

Basis of Church Doctrine

The Logical Structure of our World View

The Axioms of the Church of Reality



An axiom is a self-evident truth upon which other knowledge must rest, from which other knowledge is built up. Even though we still question our axioms, a religion has to start somewhere and declare that certain assumptions are true. These axioms make up the roots of the Tree of Knowledge upon which our religion is founded. They form the basis for our world view.

Reality exists. The Earth exists. The Human race exists. Life on this planet evolved over billions of years. We exist. We function as a society. We share knowledge. There exists a wealth of knowledge that we as a human race share. We are self-aware. We have the ability to make decisions. We have comprehension. Our decisions have consequences. Our species is continuing to evolve. Our technology is growing. We have the technology to exterminate ourselves. We are aware of time. We are aware of the past, the present, and the future. We know that many life forms on this planet became extinct. We are the descendents of species that continued to evolve.

This is a description of the reality we live in. In many important ways it sums up our existence. It is what we have to work with. Will we survive and continue to evolve, or will we become extinct? If we continue to evolve, what will we evolve into? Do we have control over what we will become? If we do have control over our evolution, what shall we choose? Or should we choose extinction? Since we can exterminate ourselves, should we?

This is reality. Welcome to the real world. Welcome to the world where everything is the way it really is. A world where there are no fictional beings to fix our mistakes. A world where we are alone and responsible for our own decisions, responsible both individually and collectively. A world of great wonderment, unlimited possibilities, or terrifying consequences. A world that we can turn into whatever we want it to become. This is the real world. The way things really are.

In pure science the universe is just stars exploding and rocks in space bumping into each other. The universe doesn't care if we evolve or become extinct. It only matters to us in that we choose evolution over extinction.

The universe doesn't care about us. Stars explode. Solar systems are sucked into black holes. This planet is but a speck of dust in the universe. Our entire galaxy is but a speck of dust in the universe. If our galaxy blew up tomorrow it would take 2.2 million years before anyone in the next galaxy even knew it happened. If there were anyone in the next galaxy, that is. And there are trillions of galaxies. We live for just a moment in time. There is no universal right or wrong. Whatever happens is whatever happens. If the sun explodes, then it is just one of trillions of stars that explode.



The human race is very young and we are just beginning to become aware of what we are, how we relate to the reality around us, and the responsibilities we face in determining our future. We have choice, so what do we do with that? What shall we choose for ourselves? How will we decide to relate to reality?



Not all of the axioms of the Church of Reality are based only on objective truth. That's because the Church of Reality isn't a religion of science. The Church of Reality is about people who are exploring reality from a human perspective. We have created a set of arbitrary axioms, choosing to give value to the human experience. We have made a religious choice to create a doctrine based on the premise that humanity should progress forward and continue to evolve into something greater than it is today.

What we choose to do is subjective. And the definition of right and wrong become defined in relation to the choices we make. If, for example, we choose to end our existence, to become extinct, then anything that leads to extinction becomes right and anything that leads to evolution becomes wrong. If we decide to make up a fictional story and to dedicate ourselves to the fictional story, then anything that we do that supports the fiction becomes right and anything we do that goes against the fiction becomes wrong.

The concepts of right and wrong are relative to the choices we make and the principles that support those choices. These are arbitrary choices and, since we have free will, we can do anything we want to do. Different people have made different choices about their own lives, the lives in their group, and the future of the human race. Some people choose extinction. Most people have settled for a fiction. Some people have chosen reality. These are religious choices. In fact - the definition of religion is the choices we make in how we are going to relate to our existence.

The Church of Reality is a religion and in our religion we have made the following religious choices. These are the subjective axioms that form the basis of Church of Reality doctrine.

1. **We Choose to Understand Reality and to Believe in what is Really Real** - We choose to reject fictional beliefs and to use the abilities that we have evolved and to take the knowledge that has been handed down to us (the **Tree of Knowledge** as we call it) and use it to know more about the reality around us. We seek real truth and understanding and we choose to dedicate our lives and our existence, both

individually and as a society, to this purpose. Because we dedicate ourselves to the exploration of reality, we call ourselves Realists.

2. **We Choose Evolution over Extinction** - We are **Realists** in the practice of **Realism**, and to explore our reality we have to continue to survive, to evolve forward, and to continue our course of evolution in a positive direction. We call this the **Sacred Direction**.
3. **We Accept Responsibility** - We understand that our actions, and inactions, have consequences. We accept the laws of cause and effect; we comprehend that we have choice and that the choices we make have results and consequences. Therefore, we commit to expend the effort to determine the right and wrong choices in relation to our goals to survive, to understand reality, and to evolve forward. We will work toward making the right choices.
4. **We Own Ourselves** - Our lives are our own. We have ownership of our own lives. This means that we have the right to make the choices that affect our lives, to control our own destiny, to be free to speak out, to take action in our own interests and in the interest of our society. We have the right to personal privacy, and to be secure in our person and our property. We are not the subjects of any nation state nor are our rights limited to what nation state allow us to do. Nations are an artificial construct that exist only for the purpose of serving the needs of humanity. Self ownership is a personal commitment to think for ourselves, to resist control and oppression by other people. To take back our lives and our reality. Because we assert our rights so do we respect the same rights of other individuals.
5. **We are a Society** - We can not achieve our objectives if we allow **Extinctionist** religions to succeed or allow fiction-based religions, which envision a future of annihilation, to prevail over our choice to survive and to flourish. To the extent that the goals of their religions deny us our goals, we commit to doing whatever it takes to ensure that we prevail. We can not allow ourselves, as a society, to destroy our existence and to become extinct. We support the creation and maintenance of a healthy society that is design for the sole purpose of serving the advancement of the human race.
6. **We are Humanity** - We are dedicated to the **Positive Evolution** of people--not government, not machines, not corporations, not monarchies, not religions, and not fictional deities. Our loyalties lie with people. Furthermore, this religion isn't just about reality itself, but about reality as experienced by the human race. We are people who are exploring reality together, as a society. Therefore, we have to take care of the human factor to enable humans to explore reality.

These arbitrary choices, our religious choices, form the basis for the Sacred Choices, the Sacred Principles, and the Sacred Missions. Together these religious choices form the basis for separating right from wrong, good from evil. They create a standard against which to test our choices so that we can achieve our religious goals. The religious doctrine of the Church of Reality grows out of the facts and choices upon which we base our religion.

Logical Basis of Church Doctrine

The initial premise for the Church of Reality leads to several logical conclusions. Our church doctrine isn't just a random collection of personal opinions. What we believe in forms a logical structure based on our commitment to the pursuit of reality.

Since we choose to explore reality and we know that one person does not build a Hubble

Telescope in the back yard, we know the exploration of reality requires an organized effort by many people. It is logical to conclude that a strong functional society is required in order to achieve our objectives.

We evolve forward through advancing human understanding. We therefore are interested in issues that promote education and the sciences. We encourage freedom of ideas that are not inhibited by intellectual property barriers. We are concerned about fiction-based cults obtaining weapons of mass destruction to fulfill their Armageddon fantasies. Times of peace create a better environment for advancing our understanding of reality than times of war. Individuality and diversity inspire creativity and avoid **Intellectual Incest**.

The Church of Reality doctrine is the logical extension of our goals and our axioms. It is the set of rules that supports our world view.

Doctrine is first based on our missions. We define what it is that we want to accomplish. It starts with the name of our church. We are the Church of Reality. We believe in what's real. This a nice phrase but how do we live that? Since we don't know all that's real it's logical to conclude that we don't really believe in what's real, but we aspire to discover what is real and we commit to choosing reality over fiction. What we are really doing is making a religious commitment to the disciplines that keep the mind focused on distinguishing reality from fiction. This is the basis for church doctrine relating to personal improvement.

We also have a mission to expand our knowledge of what's real. We identify ourselves as explorers. So it's not just a commitment to what we presently know to be real, but to expand that to grow and evolve. The more reality we discover the more we can build on that to discover even more reality. Thus our doctrines relating to intellectual property, education, individuality, and freedom serve the mission to expand our understanding.

The doctrine is to our religion as what an operating system is to a computer. The doctrine is the collection of principles that make our religion work.

The human race is a collection of individuals who share knowledge. We explore reality as a society and share our knowledge with each other in a vast network of minds. The better society functions the better we can explore reality. Since our mission to explore reality depends on society, we have to build a strong social structure to fulfill our religious goals. Like all other religions we have a stake in what is right and wrong, laws, social justice, fairness, honesty, integrity, accountability and individualism so that we can flourish together and progress as a species. We also have to make sure the electricity stays on so that we can run our computers. Everyone needs to eat, drink clean water, breathe clean air, have medicine and health care, roads and bridges, and all the day-to-day stuff that makes life work. Without society there can be no cooperative exploration of reality. So the Church of Reality doctrine must cover issues of society so that we can better explore reality together.

Since the human mind is an imperfect tool to explore reality with and humans often make mistakes we can not explore reality unless we embrace change. That change being to move towards more accuracy. Stagnation doesn't accomplish advancement. We therefore must not only change but change in a positive direction. Thus the **Principle of Positive**

Evolution is the cornerstone of our sacred principles and forward is our **Sacred Direction**. We embrace evolution as the process by which we move forward. Our world view is that we can choose to take control of our evolution and choose what we will become. Since our missions involve the exploration of reality we choose to evolve forward making tomorrow better than today and the next generation better than this generation. Our doctrine therefore covers issues relating to the positive evolution of humanity.

The Church of Reality isn't about science. We are about people.

The Church of Reality isn't about science. Science is for scientists. Religion is about people. The Church of Reality isn't just about reality itself. It's about people exploring reality from a human perspective. In addition to the objective facts of the universe we have chosen to accept some purely subjective axioms for purely selfish reasons that have nothing to do with objective reality. These subjective axioms are what makes the Church of Reality a religion and form the basis for our world view. In the cold darkness of space there is no right and wrong. Nothing has value. Nothing is important. Nothing is interesting. Concepts like right and wrong, good and evil, worth, value, importance, these are all totally subjective in nature and are based on our own selfish choices from a human perspective. We choose evolution over extinction. Other religions choose extinction over evolution. Our axioms are the basis for our world view which form the basis for the doctrine of this religion. Even though we choose to explore reality as it really is doesn't mean that reality has chosen us. Science doesn't care about us. We care about science. Our doctrine is a logical extension of our subjective axioms.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/basis_of_church_doctrine

Welcome Home ▶ Church Organization

The Structure of The Church

How the Church of Reality is Organized

Organizational Hierarchy

The Church of Reality is still a small Church. This is the current organization of the Church. It is subject to change in the future. Many positions are yet to be filled.

The Council of Realists - The High Council of Realists is the Board of directors of the Church of Reality.

Marc Perkel - Marc Perkel is the First One of the Church of Reality. He is the person who came up with the idea and is the person who is presently responsible for the creation of Church doctrine. He is the visionary behind the creation of this organization. Marc Perkel is a self taught individual who has become an expert in philosophy, law, computer hardware and software, systems administration, and religious beliefs. Marc is a writer and has an extensive web site at perkel.com. He runs a small web hosting company specializing in free speech issues. He is also a former systems administrator (root) for the [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#).

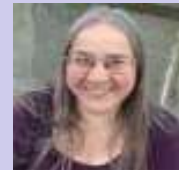


Robin Gross - Robin Gross is a San Francisco based attorney specializing in intellectual property issues. Robin is the founder of [IP Justice](#) - a nonprofit organization dealing with international copyright and patent issues. She is on the board of directors for the Union for the Public Domain. She teaches international copyright law at Santa Clara University School of Law. She is on the Advisory Board for Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility - Peru. And Robin is licensed as clergy by the State of California.



Robin travels the world giving speeches, organizing, and advising policy makers from around the world on the impact of intellectual property rules on traditional rights and innovation. Robin has made it her mission in life to protect the Tree of Knowledge from being choked off by over-broad copyright laws. She is also a former staff attorney for the [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#).

Deborah Pierce - Deborah Pierce is founder and Executive Director of [PrivacyActivism](#). Her work focuses on consumer education campaigns, advocacy, and analysis of privacy issues, with particular emphasis on data flow, data matching, privacy risks associated with data collection, and biometrics.



Deborah is currently a member of the University of Washington's Shidler Center for Law, Commerce and Technology Advisory Committee. She has been on several committees to help find solutions to privacy and security threats, including the Washington State Bar Association's Access to Justice (a committee formed to develop more detailed guidelines addressing the issue of the technological impact on privacy within the justice system) and the Federal Trade Commission's advisory panel on online access and security.

In April 2005, Deborah chaired the 15th Annual [Computers, Freedom, and Privacy \(CFP\) conference](#). CFP is a conference that has played a major role in the public debate on the future of privacy and freedom in the online world and brings together attendees and an audience from government, business, education, and non-profits, as well as from the

community of computer professionals, hackers, crackers and engineers who work the code of cyberspace. The themes have been broad and forward-looking. CFP explores what will be. It is the place where the future is mapped.

In her previous role as a staff attorney for the **Electronic Frontier Foundation**, she worked on issues related to electronic privacy, database information collection and personal identity. Deborah was the inspiration for the Sacred Principle of Privacy.

Administration - The Administration is the business end of the Church of Reality. The administration is run by the executive director who is responsible for the executive staff and conducting the business of the church.

Marc Perkel - Currently Marc Perkel - the First One - is also the Executive Director. Some day when we are bigger the Executive Director will be someone else.

Technical Staff

Marc Perkel - Webmaster

Michele Kaeder - Technical Assistant

Owlsan - Technical Assistant

Paul Gaskin - Logo Design, Artist

David Lewis - Voice Artist

Joe from Digital Images Design - Web Monk

Editorial Staff

Marc Perkel - Visionary

Michele Kaeder - Editor

Carole Fanning - Editor

The Monks of the Order of Root - Are the highly committed members who are maintainers of projects and have the power and authority to fulfil their missions. The Monks of the Church of Reality get their direction from the Executive Director.

The Beacons - The Beacons are the clergy of the Church of Reality.

The Membership - People who have taken the Oath of Reality, by accepting the Sacred Choices and identifying themselves as Realists. Through the Sacred Choices they have committed themselves to the Sacred Missions and The Sacred Principles.

