing the best of services. In fact, his service was down right (and still is) terrible. God's deal was, "I get your soul no matter what because you have no other place to send it and, in return, you're going to live a life of guilt, misery, and suffering. I get everything, you give everything." Typical monopoly attitude, right? Remember the banks, phone companies, and cable companies? Stalin? Papa Doc? Newt Gingrich? The fact is keeping most people in indentured servitude, in ignorance, in misery, and starving is cheaper than providing a decent, fulfilling life. Think about today's major trans-nationals operating in less-developed nations like China, Bangladesh, Mexico, and Indonesia.

So the Devil decided to do something about it for the sake of people, the customers. First, he created a new political party with some of the other, more socially aware and progressive angels and tried to pressure God into offering a better, more equitable deal. "Hell's bells," declared the Devil, "omnipotence must carry some moral responsibility." The Devil's new organization even tried to introduce a little democracy into Heaven. For God, that was the last angel on the pin and all Hell broke loose.

God, like many big monopolies and dictators, set out to crush the opposition and the new ideas, not by improving service or responding to the Devil's legitimate concerns, but with violence. The Devil and his followers were brutally

attacked and forcibly evicted from Heaven. God, ever the slum landlord, loved evicting people with no notice: from Eden, from Egypt, from the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorra, the list goes on and on.

The Devil, no fly by night angel he, did not give up, however, and set up shop on the other side of the Pearly Gates (ever think about why God needed a gate?) in what is now known as Hell, a run down neighborhood totally neglected by God.

"Contract to give me your immortal soul at death, and I will provide you with whatever you desire during life: purpose, social worth, wisdom, health, happiness, wealth ... whatever." "Come on down and let's make a deal!" was the Devil's new service. Of course, the cost of souls goes up with this kind of offer, but like a few other kinder, gentler Gods before him (remember Prometheus?) he felt that being fair with the customer was the right thing to do and, let's be honest, good business.

Admittedly, in early days, things were a little rough. There was no view, for example. But once central heating was added and the free, public transit ferry across the Styx was established, things became quite pleasant. Think about it. How many people in the world today can look forward to an eternal retirement in a condo with central heating and a river view? And what was God still handing out? Everybody had to wear a stupid uniform (cheap, white, 'once size fits all' togas); be told what to do by a gang of grinning, winged bureaucrats; and live in a dormitory where you couldn't see squat for all the smog. And remember this, at no time while the Devil was competing with God did he ever stoop to God's and the heavenly host's violent tactics and he always maintained the same high quality of service for the customers.

Needless to say, with such a deal, the Devil began to get more customers. And, as one would expect, just like AT&T, God didn't just go away or leave the Devil alone or

even compete fairly. He employed predatory marketing practices, false advertising, violence, and terrorism. Like the Wise Use movement and Republicans, he organized the less bright and very greedy angels to attack the Devil, his operations, and even his customers and finally and successfully managed to convince most people that the Devil was offering a very, very bad deal.

Still have doubts about the Devil? Consider this. Is the Devil ever jealous? No! Has anybody ever tried to get your money to help in the Devil's work? No! Did the Devil ever callously and deliberately torment and torture an innocent person just to prove unshakable customer loyalty as God did with Job? No! Did anyone, anywhere, at anytime, go to war in the name of the Devil? No! How much verifiable evidence is there of Devil worshippers ever causing harm to anyone? None! How much undisputed evidence is there of God worshippers causing horrible harm? Read a history book. Did the Devil ever abandon his children when he was needed most, as God did with his son? No!

And do you know why God abandoned his boy? Father and Son didn't see eye to eye on a number of social issues. The lad was pitching weird ideas like: help the poor, support the meek, turn the other cheek, love your enemy. If you think this was good news to God, ask poor Lot or his wife, a pillar of the community. So the kid had to go. And, the God squad hung him out to dry.

The miracle is that God, the heavenly spin doctors, and some grave robbers managed to turn the whole sorry affair into a public relations coup. Said it was done to save mankind. Yeah, right! Look around! And the monopoly went on stronger than ever before. Actually, Mary Magdalene caught them robbing the grave and planned to expose the whole mess. She was the one funding all the kid's work; none of the disciples had any money. So what did the God guys do? Told everyone Mary was a hooker, blamed the whole thing on the Jews, and totally let the

Romans off the hook. Why? Because the Italians were the big power of the day and, unlike the Jews, threw good parties, ran great restaurants, and made wine you could actually drink. Ever wonder why God is so hard on the Jews? Because Moses not only had the gall to negotiate with Him (the only other guy that ever did that was the Devil), but even cut Him down to only ten commandments. And do you know what's really sad about all this, the Devil tried to warn and save the kid, but he wouldn't listen. Thought he could reason with Dad. In your dreams!

So, when the Irish say, "May ya' be half an hour in Heav'n, 'fore the Devil knows yer gone," think about the Potato Famine and the Troubles. That was their reward.

And so why is it that to this very day God prevails and most people think of the Devil as a really unlikable, scary fellow? Because advertising works. Advertising is the incontestable proof that lays waste to the myth of human intelligence. Just ask Noam Chomsky.

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