

Satanists Don't Believe in Satan, So Why the Statue in Detroit?

The Satanic Temple in Detroit has unveiled a 1-ton bronze tribute to Satan. The statue depicts a person with a goat's head, horns and wings. The image is flanked by statues of a young girl and boy gazing up at the creature in adoration.

However, the Satanic Temple says it doesn't believe in Satan. The group views the devil as "a literary figure, not a deity—he stands for rationality, for skepticism, for speaking truth to power."

So Satanists stand for rationality and truth?

New York Times columnist Ross Douthat explains why Planned Parenthood apologists have avoided commenting on the actual content in recently-released videos: "Because dwelling on that content gets you uncomfortably close to ... that moment when you start pondering the possibility that an institution at the heart of respectable liberal society is dedicated to a practice that deserves to be called barbarism." Abortion supporters will continue to focus on women's rights while ignoring "human beings that the nice, idealistic medical personnel at Planned Parenthood have spent their careers crushing, evacuating and carving up for parts."

How did our culture get so far from truth?

Evangelical scholar Os Guinness notes that recent decades have witnessed an astonishing rise in consumer choices, a phenomenon he calls the McDonaldization of our culture. I remember when TV had three channels and we went on vacation to see our grandparents because that was all our family could afford. Today's consumer is immersed in choices—what to wear,

to buy, to see, to do. Our very lives seem to be the product of our choices.

Why wouldn't we believe that reality is what we choose it to be? Why wouldn't we believe the lie that there are no lies? Why wouldn't we make Satan a symbolic literary figure and abortion a harmless reproductive choice?

Here's where Christians must beware. You and I live in the same consumer culture. Our lives are equally constituted by our choices, or so we think. We may believe that we make better choices than others. But we can be just as deceived into thinking that we are what we decide to be.

Over the weekend I read Brennan Manning's classic *Abba's Child*. Manning defines our core identity as the fact that we are loved infinitely and passionately by the God who is our "Abba," "Daddy." To accept this identity, we must reject all others. We must admit that we are nothing without God and that our choices cannot change this fact.

Manning quotes Thomas Merton: "The reason we never enter into the deepest reality of our relationship with God is that we so seldom acknowledge our utter nothingness before Him." He agrees with St. Augustine: "There can only be two basic loves, the love of God unto the forgetfulness of self, or the love of self unto the forgetfulness and denial of God."

Reality is ultimately not what you choose, but what your Creator has chosen. He has chosen to like you, to love you, to die for you, to rise for you, to prepare your place in paradise, to walk beside you and in you right now. He longs for you to see yourself as he sees you—the child of your Abba.

"Consider how much love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God" (1 John 3:1).

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