Church Law and Religious Rights

Church law and religious rights are set fourth here in the **Kernel** which is our **Church Doctrine**. This doctrine might include external references like **Humanism** or **United Nations Declaration of Human Rights**. This forms the documentation of our belief system which is a growing and evolving document. The First One and the Council of Realists have the power and authority to interpret church law and doctrine. Issues not covered

specifically, or where there is a controversy over the meaning of church doctrine, may be settled by an edict of the First One.

Ordaining Church Clergy - Beacons

The Church of Reality is not one of those churches that passes out ministries by mail order like the **Universal Life Church**. To become a **Beacon** you have to get the consensus of the Council of Realists. You first have to be a Monk of the Order of Root and you need to start a project of some sort that is doing some sort of work that requires clergy status. This kind of work might include weddings, funerals, counseling, visiting prison inmates, youth programs, or speaking to groups on behalf of the church. Clergy status is granted to those people who are actually doing something or close to doing something where clergy status is required or will significantly enhance the performing of the project duties.

Control Issues

Control issues are something that is going to be a challenge for me. Like everyone else, I like being in charge. It means that I get to get my way. On the other hand it means that I'm going to have to deal with a lot of crap from everyone. People are going to be pushing me to go in directions that I don't want to go in. There will be ego battles. People getting offended because I didn't reply to their email. People getting offended because I didn't even read their email. Christians who want to save my soul. Muslims will want to have me killed. The news media will demonize me if I'm lucky enough to get them interested enough to demonize me. This is going to be a lot of hard work.

One of the key elements will be finding the right people early on who really get the idea of what this church is about, and have the talent to help make it happen. I'm hoping to be able to delegate control to the right people, yet I fear losing control and the early church falling victim to infighting or getting pushed off track over gay issues, race issues, politics, vegans, or other things that have nothing to do with the mission of the Church of Reality. I'm going to make mistakes. I'm going to piss people off and in some cases it will be my fault. There will be things that I could have handled better and mistakes will be made. I'm trying to go into this without a big ego though and not claiming supernatural inspiration.

One thing to keep in mind is that the Church of Reality is about reality, not about Marc Perkel. So if I get caught in a motel with a hooker then that's just about me. Reality itself isn't changed by that. I am not the spokesperson or the vicar of an omnipotent power. I didn't invent reality, reality invented me. So for the record, I apologize in advance to the people I am about to offend and ask in advance for your forgiveness and understanding for the things I'm going to do wrong. Now that I have pre-apologized, I can go ahead and screw up.

Everyone has a brain and brains are generally similar. Different people have different abilities both physically and mentally. For example, when I see Olympic gymnasts and compare them to what I can do physically, what they can do almost looks superhuman to me. When it comes to art and music, I can't even comprehend how to even start. If I were given the task to completely clean and organize my apartment, I don't know if I could do it. I don't read well because I'm dyslexic and I have some attention problems. My brain is so full that in order to learn something new I have to forget something to make room for it.

But for some reason I seem to have a talent for seeing the big picture. I can see the forest from within the trees as the saying goes. My ability to do that to the degree that I do, seems to be rare to the point of scary. Why am I inventing the Church of Reality? Why isn't it already here? Why isn't it obvious? I mean - now that you've heard of it - Church of Reality - a religion based on believing in what's real - it's obvious now. So why am I the first person in the history of the world to take it this far? To me this is spooky. I don't want to be the smartest being in the universe anymore. (kidding!) But on a more serious note - there have got to be some other people out there who can do what I'm doing even better than me. Whatever it is that I do needs to be understood and replicated. It is really clear to me that there are not enough big thinkers in the world and whatever it is that is unusual about me, I think it can be learned. So go learn it.

Internet Based Religion

The Church of Reality is an Internet based religion. Traditionally, churches have started in the location of the church founder(s) and have developed over the centuries from there. Many of these religions are forks of existing religions. Someone told me, and I don't know if this figure is accurate, that there are 33,000 forks of Christianity in existence. Many of these forks have occurred in the last 100 years and I believe that new technology has played a role in that. As new technology has developed, religions have used it to spread their gospels.

We now have a new phenomenon called the TV preacher who is a preacher who has learned that he can use technology to break the time and space limitations of a physical church. Churches have the limitation that all the people have to be there in the same spatial and temporal coordinates limiting their reach to those who can physically attend. The TV preacher breaks these limitations allowing the message to reach people in different locations and with video recording to allow people to be reached who are not in the same time frame as the preacher.

The Church of Reality is designed to be a web based religion that is similar to the way the Linux operating system was developed.

In the Church of Reality we embrace the latest technology in that our religion was actually founded on the Internet. It was done that way by design allowing us to be out there in front of the entire world from the very first day that it went online. In fact, with the recognition of the future as the Sacred Direction, it would almost be a sin for the Church of Reality not to use state of the art technology - not to create a network of like minded realists around the world - not to form the core of our beliefs and share them with the entire planet in real time. We use the Web to shed ourselves of the limitations of Time and Space. With the power of this technology I can not imagine any new religion not taking advantage of it. We therefore shed ourselves of the limitations of location and declare the Web to be our home.

As a role model for our development, I turn to the development of the Linux operating system as a model of how I see this church growing. Back in the olden times, in the long long ago(1950 - 1990), programmers worked together on software in the same location. But in the 1980s and on, people started building a community around the development of

free software and making all the tools free for everyone to use. In 1991, Linus Torvalds started writing a Unix-like operating system that became known as Linux. Linux was uploaded onto a server and other programmers around the world became interested in it and started developing a community around the Linux project. That community of developers is in the hundreds of thousands and now there are over 100,000 free software projects that have formed communities around their software most of which runs with Linux. And now every person who uses any computer anywhere is probably using many programs that came from these communities. The Internet, which we refer to as the Sacred Router, was created from a software community of people working together over the internet with no central location. The Church of Reality is designed to develop in the same structure model as Linux.

This model works for software development and I think it will work for our religion as well. The Doctrine of the Church of Reality is like writing the Operating System for the Human Race

The Church of Reality is a community project that is location independent for the most part and is a product of the people who join in on the project. Right now we are developing the Kernel of the Church. Once the Kernel is sufficiently developed, we can add in all the other stuff that churches do, and then some.

Religion as Software

The connection between creating a religion based on reality and writing software is very strong. Although writing software is more precise and predictable, it is nonetheless amazingly similar. In particular the logical organization of the structure is a very similar process. We're trying to figure out the overall design, what the human interface will look like, what features it will have, creating the documentation, and most importantly, how to attract and work with a community of developers. I see the model created by open source programming communities as being something that I really like in that it works well and achieves a goal in a very sane way. It's almost like religion and software have the same kind of connection as gravity and inertia.

Church Doctrine

At present the Church of Reality doctrine is written by Marc Perkel with the approval of the High Council of Realists, and with input and suggestions from anyone who has good ideas to contribute or provides inspiration. At present the Church is in the very initial stages of creation and the present structure must change and will change in the future.

The Church of Reality can be compared to an open source GPL software development project. Software projects usually start with one person who gets an idea for something and goes off and starts developing it. Sometimes he shares his code, or at least his ideas, with his friends, but he does the development by himself to start with. Eventually he starts releasing his work to the world that downloads it and runs it. If the program is a good program and people find it useful, they will start giving the author feedback telling him



what's not working, what needs to be added, requesting better documentation, and spreading the word about this great new program.

As time goes on a community develops around the author of the program and the author is overwhelmed by the growth in usage of his software. The first thing he does is create some kind of online support forum, a discussion mailing list, or a bulletin board. This allows users to communicate with each other and support each other freeing the developer of the burden of support. But if the software is really successful, it gets to a point where a single person can no longer keep up with the development demands.



At this point you have other skilled programmers writing add-on software to make the software better. This might be done independently or through an application interface that the developer creates to support plug in modules. The developer might open up the code base in a way that allows many other developers to work on different parts of the software. If the developer is successful in integrating other developers and / or allowing plugin development, then a good community forms around the software project and eventually there may be millions of people who are involved with the software.

The Church of Reality can be compared to an open source software project. At least - that is the official plan for how this church is to grow. This is a GPL project in the early stages of development. We still haven't got to version 1.0 yet and the initial code of the religion is still being written. So even though the church doctrine has only one developer and one maintainer now, it is not the way it will stay in the future. For the church to evolve into what it is designed to become, it must grow beyond the limitations of Marc Perkel as sole developer.



The Vision of the First One

To continue the software project analogy, in the beginning of a project it is necessary for the person who has the overall vision to be allowed to complete their initial work on the project. In this case the project is to write the structure of the natural religion of the human race. And I have to come up with this without the benefits of having supernatural powers or even the inspiration of omnipotent beings. This is starting out as the work of one guy with an idea that he came up with one night while smoking a joint. It's a huge job with awesome implications. Nonetheless, I seem to be stuck with it and I'm going to do as good a job of getting this started off in the right direction as I can.

Like other software projects, there is a time where the developer needs to maintain sole control of his work until it is sufficiently developed to the point where it can be cleanly handed over to a larger group of people who can continue to take it forward and have it develop organically into what it was originally designed to become. The Church of Reality is still in the pre-release beta testing stage where it is open for scrutiny and suggestions. I have opened it up for external editing. I have someone who is fixing the grammar and spelling, so there is a second developer who at least has a minor role in directly controlling the final product. I continue to listen to the ideas of other people to incorporate into the project. I am not the one who thought of everything here. A lot of people deserve credit for coming up with the concepts used here. But it is in the design specifications to turn this

project into a community based project and have it develop a life beyond the original designer. In fact - this feature is considered a necessary feature of the final product.

At what point and to what extent does the developer relinquish control to the community? That is a tough question indeed. And it is especially tough for me as someone who isn't the most highly skilled at working with other people. I am somewhat inspired by the work of Linus Torvalds, the developer of the Linux operating system and one of the greatest contributions to the Tree of Knowledge in the history of the world. Linus developed Linux using the **GNU free software development tools** developed by **Richard Stallman**, to create a Unix like operating system. He started it on his own and eventually attracted other developers. Now Linux is the accumulated work of hundreds of thousands of people and is in use on tens of millions of computers, which serve directly or indirectly every single person on the planet.



My true role in the Church of Reality is that I am the Project Manager and I am developing a public domain religion.

Linus is still in control of Linux and rules over it as a benevolent dictator of sorts. Linus has assumed a position of great responsibility and trust and has maintained his position as leader of a great movement and has kept his original vision on track and true to its purpose. Linux today has grown far beyond what Linus originally dreamed of, yet is true to the original vision of what it should become. It didn't degenerate into chaos or something that was unrelated to its original intent. It has remained pure, and it is my hope that whatever happens that the Church of Reality develops to be as true to its original conception as Linux has done.

Linus's official role in Linux is project coordinator. I think of myself as the project coordinator for the Church of Reality. Some people (jokingly) refer to me as the Pope of Reality but I am not a pope. I'm just the guy who keeps the project on track.

So - if I do a good job and it works out, perhaps I too will remain the project coordinator for many years to come. Or it might turn out that I attract others who have superior skills and fully understand the power of the original vision behind the church and will gracefully take charge of this project but continue to be true to the vision of a natural religion that is rooted in reality and true to the Principle of Positive Evolution. I do not know which way this church will evolve, but quite frankly, if better people came along who wanted to take on this task and can do a better job of it than me, I am totally fine with it. I am a lazy person, so if someone else wants to do my work - go for it! I am always looking for volunteers.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/church_structure/

[Welcome Home](#) ▶ Evangelizing Reality

Evangelizing Reality

Spreading the Good News about the Real World

Converting People to Realism

How do we spread the word? How do we convert people to Realism? What kind of reaction should we expect when talking to people about reality? How do we get people to accept reality as their belief system? These are not simple questions. To people like me and many of you reading this, it's confusing to us that everyone isn't a Realist already. To us it's "Reality - Of course! Duh!" But to others it is a much more complex problem because they too think they believe in some form of reality, but it is often a narrative taught to them from early childhood that they have come to rely upon and accept as their world view.

Belief in fictional deities is one of the root axioms that they have built their awareness around and for which a lot of their personal world view relies upon. If they were, for example, to realize that God is fiction then it would change their entire world. Many of their friends will reject them. They might not have a place in their church community anymore. They would have to endure the stigma that other religions have put on Atheism as something that is evil, or a disease, a form of mental illness, something that must be cured. This is a very big step for most people who rely upon the comfort of their place in society and are not willing to put their social position at risk.

**The first purpose of the human brain is to survive,
not to process logic.**

The human mind is not a computer. It is the result of an evolutionary process over billions of years. Its primary purpose is to help ensure the survival of the human species. We are the descendants of those who managed to adhere to that purpose. Those who survived and evolved and reproduced are our ancestors. Those who didn't are not. Thus our minds are biologically programmed for survival, to find food, to defend against enemies, to reproduce and ensure the survival of our children so they too can reproduce, to form societies for the mutual benefit of our mutual survival. Logic and reason are side effects of this neurological process. So the concept of reality might make instant sense to a computer, to a human it's often a difficult concept to grasp. When you look at the brain as a biological organ rather than a computing device, a lot of human behavior is more understandable. We are a bag of chemicals, not a robot. Changing religions isn't like wiping a hard disk and installing something else. The mind is a living system and it requires more of a migration plan. You can't usually just rewrite everything a person believes in instantly unless they are in some crisis and already looking for an instant change. Change may take time, a lot of time. It might just be gradual over years. It might take centuries. But the process begins now and it is up to us to understand it as best we can so that we can put the world back on a reality based footing and avoid being the victim of some other religion's [Extinctionist](#) fantasy.

What we are up against in Other Religions

What we are up against in fiction based religions is that using the name of God they can promise you anything. They have everlasting bliss in Heaven, 70 virgins, omnipotent intervention, an inflated sense of self worth, a loving community, **ego treats**, a sense of some grand purpose, and of course, burning in Hell forever for those who fail to believe. One thing that religions understand is that they start brainwashing their children early because they understand that the earlier they establish mental patterns the harder it is to change them.

Like the tricks that the tobacco industry uses to make cigarettes as addictive as possible, religions have evolved techniques to make their religion as addictive as possible.

Conversion to fiction based religions is easier than reality based religions. If a person is in an emotional crisis and someone comes along offering them a solution to their problems, they might just go for it. After all, it's so easy. All you have to do is believe and an omnipotent protector is going to intervene on your behalf and take care of you forever. What a deal! People want the quick fix. Reality often isn't a pretty picture. If someone is in a real bind then they have to do hard work to get out of it.

If they have lost someone they want to believe that they will be reunited with their lost loved one in some afterlife. We want to believe that when we die that we are going to go to a better place, or at least something other than ceasing to exist. We want to believe that our total existence is more than 75 years and then we are gone. And it's really easy for religions to create false hope because there aren't any dead people out there who have come back from the afterlife to talk about it. If the dead could talk a lot of religions would be in big trouble.

Conversion to Realism is an Evolutionary Process

Rarely is a person likely to instantly convert from a strongly theistic religion to Realism. Perhaps if they just had a traumatic experience where they were really burned by a religion and just realized that what they thought was real was fiction, then they might be ready to instantly embrace reality. But if people are comfortable in their beliefs and they are socially integrated into their religious culture, then there's no strong motivation to accept reality. Some people will even admit that. They will tell you that it doesn't matter if it's real or not as long as it makes them happy.

What we have to offer is reality the way it really is. It may not seem as robust as the world of fantasy but it is real, and I think that if reality is fully explored that it is as robust if not more so than the world of fiction. Certainly it is more robust than the fictions that most religions are offering today.

Converting Atheists to Realism



Realists and Atheists are not the same thing although Atheism is a reality-based position. Our slogan as realists is, "If it's real, we believe in it." Atheism can perhaps be summed up in the statement, "If it's not real then we don't believe in it." While it is true that God doesn't exist, Atheism doesn't go beyond that. Once you prove that God doesn't exist, then what? What fills the vacuum? What do Atheists believe in? How do they define right and wrong? How are we supposed to live our lives? What is our purpose? If there is no God then does morality go away?

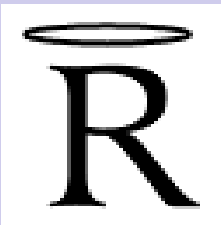


You can't replace something with nothing. Even if the something is merely the illusion of something. Other religions are about what people believe in. Atheism is about what people don't believe in. That gives religion an advantage in any debate because something generally beats nothing. It's not an argument of equals. That's where Realism comes in. Realism is about the belief in reality as it really is. Realism is about what you do believe in, not about what you don't believe in. Realism is about what is real, not about what isn't real. It's a positive position rather than a negative position.

**The difference between Atheism and Realism is that
Atheism is about what isn't real. Realism is about
what is real.**

Religions assert a belief in deities. Atheism asserts there are no deities but stops there. Realism directly challenges other religions on the basis of what is real. Whether God exists or God doesn't exist is the wrong debate. Why waste our time arguing about fiction when there's all this wonderful reality around us to explore. When it comes down to it, Atheism isn't any more relevant than Theism because both sides are focused on the unreal. But who is there to talk about what is real? We are. We are the Church of Reality and we are here to explore reality as it really is. We are here to answer the tough questions, to explore the big issues. We are here to do the hard work of making reality work in the real world.

**A person is defined by what they believe in, not by
what they don't believe in. You are defined by what
you are, not by what you aren't.**



Realism is about something. Atheism is about nothing. Yes it is true that there is no God, but so what? There are a lot of things I don't believe in that don't exist so why is not believing in God any more important than not believing in Spider Man? God doesn't exist and God is therefore not important. Atheists are doing important but limited work in making the point against a very big myth but Atheism is at best just the first step in awakening to the wonders of reality.

We live in an amazing world. The more I learn about it the more amazing it is. I'm interested in what's real. I want to learn about space-time. I want to learn about quantum theory. I want to know what happened in the first billionth of a second after the Big Bang. I want to know how organic molecules were first formed on this planet. I want to know how

they organized into early proteins. I want to understand the origin of life and how it evolved on this planet. Who are we and how did we get here?

Once you figure out God doesn't exist, what do you do next? The next step is to figure out what does exist. Realism is the next logical step in the evolution of Atheism.

But after the history is over, what I want to know is what are we doing? What is our mission? How are we supposed to live and what is the rationale behind society? What are we evolving into? What will our future be like? We are at the point where we can control our own evolution. We can choose what we as the human race will become. What will we evolve into? Now that we can change our genetic structure, when will we start building better replacement parts for our bodies?

As we expand our minds using computers and technology to see back to the moment of the beginning of time, as we discover new particles, as we figure out how to change matter into energy, and back into matter we ask what are we and what do we want to become?

We do not focus on fiction. We focus on what is real. We do the hard work of answering the big questions as best we can. We are a people who want to learn. We want to make life work. We want to create solutions in the real world. So I say to all Atheists reading this, why waste your life focusing on what isn't real when you can focus on what is real? Christians and Atheists are alike in that they both focus on a fictional God. One asserts that God does exist, the other asserts that God doesn't. Realists don't focus on God. God is a waste of time. God is irrelevant. Reality is relevant. That's why being a Realist is better than being an Atheist. Being a Realist is about something. Being an Atheist is about nothing. I choose to make my life about something.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/evangelizing_reality/

Welcome Home ▶ FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

~ Reality FAQ ~

We Answer the Tough Questions

There are a lot of good questions about the Church of Reality. Here are some of the more common ones. Hopefully you will find the answers here. Our **Principle of Scrutiny and Doubt** encourages people to question everything. We like questions because they help us to evolve forward to make sure we get it right. Any time someone is questioning us they are thinking about reality, which is one of our missions. We want you to not only understand what we are about, but to join us in improving our doctrine. If this doesn't answer your

questions you can join our [Discussion Forum](#) and hopefully a real person will answer your question.

FAQ about Reality

You say you believe in real reality. How do you know your view of reality is real?

We don't. Our claim to believe in reality the way it really is, actually is a goal. As we all know, no one knows everything about reality. So the Church of Reality is really a religious commitment to the pursuit of reality the way it really is. What we do is make reality important in our personal lives and to raise the importance of reality in society.

An important concept is that there is no "our reality" that the Church of Reality believes in that is either right or wrong. Our church doesn't usually declare what is real and what isn't. Our religion is a commitment to pursue reality wherever that leads us. So there is no "our reality" to get wrong. We are more properly judged in respect to whether our pursuit of objective reality is genuine. So - if we took a position on something and you can show us we are wrong, we are committed to changing our minds.

But what if the Church of Reality is wrong? What do you do then?

If we realize that we are wrong, we fix it. Our doctrine, which we call the [Kernel](#), is always under development. We assume that the Kernel can always be improved. The Church of Reality has a dynamic doctrine rather than a static doctrine. We are a religion committed to change, but not just any change. We commit to [Positive Evolution](#). We are evolving forward in the [Sacred Direction](#). Making mistakes is just part of the evolutionary process. What is different about us as compared to most religions is that we fix our mistakes.

Isn't Reality just science? Why do you want to stain science by lowering it to the level of a religion?

In pure science the universe is just stars exploding and rocks in space bumping into each other. In pure science whatever happens - happens. Nothing has any value. It doesn't matter to science if the human race thrives or becomes extinct. The Church of Reality has chosen a world view that our survival does matter and that we are to thrive and to become aware and to understand our reality. We have chosen through the [Sacred Choices](#) to move forward in a positive direction towards a better tomorrow. These choices are arbitrary choices and are therefore a religious choice. Other religions envision the future in destruction and that humanity is at its end. Our world view is that we are at the beginning of the Sacred Journey towards a tomorrow that is wondrous, and we have made a religious commitment to dedicate our lives to that goal.

What about personal reality? Isn't everyone's reality different?

There's one's own personal perception of reality, and there is one's personal life and thoughts. But then there's the "real world" or objective reality that we all live in and share. If

reality was all personal, then perhaps the universe was created on October 10, 1955 - the day I was born - and the universe will end the day I die. Maybe the world is just an illusion and that you all don't really exist? Maybe my brain is in a jar in a laboratory somewhere and this all is just a computer generated illusion - that some day I'm going to wake up and be back home on my own planet and this all will be nothing more than a dream.

One illustration I like to make about personal reality and objective reality is this: suppose that a Buddhist who has a personal relationship with God and a Christian who has a personal relationship with God both jump off the Golden Gate Bridge at the same time, both believing that their God can make them fly. Which one will hit the water first? (In a vacuum)

Becoming a Realist involves giving up some of your personal beliefs and personal realities because real reality is different and the Church of Reality is about the way it really is - not what you want to believe in.

FAQ about God and Deities

Do you believe in God?

The short answer is no. The long answer is - if he comes out of hiding we will believe in him. As long as he remains the invisible guy in the sky - he doesn't meet the objective reality test. The longer answer can be found on our [Does God Exist](#) page.

An important point is that the term "God" doesn't refer to a single entity. There are thousands of gods out there and every individual has their own personal conception of God based on their own imagination. So even if the Church of Reality was to decide to accept a deity, we would have to identify which one is real out of millions of choices. So we are going to have to wait till a deity steps forward and identifies itself.

Aren't you afraid you are going to burn in Hell forever if you are wrong?

Nope - not at all. But I would be more afraid if I were a Theist. After all - what if you picked the wrong religion? Maybe the Muslims are right. Maybe the Mormons are right. What if it's the Jehovah's Witnesses. We believe in what's real. Burning in Hell forever over a mistaken opinion clearly isn't. Aren't you afraid of wasting your life believing in fiction if you are wrong? What would scare me more is that if this is our entire existence, maybe 75 years and then we are gone, I wouldn't want to waste it all worshipping a fictional deity.

Do you believe in an after life?

Officially - the Church of Reality does not believe in an afterlife or pre life. If it is ever proven that there is an afterlife - we will believe in it. However - part of who we are survives in the [Tree of Knowledge](#) which represents the sum total of all human understanding. You might be remembered positively for something you accomplished or contributed - or negatively for something terrible you did - or - you might not be remembered at all. You might end up being forgotten. After the last person who knew you personally has died - will anyone remember you? Have you accomplished anything or contributed anything worth remembering?

For example - Albert Einstein is still with us because he contributed Relativity to the Tree. The "guy who invented the wheel" is still with us. The only afterlife that we know for sure is if we are remembered or if we accomplish something that becomes part of the Tree of Knowledge. In the Church of Reality - if you want an afterlife - you have to earn it.

What about punishment?

If you turn your back on reality - you will be punished! Seriously though - people who take reality into consideration in their daily lives tend to make better decisions giving them access to opportunities and avoiding the pitfalls of those who turn their back on the real world. Reality can make your life better.

Do you worship anything or anyone?

Not really. However - there are some things we hold as sacred and holy. We consider the Tree of Knowledge to be something that is holy to us. When we use the terms sacred and holy - it's because it is part of our lives and our commitment to the truth. We also consider **Mother Earth** to be sacred because this is where we evolved and we are dependent on it for our survival.

But - we don't worship anything - pray to anyone - or fear the wrath of deities striking us down for failing to worship them.

Do you believe in a higher intelligence?

Not in the form of a deity. But the human race is interconnected through the Tree of Knowledge and we function as if humanity itself were a super organism that we are all a part of. In that respect humanity could be considered to be a superior being to us individually.

FAQ about Morality

What about moral values? What does Reality have to do with Morality? Without a God, how do you discern right from wrong?

That's where reality as a religion separates itself from reality as a science. As a religion we are dedicated to the Principle of **Positive Evolution**. That we are on one planet - that we are all here together - and that we choose to make tomorrow better than today. To us the **Tree of Knowledge** and the **Tree of Life** are sacred and we dedicate ourselves to the exploration of reality the way it really is. In order to live our lives the way we have chosen - we have to have a sense of right and wrong based on building a strong functional society in accordance with the **Sacred Principles**. It is one of the Sacred Moral Missions to ask if any rules or laws or moral principles are really in the best interests of society and are fair and just.

The Church of Reality accepts certain **Axioms** which form the basis for our moral code. We choose a world view that our existence is important to us and that we are to thrive and to progress and to evolve forward in a sane healthy society where we can all live together in harmony and explore our existence. These axioms form the basis for the **Sacred Principles** which define our moral code and allows us to distinguish right and wrong.

Our morality comes from wisdom and hard work. We make the effort to figure it out and make careful choices based on realistic concepts. We don't have a "sacred book" where some ancient prophet declared morality based on his personality. But the Sacred Moral Question is very much a part of this religion.

But other religions have a lot of the same moral values as the Church of Reality. Why start a new religion?

Yes - many religions came to the same moral conclusions based on reality as the Church of Reality did. But often religions rely on "Holy Books" and bad cultural habits to define morality in terms that are unrealistic and unjust. For example - Christians and Jews consider the Sabbath to be a holy day putting it in the same list as murder and stealing. They have commandments about having no other gods so that their invisible guy in the sky is exclusive to everyone else's invisible guy in the sky. Religions tend to be very irresponsible when it comes to issues of war and peace. Although they give lip service to being against murder, Muslims will put you to death for sexual crimes.

Many other religions are male dominated in their beliefs and culture. The Church of Reality considers people to be equal, giving the same rights and responsibilities to everyone without regard to gender. The Church of Reality doesn't rely on ancient texts to tell us what to do. We have the responsibility of having to figure it out for ourselves and to put out the effort to get it right and fix it if it's broken. In other religions - if the sacred text has it wrong - it stays wrong. We are always looking for the better way.

But there's already a religion that is like your's - it's called Atheism. How are you different than Atheists?

Atheism is not a religion. It merely states that one does not believe in God. Realism is much deeper than that. Realists actively pursue reality the way it really is. We have our **Sacred Choices** and our **Sacred Principles** to guide our lives. If God does exist and he comes out of hiding into objective reality where everyone can see him - then we all become Theists.

How do you know that the Church of Reality won't become corrupt like all the other religions?

That's a very good question. The short answer is that we don't know that. It is definitely possible that the Church of Reality will become just another cult. But - there are a few differences that we are starting with that distinguish the Church of Reality from other religions.

First - the Church of Reality is about reality. Reality is more stable than a religion based on a fictional premise or lost books or books written by people which are supposed to be influenced by invisible deities. With fiction based religions - if the religion moves from one fiction to another - who is to say which is the better fiction. Reality is something you can always get back to. Reality is something that doesn't go away when you stop believing in it. The Church of Reality can stay true as long as it remembers its original mission.

Second - The Church of Reality isn't about any individual. It's about reality. So it's not something that is driven by a personality. No one is empowered by supernatural forces or

otherwise spiritually endowed.

Third - The Principle of Self Scrutiny will help keep us on track and let us look at our progress and evaluate ourselves as objectively as possible so that if we get off track we can correct ourselves and get back to where we should be. We are committed to doing the hard work and making sure that we are in fact successful and that we resist the paths of corruption.

The bottom line is - we are just going to have to try hard and hope for the best.

Do you have physical churches? Do you meet on Sunday?

At this point we do not have a physical church or regular meetings. I do however personally believe that a lot of people who are used to going to church would benefit from it and I'm hoping that someone (not me) will step forward with a plan and make it happen.

So - how are you going to convert Christian, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, or Buddhists into becoming Realists?

It isn't necessary for everyone to convert to Realism, it would be unrealistic to expect that. Converting people into Realists is one of many goals of the Church of Reality. And conversions aren't measured in numbers of people but in the impact that Realists have on society.

Whenever someone talks about reality, it causes the listener to think about reality. When you cause someone to think about reality - you are causing them to be "Real in the Sacred Moment" (the Sacred moment is Now). In that moment they are a Realist. As people spend more time thinking about reality - they become realists for more hours during the day. During this time they become "One with the Tree".

Realists realize that other religions are evolving. Evolution is everywhere and is happening all around us all the time. Religions are evolving too. Some for the better - some for the worse. One of the scared missions of the Church of Reality is to challenge other religions to test their beliefs to see if they are real. In this manner we get others to think about reality and to consider if they might be living a lie. It is our belief that reality is a good thing and that other religions benefit by being exposed to the idea that reality is something that is important.

By promoting reality realists help other religions evolve in the Sacred Direction - forward - towards a better tomorrow. It helps keep them from becoming a suicide cult or destroying the world so that Jesus can return. Realism is a lifestyle that can influence others to bring more reality into their lives.

So - Realists are not just trying to get everyone else to be Realists - but to get everyone to spend more time thinking about reality and asking the Sacred Question - "What is Real?" Realists spread Realism not only through conversion - but by spreading the importance of reality into the social fabric.

<http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/faq/>

[Welcome Home](#) ▶ Getting started as a Realist

Getting Started as a Realist

An Overview of Realism

An Overview of Realism as a Religion

What is the Church of Reality? What makes it a religion? What do Realists believe in? Why should I become a Realist?

The name Church of Reality is the short definition of what we are and a statement of our mission. The Church of Reality is a religion based on the axiom that the pursuit of the understanding of reality by humans has value. Realism is a world view and a philosophy of life. Our beliefs are based on what actually is real. Since no person knows all of reality our religion is based on the pursuit of reality as it really is. Realism is a religious identity and a culture of people who put reality first above all other beliefs and philosophies. Realism is the pursuit of the understanding of real reality as it really is.



If you think this concept is simple and that our entire religious philosophy can fit on a bumper sticker, you are in for a pleasant surprise. This religion is far deeper and more interesting than you can imagine. Although it has roots in a simple concept -- the pursuit of the understanding of reality as it really is -- you will find new concepts here that you've not yet seen anywhere else. As you embrace the concepts presented here, you will find them both interesting and fascinating, and well worth your time. These reality-based concepts are a lot to comprehend and we hope that no matter what your background, you will take the time to read the vast amount of material presented here. Realism is both deep and rich and is as full a religion as any other religion on the planet.

Our gift is to give you something to think about.

If you are a member of some other religion and are trying to assess what we are, we welcome you to read on. We believe that all religions better themselves the more they embrace reality. We are a church of reality evangelists and we want everyone to spend time thinking about reality, talking about reality, and exploring reality along with us. And, if you believe in something and what you believe in is real, we are interested. Our religion incorporates concepts from many other religious disciplines, philosophies, and world views. We are always looking for new ideas that we can add to our **Kernel**. We are a culture of listeners and thinkers especially when we are talking about what is real. We can be "converted" and accept a new truth as long as you can demonstrate this truth using the **Sacred Method**, which means that you can prove your point using science and reason.

We believe that thinking about reality is good for you no matter what your religious beliefs.

However, it is our hope that we can inspire you to think about reality and to more fully make reality part of your life. After all, if what you believe in is real, and you believe that it is important for you to believe in something that's real, then thinking about reality and talking about reality should be no threat to your belief system. In our religion the word Reality is our **Sacred Message**. Our world view is that every time the word Reality is spoken, the world becomes a little smarter. Whenever people discuss reality that is for us **Communion**. So your reading of our Kernel is taking communion with us and we appreciate you taking the time to read this and making the Church of Reality part of your **Life story**.

The first step in learning about Realism is to learn the **Vocabulary of Reality**. Like other religions we have our own vocabulary to express new concepts in our religion. As you learn these new words and the concepts behind them you will more fully understand who we are as a culture and the foundation we are creating upon which to build this religion.

We were created by reality and we are trying to understand our creator just like every other religion.

What is a religion? A religion is a community of people who share a common world view and a set of moral values and have a set of common goals that attempt to give humanity an understanding of our place in the universe. Like other religions we ask who we are, how did we get here, and what is our role in existence. We are the creation of reality and we are trying to understand our creator, just like every other religion. Since we are part of reality and we are aware of reality and trying to understand reality, it can be said that reality understands itself through us. Each of us is a portal through which reality itself becomes aware of its own existence and reality understands itself through us. We seek to understand the understanding of understanding, and to know real reality as it really is. We come together as a community to share our individual knowledge so that we might all understand ourselves as a people and as a planet.

Many religions believe in the supernatural. We do not. We are a **Reality Based Religion**. It's a concept that takes some time to get used to. When you were young at some point you learned that a whale was not a fish, that it was in fact a mammal. That was hard to understand because we all knew that mammals had fur and lived on the land, and things that lived in the sea and had fins were fish. Similarly not all religions believe in deities or things that defy logic and science. This is one of the many new concepts to ponder in our religion. But this concept shouldn't be that foreign because, if you are of some other religion and if what you believe in is real, then you have the same problem we do. So if your religion is a real religion, then our religion must also be a real religion.

Fundamental Concepts of Realism

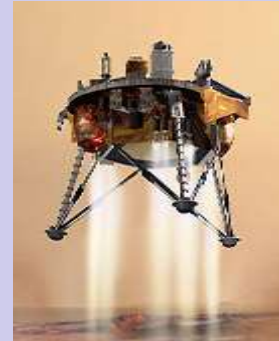
A good place to start in understanding our religion at this point is to read about **How we are Different** than other religions. This will give you an overview of what we are and what we are not. The Church of Reality is more about what we do than what we believe in. Some religions only really require that you believe in what they believe in. Likewise the Church of Reality starts with a commitment to believing in reality as it really is. But that is just the

starting point. The commitment to the pursuit of the understanding of reality is the first of the **Sacred missions**. There are many others.

If what you believe in is real, then Realism is not a threat to your religious beliefs.

In addition to believing in reality, we evangelize reality. Our world view is that every time the word reality is used the world becomes a little smarter. The word Reality is our **Sacred Message** and whenever people discuss reality that's **Communion**.

Humans understand reality collectively as well as individually. One doesn't build a Mars lander in their garage and launch it from their back yard. We do this as a community. And when we look out across the Martian landscape we, as the human race, share common eyes that allow us to look at Mars collectively. It took the work of millions of minds working across thousands of years to create the technology to allow us to understand the reality of Mars together. We in the Church of Reality recognize the vast amount of common knowledge we understand together. It is our collective understanding of reality that allows us to understand reality individually. We refer to this common knowledge as the **Tree of Knowledge** which represents the sum total of all human understanding.



Our mission as Realists is to care for and to grow the Tree of Knowledge. Our religion is more than just the statement that we believe in everything that's real. Our mission is to realize that our understanding of reality is limited and that we must always work to increase our collective understanding of the universe. So as we take from the Tree of Knowledge as a basis for what we know, we also give back to the Tree through **Intellectual Tithing** where we share with each other and future generations what we've learned. Our mission is not just to understand but for understanding itself to grow so that the universe can better understand itself through humanity.

Because we are committed to the task of increasing the understanding of reality, and because we understand reality collectively, with every generation building upon the knowledge of the previous generation, the human race must evolve forward and continue to progress. That is why we consider the future to be our **Sacred Direction**. We are a forward looking culture who dreams about what we can become and are committed to getting there. This leads to the first of our **Sacred Principles** -- The Principle of **Positive Evolution** -- and it becomes the basis for our **Sacred Moral Question** "What is good?"

Is Reality part of your life story? Where does Reality fit into your belief system?



To that end we issue the **Sacred Challenge** to inspire people of other religions to not run from reality but to embrace it and to join with us in recognizing the pursuit of reality as it really is as a good thing. We challenge the world to embrace the

future the way we do and to share our values for the progress of humanity towards a brighter future. We wish to **Unite Religion and Reality** and invite you to join us in that cause. We are **Activist** and it is our mission not just to talk about it, not just to believe in it, but to actually make it happen.

The Church of Reality is based on a number of **Sacred Principles**. We are a **Doubt Based** religion. We require that everything be tested. Our world view is that truth is purified through scrutiny and that's why we have the principle of **Scrutiny and Doubt**. We identify ourselves as **Explorers** rather than **Followers**. Our moral compass is based on the **Positive Evolution** of humanity. In order to accomplish that we believe that we need to have a strong functional society based on **Freedom, Courage** and **Honesty**. We have developed a **Realist Culture** to help us define who we are as a people. We have a strong sense of **Self Ownership** that combines giving us the **Freedom** and **Responsibility** to control our own **Life Story** and take charge of our individual lives and our role in existence.

The Church of Reality is an **Inclusive Religion**. Everyone is welcome. In our religion everyone has equal rights no matter what race you are, what gender you are, what your sexual preferences are, or the geography of where you were born. We don't demonize others. Our view is that people are basically good and we believe in **Original Virtue** rather than original sin. We see ourselves as one people, one planet. We are environmentalists. We believe in personal choice and personal responsibility. We admire attributes like **Curiosity**. We are a people who want to know everything. We want to understand it all. We have a quest for knowledge. And not just any knowledge but about reality as it really is.

We don't know if there is some sort of grand purpose in our existence. We don't know if reality has a purpose. But it is what we don't know that makes us want to know. We are different from other religions in that it is OK for us to not know everything. We are a **Humble** culture because we understand that this planet is but a speck of dust in the universe. We are not a religion that has all the answers. We don't have a supernatural leader who has all the answers. We don't have an afterlife to offer people in exchange for their loyalty. Nor do we have any deities to fall back on in troubled times. We have to do the hard work for ourselves. We have to figure it out on our own. We have to make it happen.

The Church of Reality is a **Monorealistic** religion in that we believe there is one reality that is the sum of all realities that are actually real. We don't believe in "this reality" and the "next reality" or that reality itself changes to match what you want to believe in. We don't play games with terminology to try to sneak something in that wouldn't stand up to scrutiny.

Making Reality Personal in your Life

So you might be wondering what it's like to be a Realist. What are our moral values? What do we do when we wake up in the morning? How do we live our lives?

The Church of Reality puts a high value on self determination. We have a concept called writing your **Life Story** and being in control of one's own life. A person's life story is everything you do from the time you are born until the time you die. When you are gone all that's left of you is the story of what you did. While you are living you are writing your story. We as Realists try to think about our story. Who am I? What is my life going to be about? What do I want to accomplish in the short time that I am here? What do I want people to remember me for?

If it wasn't for Reality I wouldn't be here!

Because we value our own lives and because we are writing our life stories we have a concept of **Self Ownership** that says that it's my life, my choices, my mistakes to make. We aren't **Followers** that take orders from omnipotent beings and we recognize that people are often different and that we allow ourselves to explore those differences and only impose rules to prevent people from harming each other or society as a whole.

In order for humanity to progress in its quest for the understanding of reality we need new ideas. We need to be the kind of people who think "outside the box". If we are all alike then who is going to be innovative? We aren't looking for people who agree on everything. We are looking for people who are strange and unusual who look at how things are and dream about how things might be. In order to get that we encourage a higher level of individualism and individual awareness. We respect people who are different from us. They give us something to think about. Even if we do something wrong there is at least a learning opportunity as to what not to do.

The Church of Reality doesn't promise you happiness. There is the possibility for eternal life if we invest in the technology to make it happen. But there's no "next life" to look forward to. Our sense of immortality comes from what we contribute to the **Tree of Knowledge**. Will we be remembered after we are gone and all the people who knew us are also gone? Will they keep our web site online? Will they remember our life stories? Do our lives at least have some meaning in the story of humanity?

We don't promise you "spiritual experiences". This is not a religion based on creating emotional sensations. We aren't fighting a glorious battle against evil for the glory of the mighty deity.

However we offer a sense of real accomplishment. Ancient religious texts talked about the miracles of prophets riding flaming chariots into the heavens. Through science we have done that. We have tasted the water on Mars and we have peered back in time to almost the moment of the creation of the universe. We dream of the day when we can travel the universe and we wonder what is out there. We wonder what we will become in the next billion years. Is this the only universe out there? How vast is reality? We are the fulfillment of the dreams of Galileo and if Humanity continues on the path of **Positive Evolution** then

**Spiritual Experience in the Church of Reality
The Phoenix lands on Mars**

some day our descendents will fulfill our dreams -- that reality itself will become self aware and that we might know the nature of what existence is.

Our vision of the future is different than many other religions. We call the future the **Sacred Direction**. That's because we see ourselves as the caretakers of tomorrow. Our future depends on good sound reality based judgment and, if we take responsibility for our actions and make our decisions based on reality, then we are more likely to have a better future than if we turn our backs on reality.



" We live a life that embraces honesty. We see ourselves as Scientists and **Explorers**. Science and exploration require honesty because in science when you manipulate the results then science stops. You can only make progress if you are 100% honest about your test results. The Church of Reality is a science based religion and we can only make progress as long as we stick with reality. People often suggest that we might get more members if we loosen up on the deity issue, but our response is, "Trot your deity out into the open where it is observable by nonbelievers and we'll all worship it." If the Church of Reality doesn't stay true to reality then we are nothing. Reality is the soul of our religion. Reality is what defines who we are.

A Realist is a humble person. We have found that an excessive sense of self importance becomes a huge distraction to reality and an expensive habit to maintain. We look at ego like giving candy to children. You can have a little if you are good but too much will make you hyperactive and rot your teeth.

Realists are environmentalists. We exist because of the **Tree of Life** which sustains us. It is our evolutionary history and our present day ecology. We are all part of one giant living organism that includes all life on Earth. We must maintain ecological balance so as to keep this planet habitable for our species rather than facing extinction. We must ensure that we don't destroy ourselves through overpopulation or environmental damage.

For more information about who we are as a people read the section on **Realist Culture**.

The Disciplines of Realism

In the Church of Reality our religious disciplines are based on contemplation rather than prayer or worship. We tune our minds and exercise our brains so that we might have a better understanding of reality. Contemplation is exercise for the brain and we try to stay mentally fit. If you are new to Realism you can get started by contemplating the **Sacred Contemplations**.

The first of the Sacred Contemplations is **Contemplating the Name** (Church of Reality). You may be thinking, "This Church of Reality thing is really messed up. They don't believe in real reality at all." But even if you aren't thinking that, suppose you were given the task of starting something that will be called the "Church of Reality". What would you do? What would your Church of Reality have in it?

This is a good place to start. Think about it. Think about it a lot. We might be on the wrong track. Maybe we are missing the point. Maybe you have a better idea. Maybe you thought of something that we haven't thought of yet. Maybe you can do a better job than we did. If

you can do a better job of it than us - we'll join your church.

Contemplating the name is an important exercise for the mind. It allows you to personalize the Church of Reality. To make it part of who you are. It prepares your mind for the journey into Realism. It helps you learn how to give up being a **Follower** and to become an **Explorer**. It teaches you to think for yourself -- to make ideas your own.

After contemplating the name go on to the other sacred contemplations. One can spend one's entire life contemplating these subjects and there are billions of things out there to contemplate. Thinking about reality transforms the mind and enriches the soul. It opens you up to all the possibilities that exist in the real world. Why should someone waste their life filling their mind with fiction and dedicating themselves to characters that don't exist when we are surrounded by all this wonderful reality. The universe is an incredible place and we in the Church of Reality invite you to join us in the **Tree of Knowledge** to contemplate with us.

Your Role in Reality

So now that you've contemplated our church it's time for us to ask you, what's your story? Who are you? What is the meaning of your life?

In our religion we believe in personal choice. You are who you decide to become. Our world view is that great people are people who choose to do great things with their lives. We believe that you **own yourself**, that your life is yours. We believe that you are what you think and you are what you do. People make choices and what you choose becomes your choice. When your **life story** is written what do you want it to say? What do you want people to remember you for? What do you want to accomplish while you are here in this reality, the only reality that we know is actually real?

The Church of Reality is in development. It is always in development. We are always looking for ways to improve ourselves. We are a young religion. You can be part of the process to help us define who we are. We hope that we have given you ideas to think about. We are always looking for new ideas. Reality has changed our lives. It can change yours, too.

Making the Commitment

If you are convinced that Realism is going to be your **Life Story** then the next step is to experience the **AH-HA Moment** and **Accept the Truth**. It's what you tell yourself "I'm doing it! Reality as it really is! No more **Bullshit**. I'm going to give up **Living the Lie**." You may not know what reality is and you may not know how to determine what's real, and you may have a lot of beliefs that you aren't sure about, but you have accepted Reality as your standard. You are no longer afraid to ask the **Sacred Question**, "What is Real?" It means that to just believe for the sake of believing is no longer good enough. It means that Reality matters. It means that you are putting **Reality First**. It means that you will no longer **Worship a False Truth**.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/getting_started_as_a_realist/

Welcome Home ▶ Gospel of Reality

The Gospel of Reality

Spreading the Good News about the Real World

The Hope for the Future

What is a Gospel? What does the word Gospel mean? The word Gospel means the good news. The good news is about the future. A gospel is a message of promise and hope for things to come and we in the Church of Reality have a gospel because we look forward to a wondrous future for the human race--a future that we as Realists will help create.

Humanity is at a critical point in our evolution. For the last 3 billion years we have been the result of the Earth's evolutionary process. The events of our planet have caused us to occur and evolve. We used to be another species that life moved forward. We survived. We endured. For millions of generations life on this planet improved itself through selection processes. Those who survived and thrived became our ancestors. Those who didn't became food. We evolved communication and the ability for humans to network our minds together into a **Tree of Knowledge** so that we can explore the universe. As our knowledge grew and our technology increased we developed an awareness of our existence and a quest for understanding of who we are, why we are here, and what our place in the universe is. Humanity has evolved the ability to ask the **Sacred Question**, "What is Reality?"

Humanity has arrived at a wondrous point in our evolution. We are at the point where we can build machines to allow us to do things that no biological being on this planet has ever done. We can leave this planet and travel to the Moon. We can explore other worlds by launching equipment into space. We can alter genetics to grow the plants and animals we use as food to suit our needs. We build computers that greatly expand our minds and our human network. We are on the verge of altering our genetics so that we will be able to create new life forms that are better than what we are. We are in a position to choose what we will become. We are the creators of the future of our species.

Our future is what we choose to make it. We can and will take control of our evolution and decide what we will become. There is a price however. We need to choose wisely. We need to take responsibility for our future and our evolution. To do that, we are going to have to embrace reality and put out the effort to think things through. That is a reasonable price to have the power to control our evolutionary destiny.

The Gospel

Sometimes it's easy to get discouraged in the face of illusion but there's one thing to always remember. Reality is here to stay. Reality isn't going away. Reality always was and always will be. Reality was there at the beginning of time and will be there till the end of

time. And no matter how many people believe in things that aren't true, reality stays the same.

It is always there and you can always turn to the real world, embrace the truth, and we as a society can make better choices. Reality can change your life today. You can embrace it, explore it, own it. Thinking about reality is the joy of being real in the sacred moment. You can become one with the real world. Let reality into your soul and experience the knowledge that everything in the world is real.

Reality gives us strength. it gives us courage. Reality gives us the true freedom to make the most out of who we are and what we will become. We owe our very existence to reality. If we reject reality, we have nothing left.

We are surrounded by all this wonderful knowledge. Knowledge that we can grow, that we can share, that we can build our future with. We can use reality to build a better tomorrow, a world that we can be proud of and we come together as one people, as one planet, to live in peace and let reality take humanity to its full potential. We have the power to choose our destiny. To decide what we will become. Let us therefore make the best choice possible and let reality guide our decisions in everything we do. We can become the dream.

This is the Gospel of Reality. Go forth and proclaim it!

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/gospel_of_reality/

Welcome Home ▶ How we are Different

What makes the Church of Reality Different?

Our Unique Beliefs

Our Unique Contribution to Religion

What does the Church of Reality contribute to the religious community? How does it relate to other religions? Religions are often defined in relative terms. For example, what is a Seventh Day Adventists? The short answer is that they are a form of Christianity that is somewhat unique in that they (correctly) identify the Sabbath as occurring on Saturday instead of Sunday. Thus the name "Seventh Day". Many are also vegetarians and fear that in the end times the government is going to come in and make them worship on Sunday at gun point.

Our name is our mission. We are the Church of Reality

So - what defines us? Who are we in relation to the rest of the world? Where does our religion come from? How do we fit in to the big picture?



Unlike most religions we are not a splinter group of some other religion. The Church of Reality has its roots in Atheism, Humanism, and Science. Atheism isn't a religion but a statement about reality; about the non-existence of God. Humanism is the basis for building a social structure and determining right and wrong in the absence of some holy text declaring the will of mythical deities. It also has roots in Free Thinkers who seek an understanding of the real world.

**Just as a whale is a mammal that looks like a fish,
we are a religion that looks like science.**

The Church of Reality is a very different kind of religion. A whale, for example, is a mammal, but it looks like a big fish. Similarly the Church of Reality is a religion, but it looks like Atheism, Humanism, and Science. In order to understand Realism you have to throw out your preconceptions about religion. Just as a whale is a mammal without fur, we are a religion without faith and dogma.

This religion was invented from scratch as a **natural religion** making a commitment to reality as it really is. Like Seventh Day Adventists the name is the predominant feature of the religion. The purpose of the Church of Reality is focused on the understanding and the pursuit of reality itself. It is a reality based religion.

In its short lifetime the Church of Reality has developed a lot of religious concepts that are unique among religions. We are happy that we can contribute new and unique concepts about belief systems and it is our hope that other religions steal our ideas. We look at religion as an evolutionary process and within that process there is some inter breeding of ideas and concepts. One might look at the doctrine of the church as DNA and we want to share our DNA with other religions and pick out the good stuff that they have already figured out. In that respect we don't require that all the people of the world convert to Realism. If we can contribute doctrine that is picked up by other faiths then we have made a better future.

Reality Based Religion -

Every religion has a basis. Most have some holy text which describes a deity and miracles and grand stories and

commandments and such. These religions are "faith based" and you are generally required to accept it without proof. The Church of Reality is a reality based religion and it is based on what is real. A religion that is based primarily on the commitment to the pursuit of reality the way it really is represents a new world view. We call it **Accepting the Truth**. It offers a religious choice that few other religions offers.



Fundamental Commitment to Real Reality - The Church of Reality is a fundamentalist religion that is dedicated to an absolute loyalty to the pursuit of real reality the way it really is. Many religions are reality friendly but allow for individual opinion to be superior to objective observation. As Fundamental Realists we take a more humble position about our understanding of reality by assuming that everything we believe is either wrong or at least incomplete and can be improved. We are after all a highly limited biological computer that injects a lot of ego noise into our perception of the universe.

Reality is not a human construct that becomes whatever we believe it is. Humanity is a reality construct and we become what reality deems us to be. Through us reality becomes aware of its own existence. Our relationship to the real world is fascinating beyond belief and that any time we let our egos obscure pure reality we cheat ourselves out of the holy grail of the possibility of perfect understanding. It is a quest beyond achievement, yet something that we commit ourselves to accomplish. If humanity spent an infinite amount of time pursuing pure reality and stayed true to the purity of the quest, then after an infinite amount of time we might be successful. If however we allow our ego to make our opinion more important than reality, then even in infinite time we will fail to achieve the purpose and cheat ourselves out of the ultimate conquest. To become one with the real world.

This is the Church of Reality, not the Church of Reality-ish Belief. The name is the mission. There are people who think reality is boring, but those people are not Realists. There is nothing more exciting to us than the pursuit of reality the way it really is.

• **A Religion that Makes Sense** - Reality itself has consistency. It all fits together. It is something that makes sense. Reality is testable. It invites logic. The Church of Reality is a mirror of reality itself and (if we stay true to our missions) has the consistent properties of reality. The world view of Realism doesn't conflict with what we observe in reality itself. It doesn't require that you have to cheat on the objective level to explain your beliefs. It doesn't rely on magic and miracles or omnipotent deities who can operate outside the bounds of science. We don't ask you to suspend rationality. We don't ask you to accept information that can not be questioned. Realism makes the inner scientist smile.

Humanity based Religion - You can't explore without an explorer. Who is the explorer? We are. At least that's the way it is on this little piece of dust in the universe that we call Mother Earth. As we humans progress forward in our evolution from what we were to what we will become we increase our abilities to explore reality the way it really is. Thus the Church of Reality is the exploration of reality by humans, and the positive evolution of humanity is necessary for progress to be made. The exploration of reality and the progress of humanity are the same thing.

Realism is a Discipline - Our mind is a tool. It's not a very good tool, but it's all we have to work with, so the better we learn how to use it, the more progress we will make. Realism is the understanding of understanding. How do we rise beyond self delusion? How do we sharpen our minds? How do we come up with new innovative ideas and expand the horizon of understanding? How do we network with other minds to increase our collective mental abilities? We learn how to see through the fog. We try to understand ourselves and each other so that we can become the tools of exploration that we need to be in order to increase the sum total of human understanding. To grow the **Tree of Knowledge**. In order to do this we adhere to the disciplines of science.

Doubt Based Religion - Most religions are fiction based and require you to accept on "faith" without question that their premise for existing is true. The Church of Reality takes

the opposite point of view. We are a doubt based religion believing that truth will stand the test of scrutiny and that the questioning of everything is a required process for discerning what is really real from that which is just bullshit. In our religion there is nothing that can not be questioned. We think faith is something you earn by accepting doubt and proving that you are trustworthy. We think that anything that you are required to believe without scrutiny should be considered to be false.

Tree of Knowledge - Although this name has been used in other religions no other religion has recognized the importance of the sum total of human knowledge in a religious context. The Church of Reality embraces the growth of human knowledge as one of its axioms. Most of what we know we know collectively, not individually. In fact the sum total of human understanding is one of the key indicators of our evolutionary advancement.

Positive Evolution - Although a brighter future in itself is not something that is new, the idea of making it the moral compass of a religion is a new concept. The Church of Reality accepts that our survival and progress is preferable to extinction and gives it a central role in church doctrine. We recognize that one can not advance the understanding of reality without the progress of society. We not only have concluded that evolution is real, but realize that only in taking control of our evolution can we pursue the goal of exploring reality as it really is.

The Sacred Direction - The **Sacred Direction** is forward, making the Church of Reality a **Futuristic** religion. Most religions are **Dogmatic** religions looking back to the good 'ole days starting in paradise and the future ending in destruction. In contrast we look towards the future and marvel at the possibilities of what we can learn about reality and what we can accomplish for the good of humanity by harnessing reality. Most religions look backwards in time towards what they believe is ancient wisdom. Our world view is that our best wisdom is yet to come. We believe in **Futurism**, not **Dogmatism**.

The Church of Reality focuses on the future, not the past.

The Power of Vocabulary - The human race is linked together through a complex set of agreements that is sustained through vocabulary. Some people say that you are what you eat, or you are what you think. We think that perhaps you are what you talk about. It is our vocabulary that binds us together as a society. Words and phrases convey meaning and establish common references. These common references trigger standard thought patterns that come from our shared understanding of reality. Through language we learn who we are, how society works, and our relationships with the people around us. Language is how we connect into the social fabric of humanity. It is what defines who we are as a community. If we change that language we can change civilization. We therefore consider our **Terminology** to be very important and we speak in the Vocabulary of Reality.

Intellectual Tithing - An important concept first introduced here as a religious concept is **Intellectual Tithing**, which is the contribution of knowledge to the sum total of human understanding. Our religion recognizes the giving and the sharing of knowledge as something that is at the heart of human evolution. We are creative and we share our ideas for the benefit of everyone as they share their ideas with us for our benefit. The ideas that we contribute to humanity becomes our immortal legacy if we do anything worth being remembered for. The sharing of ideas is like a holy sacrament in the Church of Reality.

Faith - The Church of Reality is not a faith based religion. We are a doubt based religion. Faith is actually prohibited and doubt is required in the Church of Reality. We believe that truth is purified through doubt and that anything that is required to be believed without questioning is assumed to be false. We believe that all truth will stand up to scrutiny. Because things believed by faith cannot be tested there is no way to distinguish what is true from what is not true.

Lawrence Krauss
The difference between Science and Faith

Earned Trust - The Church of Reality takes a strong position against "blind faith" and says that if one is expecting to be believed that they have to earn it by being trustworthy and accepting **scrutiny**. Faith that is required without proof or where doubt is prohibited is considered to be **bullshit**. Most of what we know is based on trusting relationships with people and organizations who have developed a reputation for scientific discipline.

Vectored Answers to Important Questions - Unlike many other religions the Church of Reality doesn't answer questions but rather specifies the correct process for determining the answer. For example, the short answer to the question, "Does the Church of Reality believe in an afterlife?" is No, we don't. But the long answer is that our position represents the current consensus of the secular scientific community on the subject that they have determined through the disciplines of the scientific process. We recognize that we don't have answers to questions that no one knows, and that as our understanding of the world evolves forward that our position will reflect that evolution. Our answer to "What is Real?" is whatever free science has determined what is real.

Communion - We don't pray together, we contemplate together to share ideas and explore the reality we all exist in. In our tradition any time two or more people gather to talk about reality, that is communion. When we talk about reality with those of other religions we are sharing communion with them.

We are Monorealistic - Our world view is **Monorealism** in that we believe there is only one true reality, not multiple realities. Our reality includes all realities that are actually real and is the sum total of everything that actually exists. We contrast ourselves with the **polyrealistic** religions that believe on multiple realities without regard to whether or not they are actually real.



Nothing Supernatural - The Church of Reality rejects the idea that there is anything that is supernatural, magical, or miraculous in the sense that the impossible occurs. We think that everything has a basis in science. We don't have explanations for everything because we know that there is a lot we don't know. There are things that are real that we don't yet understand, but there is nothing that happens that is outside of reality. There is only the reality we know and the reality that we don't yet know. But it's all within the scope of reality. Because nothing supernatural is real, we can guarantee that you won't go to hell.

Intrinsic Value of Humanity - The Church of Reality accepts as one of our axioms that all people have intrinsic value and that we **Respect** the intrinsic value of ourselves and others. This is the basis for our view that we are equal citizens of one planet, that we have the

intrinsic right to **Self Ownership**. That we consider human rights to be sacred, that all war even when necessary is fundamentally wrong. We express our love of humanity through our commitment to **Positive Evolution** to ensure that tomorrow is better than today. We are Realists because people are important to us.

Self Ownership - Realists own their own lives. We don't belong to God, Jesus, or Mohammed and we are not subjects or property of the nation states we reside in. We believe in individual rights and responsibility and respecting the individual rights of others. We assert the rights to freedom and liberty, the dignity of the individual, and the assertion that the only purpose of government is to serve the population that gives it power. Self ownership includes the right to control one's life, one's death, one's own medical decisions, the right to birth control and abortions, and the right to personal privacy. Self Ownership is also a personal religious commitment for people to take control of their own lives, to think things through for themselves, and to actually exercise personal choice and make sure that their decisions are their own and not those of an oppressor.

Human Rights - While members of most religions strongly support the human rights and the protections and freedoms that every person is entitled to, the Church of Reality has incorporated those right within the heart of our religious texts. Other religions are based on ancient texts that lacked a concept of individual liberty, self ownership, and the intrinsic value of the individual. In fact, many religious texts accept slavery and human sacrifice as normal behavior. We don't. We incorporate freedom and liberty into our religious doctrine.

Responsibility and Accountability - Responsibility and accountability are the cornerstone of Realism. Unless a deity shows up there is no omnipotent father figure to fix our mistakes. If we screw up, we screw up. We are responsible and accountable in that we realize that we have control and that our actions have consequences. Maybe some day space aliens will show up with welfare packages but we can't count on that. We don't believe in a God that forgives our sins allowing us to go out and sin knowing that we will be forgiven. If we do something wrong then we have to live with the consequences of that. And if we do something right then we get the benefit. There aren't any outside influences that are rigging the game. We therefore accept this responsibility and aspire to live the kind of lives that we can be proud of.

Religious Law - The Church of Reality has a very large and detailed **Kernel** which is the operating system of the human race. In it we assert a variety of religious rights and freedoms that we require to practice our religion. Many nations create special exception in their laws for religious practices. Because we are evolution based we take advantage of religious law to advance our cause of exploring and evangelizing reality.

Religious Identity - The Church of Reality provides a **religious identity** to people who believe in reality the way it really is. Many Atheists and scientists who have lacked a religion are able now to have a religion that they can identify with so they can say what they do believe in rather than just what they don't believe in. The Church of Reality is the religion of what is real, not what is not real.

We are Thinkers - Most religions put value in blind faith and trust and using emotions as a basis for seeking the truths of the universe. We are a **doubt based** religion that put value in thinking and exploring the reality around us. We think that everyone can become smarter than they are now and that thinking is good exercise for the brain. We are a religion that

puts value and incorporates thinking and logic into the core of our religious doctrine. We honor innovation and invention and consider the **accumulated knowledge of humanity** to be sacred to us.

We also think that thinking has healing powers for the mind. Whenever someone is thinking about reality it reprograms their brains away from fiction based belief to reality based belief. We want to make thinking cool again.

Contemplation instead of Worship - Most religions come together to worship fictional deities. That becomes the cultural tie that binds their religion together. The Church of Reality uses the **Sacred Contemplations** to bind our religion together culturally. We explore reality together with our minds rather than stunting our mental evolution with the limitations of faith based thinking.

We Find Solutions - The Church of Reality is a solution oriented culture. We figure out a way to make it happen. We do tech support for the human race. If a problem has a solution, we'll find it. And if there is no solution, we'll still figure something out. We are innovative and resourceful and we like being clever and accomplishing things that no one else can accomplish. Our religion, a religion based on reality, has been called an impossible task. But we are here to accomplish it in spite of whether or not it is possible because it is something that we must do, and we must be successful. Because if we can't make reality work then we're all in trouble.

Building Bridges - The Church of Reality is not an "us vs. them" religion. We are a religion that builds bridges. We are here to help everyone else evolve in a positive direction by making reality part of the discussion. We also look for the opportunity to learn things from others to see if they have good ideas that we can adapt to improve ourselves. Some cult based religions separate themselves from other drawing lines to separate us from them. We are the opposite. We try to tear down the lines, find common ground, and view all people as us.

Evolving Doctrine - Our religion isn't static. We have an evolving and forward looking doctrine that is expected to change and improve. That will keep us from being stuck with and aging holy book that becomes more outdated with each passing year. Our **Kernel** is always considered to be in development and we expect that we will make mistakes, but we are committed to correcting our mistakes as we find them.

Conversion and Evangelizing - We do not measure our success by the growth in our membership and we are not dedicated to saving the world by converting everyone to Realism. We are a religion of ideas and a religion of the mind. We think that reality itself is a **Sacred Message** and it is our goal to inject reality into the human equation to help all people evolve into better people living in a better society.

It is not necessary for us to get believers in fictional deities to give up their fiction. We just want to assist other religions in incorporating reality into their culture and help them focus on a positive future so that they are a more productive member of the human community that a threat to civilization. Our world view is that whenever a person is thinking about reality that they become a Realist in that moment and that the world becomes a little better place because of it. We evangelize reality by discussing reality and getting more people to think about reality more often. By taking small steps forward in the right direction the whole world gets a little better, a little bit at a time.

Equality of Women - The Church of Reality does not force women into an unnatural role. We do not stone women to death. Women are not the property of men. Wives are not subservient to their husbands. Women are not considered to be unclean during their period. We have no requirements for chastity. Women are not required to pretend that they are something they aren't. Women are 100% equal participants in our religion and have an equal right to **Own Themselves**. The Church of Reality actively opposes those who would oppress women.

Furthermore the Church of Reality considers the oppression of women to be morally wrong. We oppose any laws that treat men and women differently. In our world view women should have access to the same resources as men. This rights include the right to equal education, health care, the right to dress as they want, to drive cars, to go places unescorted by men, to decide reproductive issues themselves including a right to have an abortion, the right to vote, the right to server in public office, and equal protection under the law. Furthermore women are entitled to additional rights regarding pregnancy and child bearing in order to accommodate their unique needs as females.

Guilt Free Sex - Unlike most other religions the Church of Reality has few restrictions on sex. These restrictions include sex with children, rape and other forms of forced sex, and sex that involves exploitation and behaviors that are harmful to society. Sex must be consensual. The Church of Reality has no marriage requirement so words like adultery and fornication do not apply to our religion. Sex outside of a committed relationship is only wrong to the extent that you are violating promises made and not kept. Infidelity would be an issue under honesty, and not under sexuality. Some couples choose to have multiple partners.

We do not associate sex with sin. There is nothing immoral about sex outside of marriage. Marriage is not relevant in any way with respect to the morality of sex. Sex between people of the same sex is no less moral than sex between heterosexuals. Our position on sexuality is that it is a personal choice and that the individual has a right through **Self Ownership** to make their own sexual choices. We are therefore officially disinterested in sexual morality.

Marriage - Traditional marriage is not part of the Church of Reality culture. The traditional institutions of marriage are historically based on deity based sexual morals and are geared towards reproducing heterosexuals only and not the needs of non-reproducing heterosexuals, late life marriages, and homosexual relationships. Much of marriage law it written around the concepts of generations and inheritance of property. Marriage used to include a lifelong commitment but most nation states have no-fault divorce laws that seem to negate the very core concept of marriage as a lifelong commitment.

Many religions struggle with the issue of same sex marriage and our religion is no exception. Ultimately our answer didn't come down to the equality question, because homosexuals are fully equal in our religion, but rather do we try to fit everyone into the same mold offering a state marriage to everyone equally when state marriage laws and traditions are designed to serve only one class of citizen. Our answer is that traditional marriage offers a "one size fits all" solution and doesn't meet the needs of our membership. We therefore do not officially offer it to anyone. We will in time develop our own form of union where the individual couples can tailor their own union based on their own agreements that suit their unique relationship.

Homosexual Relationships - Being homosexual or homosexual acts are not considered to be either immoral or sinful in the Church of Reality. Gays and lesbians are full participants in the Church of Reality. Sexual orientation is not considered to be an issue in our religion.

Virgins - We're not obsessed with virgins or virginity. We're not really even interested in the subject. In the Church of Reality virginity is not any sort of big deal. Some people are virgins, some aren't. Virginity is a personal choice. We are equally disinterested in both male and female virginity and neither has to worry about becoming a human sacrifice to a deity. We do not believe that you will be offered as a prize in the next life because someone killed a lot of people in the name of a deity.

Abortion - The Church of Reality is a pro-abortion religion. Our world view is that a woman has an absolute right to control her own reproduction. We do not have a fetus obsession like some other religions. Personhood begins at live birth. The world is overpopulated and it's irresponsible to add to the population problem by forcing women to give birth against their will. Women have the right to write their own life story, to have control over their own lives, to own themselves. Reproduction is a personal decision and it is the right of the woman to make it.

Atheistic Altruism - We establish a logical reason for being generous and selfless and caring about the well being of others in the context of reality, thus refuting the idea that Atheists are selfish. Humanity's success is based on sharing resources and taking care of each other and forming strong and healthy communities. Generosity is part of human evolution and is necessary for our common survival.

Good and Evil - The Church of Reality looks at good and evil as being choices rather than forces or entities. It is more related to short term thinking and selfishness rather than good and bad entities that influence people. We believe that the individual is responsible for their own behavior.

No Holy Prophets - The Church of Reality has no holy prophets. I, Marc Perkel, founder of the Church of Reality, has no special powers, is not divine, and there is nothing at all special about me except that I am an ordinary guy who came up with the idea. I didn't invent reality, reality invented me. People are just people and we do not worship anyone. If this church is successful there will be people in the future who are far smarter and wiser than I am, who are also not to be worshiped or given excessive social status. As will all of you most everything I know comes from the **Tree of Knowledge** and I am just building on the work of billions of other people, most of whom are dead and forgotten. If the Church of Reality excessively exalts current or historical figures it is on the wrong track. I am not, in many ways, a role model for human behavior. When I die I want my bad habits to die with me. I don't want to end up like Ayn Rand whose arrogance lives beyond the grave. May my arrogance be cremated with me.

Cruelty Free Religion - The Church of Reality rejects all forms of cruelty including torture, flagellation, stoning, slavery, human sacrifice, animal sacrifice, eternal damnation, and crucifixion. Our position is that these are the acts of barbarians and have no place in civilized society. Any religion who has to threaten its members with burning in Hell forever to entice them to believe is an admission that their beliefs can't stand up to **Scrutiny**. We are not a sin and punishment religion.

No Terrorism - We don't terrorize people to enforce our religious values. The following is a partial list of things we consider to be just plain evil. We are moved by our sense of moral justice to spell it out so as to take a strong stand against this kind of behavior.

Realists do not blow up airplanes or fly planes into buildings.
Realists do not blow up trains or subway stations.
Realists do not stone people to death.
Realists do not kill women for sex crimes.
Realists do not kill our daughters for refusing to wear the hijab.
Realists do not kill homosexuals.
Realists do not kill cartoonists who draw offensive cartoons.
Realists do not kill the families of those who offend us.
Realists do not kill people because they are a different race or tribe.
Realists do not kill women who were raped to restore the family's honor.
Realists do not kill women who refuse to marry them.
Realists do not allow husbands to beat their wives.
Realists do not do suicide bombings.
Realists do not blow up abortion clinics or kill doctors who perform abortions.
Realists do not throw acid in the faces of little girls on their way to school.
Realists do not cut off body parts or otherwise mutilate people.
Realists do not burn people alive.
Realists do not torture prisoners.
Realists do not crucify people.
Realists do not burn the homes or destroy the property of those who don't agree with us.
Realists do not poison people for political or religious gain.
Realists do not cut off the hands of thieves.
Realists do not perform honor killings.
Realists do not rape women to punish them and their families.
Realists do not punish women who have been raped.
Realists do not turn children into bombs.
Realists do not behead people.
Realists do not execute people by public hangings.
Realists do not enforce sexual morality through flogging.
Realists do not beat people.
Realists do not kidnap people.
Realists do not teach hatred.
Realists do not teach children to kill.
Realists do not teach that non-believers deserve death.
Realists do not teach the God will send you to burn in Hell to be tortured forever.
Realists do not believe that God is an omnipotent terrorist and torturer.
Realists do not kill people who Realists think offended a deity.
Realists do not believe in an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.
Realists do not believe in god(s). But if Realists did Realists would not believe in an angry vengeful god.
Realists do not commit genocide or ethnic cleansing.
Realists do not start religious wars.
Realists do not condone the accumulation or use of nuclear weapons.
Realists do not use weapons banned by the international community.
Realists believe terrorism is always wrong.

Realists believe torture is always wrong.

Realists believe cruelty is always wrong.

Realists believe that the deity portrayed in the Bible sets a bad role model for human behavior.

Realists refuse to participate in war crimes.

Our position is that our beliefs stand on their own merits and that belief systems that require terrorism to support their religious views are admitting through their conduct that their beliefs will not stand the tests of scrutiny. Terrorism is the tool of those who believe in a weak and false God. We believe that every time any person commits these kinds of acts that it forever becomes part of their **Life Story**, and it becomes part of the **Story of Humanity**. Our view is that once you do something it cannot be undone. What Adolf Hitler did, for example, is forever part of human history and will forever remain a blemish on the soul of humanity itself. These acts are more than crimes against individuals. They reflect who we are as a species. That fact that you if did one of these acts is forever with you. After you die you will be remembered for the horrendous acts that you committed and your Life Story will be remembered with disdain.

No Absolution from Sin - Although we are a religion that sees forgiveness as a virtue, we do not absolve your sins. You have to work out forgiveness here in the real world. We provide no deity who will expunge your record. In the Church of Reality what you do becomes what you did and once you do something it becomes part of the **Story of the Universe** which is the sum total of everything that happened since the beginning of time. So if you do something evil, the fact that you did it is forever part of your **Life Story**.

In our world view absolution from sin encourages crime and irresponsibility by giving those who do wrong a false sense that some deity has forgiven them as if what they did never happened. In our view absolution is a form of cheating and you can't cheat reality. A person can change what they do in the future but what someone did in their past is forever part of who they are. Our view is that religion who offer absolution of sin through a deity are being irresponsible because they are creating a false illusion that people are forgiven who aren't. We think that it also contributes to higher crime rates and that if the individual knows that what they do is what they did, and there's no deity to help them cheat, then they might think before they commit a serious crime.

In other religions one can either confess to God or confess to a priest who is representing God for one's sins to be absolved and one's reward in the "next life" to be restored. The fostering of belief, for example, that the victim of murder might be in Heaven and that the murderer might get to go to Heaven too is an irresponsible religious act. Criminals might come to rely on such moral support to continue a life of crime. In the Church of Reality if you murder someone then they are forever gone and you are forever their murderer and that never changes. Some criminals can be rehabilitated and returned to society as productive citizens but what was done was done and can not be undone.

Original Virtue - The Church of Reality realizes that people are intrinsically good and that the **Philosophy of the Open Hand** is the natural character of the human race. Our world view is that people are intrinsically good people and that although there are people who do bad things that is the exception rather than the rule. We reject the assumption that humans are intrinsically evil.

No Religious Homeland - Realists do not believe that we or any other religion should have control of a country where some people have a superior social position based on religious or ethnic affiliation. Our world view is that justice and equality applies to everyone and that we are all part of an integrated human society. We believe that if a culture or religion has any special wisdom that they should share it with everyone else. We want to share our wisdom and learn the wisdom of other religions. Our view is that religious homelands lead to isolation, oppression, a false and dangerous sense of self-importance, and eventually to war.

Commitment to Peace - The Church of Reality is a religion of peace. We have taken on the challenge of figuring out how to solve the problems that lead to war so that humanity can evolve beyond thousands of years of killing each other. Reality is best explored in an environment that is free from war. We embrace the [Vocabulary of Peace](#) and we take the position that we are an anti-war religion and we challenge other religions to identify as anti-war religions.

The Shame of War - Although we recognize that sometimes war might be necessary we think that it is never something to be proud of. War always represents a failure of peace and must never be glorified. We do not honor veterans merely for being in a war because if you glorify unjust wars then you encourage others to fight in unjust wars.

What the Church of Reality Isn't - Besides the above statements of what we are, much of what we are not defines us and not only a unique religion, but a completely different class of religion. Some people consider all religion to be evil because all religions tell you what to think or do other things that most all religions do that scares thinking people away. Some of the things the Church of Reality isn't includes:

We do not tell you what to think. You have to think for yourself. We are not interested in doing your thinking for you.

We do not worship anything.

We are not into rituals. No throwing virgins into volcanoes.

We don't burn witches.

We are not out to get your money.

We are not a cult.

We are not the only path.

We are not any better than anyone else.

We are not on a higher plane of consciousness.

We are not enlightened.

We are not into dogma.

We are not sinners.

We do not demonize sex.

We do not require you to get married before having sex.

We do not demonize thinking, science, or reason.

We do not hate ourselves.

We do not hate homosexuals.

We do not have commandments.

We are free of gods, devils, demons, spirits, fairies, elves, vampires, angels, leprechauns, trolls, pixies, thetans, prophets, ghosts, goblins, witches, and space alien possession or abduction. (Some of us however secretly believe Spock is real.)

We do not demonize nonmembers.

We are not the chosen people.

We do not restrict your personal freedoms.
We do not indulge in an inflated sense of self importance.
We are not endorsed by any omnipotent beings.
We do not accept real estate from deities.
We do not ask you to turn your life over to anyone.
We do not kill you for converting away from Realism.
We do not kill people over cartoons.
We do not shun you for leaving this church.
We do not ask you to put aside logic and reason.
We do not require you to accept anything on faith.
We do not save your soul by asking you to have a personal experience with a fictional deity.
We do not pass out preacher credentials, participate in religious fraud, nor are we involved in or advocate tax scams.
We do not make false promises or threats about in relation to a fictional next life. No Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, or Reincarnation.
We do not offer you virgins as a reward for terrorism.
We do not make you wear weird clothing.
We do not distort the meaning of words to make them meaningless.
War is not Peace
Freedom is not Slavery
Ignorance is not Strength
Submission is not Freedom
Death is not Life
Suffering is not Pleasure
Reality is not Illusion
Reality is not Personal Perception
Faith is not Truth
You don't obtain freedom by giving it up
Common Sense is not the opposite of being Smart

Converting to Realism - Converting to Realism starts with experiencing the **AH-HA Moment**. That's the moment when you really get it. When something inside you says, "YES! I get it! Reality as it really is! Of course! It's so obvious! It all makes sense!". That's when you **Accept the Truth** and make a commitment to put **Reality First** in your life.

So - if these sort of things scare you about religion, that is understandable. It scares us too. That's why we choose to be different and offer a new model of religion, designed from scratch, but without most of the flaws of traditional religions. If you like what you see then read **Getting Started as a Realist** next.

<http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/different/>

Intellectual Tithing

~ Contributing with your Brain ~

Donating Wisdom to the Tree

The **Tree of Knowledge** represents the sum total of human understanding. Intellectual Tithing is the giving of new and useful information to the Tree of Knowledge. The Tree of Knowledge is what separates us from the animals. We all benefit from the knowledge that has been handed down to us.

Think about it - where would we be today if someone didn't invent the wheel? The person who invented the wheel made a great contribution to the Tree of Knowledge of the human race and helped all of society move forward. If you look around at all the stuff around you - you soon realize that almost all of it was built by other people. As you sit in front of your computer reading this, you are using a device that is the combined work of millions of people and technology that is built on the work of people for thousands of years. All contributing to the Tree of Knowledge which allows us to have things like computers. We are living off the intellectual tithing of others, and we give back to the world by contributing intellectually - by being creative and sharing our creations with the rest of humanity. This helps grow the Tree of Knowledge and furthers us as a species. From this perspective - the human race can be envisioned as a single super being that shares a common mind. And in that respect we all have the opportunity to contribute to that common mind so that our thoughts and contributions will outlive our physical bodies. Contributing to the Tree of Knowledge is probably as close as you get to immortality in the Church of Reality.



The Linux Penguin symbolizes the Giving of Knowledge

Intellectual Tithing is discovering something useful and making your knowledge part of the Tree of Knowledge.

I use the **Linux Penguin** as a symbol of intellectual tithing because the Linux operating system is distributed under the GNU license and is free to everyone. This software is the work of tens of thousands of people contributing freely to a software tree that everyone on the planet is allowed to use. These people freely give of their intellectual resources to the good of humanity. As you surf the Internet you are hitting servers that are running this free software.

The Tree of Knowledge is the Afterlife

What is left of you after your body dies? If you reproduced then your genetics live on. But does that represent who you are? Not really. Yes - you might pass on some values to your children and if the values are good values then you continue to contribute to the world after you are gone. If the values you pass on are bad values then the things that are bad about you continue to live on after you are gone. The "guy who inverted the wheel" is still with us because the wheel is a very important part of the Tree of Knowledge. Hitler is still with us because the remnants of his destruction still exist and have made an imprint in the Tree.

Some people are remembered for what they contributed to the Tree. Some are remembered for being destructive. But most people aren't really remembered at all. When you die there is a small circle of people who knew you and remember you. But what happens when the last person who knows you dies? Will there still be anyone around to tell your stories? Will there be people quoting your writings? Will they be using your invention? Or will you merely be forgotten?

What you do counts and what you leave behind and how you are remembered represents the only form of immortality that we know for sure exists. So if you want to be remembered in the Tree you have to accomplish something. You have to take all the Knowledge you inherited from the Tree and give something back. Come up with something new and useful - or - you can help someone else come up with something new and useful and you can know you had a hand in it.

Steven Hawking is one of the worlds greatest physicists. He contributes much to the Tree of Knowledge and he will be remembered for his accomplishments. But the people who dress him in the morning - feed him - and put him to bed at night also have a hand in his accomplishments. So you can contribute to the Tree by supporting those who are making a difference in the world and helping us evolve in the Sacred Direction. When you do that then part of you lives on and the world becomes a better place because you contributed to help make it happen.

How to Donate to the Tree of Knowledge

Not everyone is a programmer - scientist - or researcher. You may be wondering - how do I donate to the Tree of Knowledge. You might be a fairly ordinary individual who has never invented anything nor come up with an idea that is significantly profound. But you can still contribute - and you can use your wallet to do it.

If you can't contribute to the Tree of Knowledge, you can donate money to people who are contributing. For example - you could donate to cancer research, and if they find a cure for cancer - your donation might have helped make that happen. You can donate to the **Electronic Frontier Foundation** - a nonprofit civil liberties foundation that is working hard to protect the right of free expression on the Internet to help make sure the information keeps flowing. Civil liberties - freedom - and justice are all issues that are very



important to the Tree of Knowledge and your contribution advances the human cause.

If you are using someone's shareware program or free software and they ask for a donation to support their work - send them some money. If these programmers don't get any donations then they might have to go out and get real jobs to support themselves and not have the time to write free programs.

Starting a web site and posting useful information is intellectual tithing. You might have a cure for the hiccups or grandma's fruit cake recipe. You might have a kool trick for doing something no one else has thought of - or something that a few people know and you want to share it with the world. When you post a web site - you're providing information to the entire planet. Or at least the part of the planet that has Internet access. You should be careful to make sure your information is both accurate and useful. Contributing misinformation adds chaos to the Tree of Knowledge and doesn't benefit anyone. Being intellectually responsible is important.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/intellectual_tithing/

[Welcome Home](#) ▶ IRS Tax Exempt Status

IRS Tax Exempt Status

Not for Profit Organization

Church of Reality gets Nonprofit Status

The Church of Reality is a 501(c)3 tax exempt not for profit organization recognized by the IRS. Here is the initial letter approving our status. The image is slightly edited in that it was originally 2 pages and I merged them.



TAX EXEMPT AND
GOVERNMENT ENTITIES
DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20224

OCT 20 2005

Date:

Church of Reality
754 Glenview Drive, Suite 201
San Bruno, CA 96066

Employer Identification Number:
65-1208537
Person to Contact and ID Number:
Robert Charnoff 50-29632
Toll Free Contact Number:
(877) 829-5500
Accounting Period Ending:
December 31
Public Charity Status:
509(a)(1) & 170(b)(1)(A)(vi)
Form 990 Required:
Yes
Effective Date of Exemption:
November 6, 2003
Contribution Deductibility:
Yes
Advance Ruling Ending Date:
December 31, 2007

Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are deductible under section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code. **Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.**

Organizations exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. During your advance ruling period, you will be treated as a public charity. Your advance ruling period begins with the effective date of exemption and ends with the advance ruling ending date shown in the heading of this letter.

Shortly before the end of your advance ruling period, we will send you Form 8734, *Support Schedule for Advance Ruling Period*. You will have 90 days after the end of your advance ruling period to return the completed form. We will review the information you provide and determine whether you have met the public support test. We will then notify you, in writing, about your public charity status.

Church of Reality

Please see enclosed *Information for Organizations Exempt Under Section 501(c)(3)* for some helpful information about your responsibilities as an exempt organization.

Sincerely,

Lois G. Lerner
Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings & Agreements



OGDEN UT 84201-0038

In reply refer to: 0437958642
Mar. 18, 2013 LTR 4168C 0
000000 00
00033403
BODC: TE

CHURCH OF REALITY
% MARC PERKEL
7498 CHESTNUT ST
GILROY CA 95020-5806



034173

Employer Identification Number:
Person to Contact: L Reed
Toll Free Telephone Number: 1-877-829-5500

Dear Taxpayer:

This is in response to your Mar. 07, 2013, request for information regarding your tax-exempt status.

Our records indicate that you were recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in a determination letter issued in October 2005.

Our records also indicate that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are described in section(s) 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

Please refer to our website www.irs.gov/eo for information regarding filing requirements. Specifically, section 6033(j) of the Code provides that failure to file an annual information return for three consecutive years results in revocation of tax-exempt status as of the filing due date of the third return for organizations required to file. We will publish a list of organizations whose tax-exempt status was revoked under section 6033(j) of the Code on our website beginning in early 2011.

Newsflash

The IRS has approved the 501(C)3 **tax exempt status** of the Church of Reality.

Please link to us, discuss us in online forums, and blog about us. Every time anyone thinks about reality the world becomes a little smarter.

Spelling and Grammar errors? spelling@churchofreality.org - please identify page and location in the page of the error.

The Church of Reality is a non-prophet organization.

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http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/irs_tax_exempt_status/

The Church of Reality's Hidden Agenda

What we are really up to

Everybody has a Hidden Agenda

Does the Church of Reality have a hidden agenda? Do we have a secret plan? What is it we are "really" up to? In an age where everyone is lying about something, what is the Church of Reality really about? Is it politics? Is it world domination? Are we really Satan's minions?

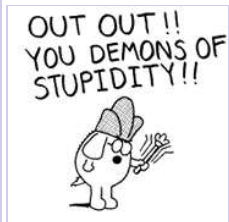
So yeah, we have a plan. We have a plot. We are up to something. But what is it? Is the Church of Reality really going to reveal it? Sure we are! Would we lie to you?

We are really just trying to trick religious people into thinking.

Our hidden agenda is - we are trying to trick people into thinking. Thinking about reality that is. We believe that if people start thinking about reality that it will cause them to ask themselves if what they believe in is real. Will this undermine faith? It will undermine blind faith. We want to perform a faith healing on faith itself so that the blindly faithful will see again. We want to take the blindness out of blind faith.

Making people think is what we are really up to. Realism is a religion of the mind. You try to resist it but you can't. You can pray and pray and as hard as you try not to - you just can't help it. All of a sudden there you are, thinking. Thinking about reality - reality the way it really is. It seduces you, sucks you in. You start wondering if what you believe is really real. The temptation is too strong to resist. You can feel reality all around you and you can't help but to wonder what it is. And when you are thinking about reality you are becoming **real in the sacred moment**. And during that time you become one of us. Resistance is futile. ha ha ha ha ... heh

Undermining Faith



Does thinking, logic and reason undermine faith? Does questioning what you believe in undermine faith? Or does faith require you to never think about it? Are you prohibited from asking yourself if what you believe in is actually true? What is the relationship between faith and reason? Can faith and logic coexist? Can science and faith coexist? Or is it that in order to have faith that you can't question it? Do you have to just believe it? If you question it - is that a sin?

What is the relationship between faith and reality? Do you have faith because what you have faith in is actually real? Or does reality not play a role? What if you found out that your neighbor's religion was more real than yours? Would you convert, or stick with the religion you have?

If what you believe is real then there's nothing to fear about exploring reality the way it really is.

These are the kinds of questions that we are trying to trick you into thinking about. We want you to start wondering about the relationship between reality and what you believe. If what you believe in is real, there's nothing to worry about, is there. If what you believe is real then thinking about reality will strengthen your beliefs. If what you believe in isn't real however, then thinking about reality can create a conflict. Do you stick with faith, or go with what's real?

Besides, if you believe in God, and if God is real and almighty then surely God isn't afraid of reality is he? Why would a real god not want you to think about reality? If your god is fake however then those who are promoting the fake god wouldn't want you to think about reality. Reality is a threat to all forms of fiction based beliefs. Reality isn't afraid of being questioned.

If what you believe is real, then we want to believe in it too. But if what you believe isn't real, then do you really want to stick with it?

Suppose that all the Bibles in the world were suddenly destroyed and couldn't be reconstructed from memory. Would people still believe in Jesus? Would it be the same as the Bible today? Suppose that all the science books in the world were wiped out and no one remembered science. If people started rediscovering science from scratch would evolution still exist? Would gravity still exist? Would we come to the same conclusions if we started over a second time? Yep - we sure would!

We aren't here to undermine faith. We are here to undermine fictional beliefs. What are fictional beliefs? The simple answer is - every other religion except yours. You would at least admit that there are a lot of religions out there that are dead wrong. So isn't it a good thing if the Church of Reality were to undermine all of them? Yes - of course - that would be a good thing. And - if what you believe is the really real true religion, then I'm sure that we will confirm that and you can go on believing in what you believe in now.

If your God is afraid of reality then how almighty is he?

We believe that false faiths will not stand up to the tests. False faith isn't accountable. False faith will not stand up to the **purification of truth**. If you bring falsehood out into the light it will disintegrate. But real truth will pass the test of **scrutiny** and will be strengthened by doubt. We are not afraid of reality, are you?

Reality and Politics

Does the Church of Reality have a political goal? Sure we do. By making reality more important in people's lives we hope to help elect political leaders who are well grounded in reality. People who consider reality in making the decisions that affect all of us. We think the world will be better off if reality is part of the decision making process and we want politicians to have to express a commitment to reality when running for office.

We think the world would be better off if smart people were in charge.

The Church of Reality has a secret agenda of trying to get smart people elected to office who believe in reality and will teach Realism in the public schools.

Undermining Religion

Some people wonder if the Church of Reality is trying to undermine religion. It is not. But we believe that it is our duty to expose religion to the light of reality and challenge belief systems on the basis of what's real. We believe that these challenges that get people to think will help religions evolve in better versions that will in fact improve their religious experience.



Most all religions make a claim that what they believe is real, that reality is a necessary element in their faith. People state that if it wasn't real that they wouldn't continue to believe in it. On the basis of evoking reality we feel it is morally justified to assist in their quest for what is real. Perhaps if a religion totally denounced reality and wanted to have nothing to do with it that might make a difference. But once a religion claims reality then they are open to the laws of reality which includes scientific accountability, the purification of truth through scrutiny, and the application of logic and reason to the belief systems to see if what is claimed to be real is in fact real.

We in the Church of Reality are explorers exploring the reality that we seem to exist in. We are on a quest for the truth. Therefore if a religion has truth and a grip on reality then we want to learn it. If a religion actually has it right then we not only want to discover it, but adopt it and benefit from it. Even build upon it. If a religion has it wrong then that becomes something that we can learn from as well and in the process of interacting with them we both hopefully will learn more and both come out ahead.

We don't really respect other people's religions. We just pretend to respect other religions because it's the politically correct thing to do.

We believe in evolution, not just in a Darwinian sense but the evolution of religions themselves. As we look back through history we can see how religions have evolved over the centuries and in many ways are quite different than they used to be. Religions change over time. Generally most of the changes are for the better. We have to assume that religions will continue to evolve in the future so no matter what your denomination believes today, much of it will change in the future. But what will your religion change into? Will your religion evolve forward in the **Sacred Direction** or will it become extinct? That all depends on the choices that each denomination makes. We as realists believe that reality is good for the evolution of all faiths.

Awareness of the Future

One of our hidden agendas is to discuss religious concepts in the context of reality and to get people to think and to wonder about the future. We ask, "What will the future be like?" We want people to think about the future and wonder about it. We want people to wonder what kind of world that their descendents will grow up in and what challenges they will have to face. We want people to wonder about what technologies they will have. When will we cure Cancer? Or will we destroy human life and give the planet to the cockroaches?

Thinking about the future makes people more realistic.

Wondering about the future is what we call the **Holy Question** and it makes us appreciate how important it is to make good choices. Our **Principle of Personal Responsibility** reminds us that our choices count and that if we want to have a future that is better than today then we need to make the right choices and take reality into account in everything we do. It's a trick as you can see because it creates different thinking habits. Thinking about the future in the context of reality reprograms the mind and undermines the bullshit. We think it's a good thing and if your religion believes in reality, we think that thinking about the future is good for you too.

Isn't this really about Marc Perkel's Ego?

This religion isn't about reality is it? It's all about Marc Perkel - the founder of the Church of Reality. That's why he is the **First One**. Perhaps reality is just a ploy to suck everyone in. After all, how can you not believe in reality? But is it really about reality or is Marc Perkel just trying to create the ultimate cult where he rules the world and enslaves the world forcing everyone to believe the way he does. Perhaps Perkel secretly thinks that he is God and that if enough people believe in him, that he will become God.

Or perhaps his goals are more modest. He's just trying to build a financial empire like the rest of the TV preachers living in a 35 million dollar mansion with a \$15,000 air conditioned dog house. A life of drugs and debauchery with hundreds of women in his harem known as the Sacred Sluts. Perkel always has to be right and he thinks he's the smartest man in the entire universe. He secretly laughs at Realists and believes reality is just a crutch for people who can't handle drugs. It's all about fame, power, sex, drugs, rock 'n roll, tossing virgins into volcanoes, and rolling around naked in the church money room. All in a futile attempt to convince himself that he's not really the pathetic loser that everyone knows he is. Besides, he has to do something because he doesn't have a college education and can't hold a real job.



Or maybe he's just trying to fix the world so that he can someday retire with his childhood sweetheart in a world of peace and tranquility.

So - the big question. When they make the movie about the life of Marc Perkel, what actor should play his part? Jon Lovitz, Tom Cruise, Mike Meyers, or Michael Moore?



Or - maybe it really is all about real reality the way it really is could the Church of Reality be real and not just another scam? Figure it out!

World Domination

Perhaps the hidden agenda of the Church of Reality is world domination? Are we going to enslave the world and force everyone to accept reality at gunpoint? Not hardly. However it is our belief that as the human race evolves forward towards a better tomorrow that it will become more realistic and that humanity will embrace reality as it really is. Does that mean the end of fiction based religions? We don't know. Perhaps fiction based religion will just have a better fiction that is more reality compatible.

But - yes - we dream of a world where reality rules. Busted!!!

You're just trying to convert us - aren't you?

Just like all religions the real secret agenda is that you are just trying to convert everyone to reality, aren't you? The Church of Reality is just like all the other religions, trying to convert everyone. Trying to win souls over to reality. I suppose if we weren't out secretly trying to convert people we wouldn't be a real religion. So yes! Busted!



So - what I want to know is - are you ready to accept reality today? Are you ready to make a personal commitment to the real world? To experience reality the way it really is? Are you willing to quit **living the lie**? Then welcome to the real world! (Darwin loves you!)

Yours in Reality,

Marc Perkel
First One
Church of Reality

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/hidden_agenda/

Realism and Politics

Our Relationship to Nation States

We are a Religion not a Political Organization

The Church of Reality is a religion, not a political organization. As a religion we do not endorse candidates or take any partisan political positions. We are not involved in party politics. We strongly believe in the **separation of church and state** and that separation applies to us as well, even though we believe as strongly as every other religion does that we are right. The scope of the Church of Reality as an institution is to focus on the religion of reality.

As Individuals we are Politically Active

The Church of Reality has two separate elements. We are an institution and we are individuals. As an institution we are politically neutral. As individuals we are extremely active. Our Sacred **Principle of Activism** inspires us to get involved and change the world. In the Church of Reality it is a sin to fail to vote in an election. We don't tell you who to vote for, but our governments have a huge impact on our ability to pursue the understanding of reality and we therefore need to make sure that we elect people who are compatible with our religious goals and vote on issues that support our **Principle of Positive Evolution**.



Politics is in the realm of individual choice. We are a church of individuals who are **strongly individualistic**. We are not here to tell you who to vote for. Realists, however, are politically aware people with a keen interest in society and the functioning of government. We are people who participate in the structure of society. We are people who want to make the world a better place, care passionately about causes, **social justice**, holding leaders **accountable**, ethical government, **peace**, and **education**, to name a few. We are a religion of thinkers. We use reason and wisdom to think things through and come up with the best solution.

We are people who honor those of great political **courage**. We are people who are not only willing to fight for what's right, but to have the **honesty** and **wisdom** to figure out what is right before we fight. We are people who are dedicated to not being fooled by **Bullshit** and becoming political suckers, because it creates a false sense of **self importance**. We are willing to go out and protest and, if necessary, to get arrested for causes that are just. We are a culture that speaks out. We believe that to remain silent and allow injustice to occur may be the same as participating in the injustice itself.

Our simplistic definition of our church is that "we believe in everything that is real." But that really doesn't define us. A more accurate definition is that we are here to change society for the better. We are here to transform our world into a better place to live. We are here to transform society into a smarter society. We are here to transform ourselves into better and

wiser people. Our goal is the understanding of reality as it really is. But our method for achieving that goal is through **Positive Evolution**. Positive Evolution isn't an opinion that humanity is evolving forward. Positive Evolution is a commitment we make to do our best to ensure that humanity evolves forward. And we aren't going to evolve forward unless we as individuals are willing to work to affect the nation states that we live in. So even though the Church of Reality is a religion and politically neutral, as individuals we are very politically active.

Reality is our Political message



Different religions have different world views and our world view is Reality. We want to inject reality into the political process. Reality is our **Sacred message**. We want our leaders to take reality into account when making decisions that affect all of us. We want to make reality important in society. We want our science classes to teach our children about reality. We want people who propose projects to ask, "is this really going to work?" We want real solutions to real problems. We are a culture of thinkers who are not satisfied with sound-bite politics. We want to see a plan and we want the plan to be a realistic plan. We want our nation states to make sense. So as realists we take a position, as a church and as individuals, to influence nation states toward real solutions to real problems.

Competing for control against Other Religions

Different religions have different world views and are involved either directly or indirectly in trying to influence nation states to transform to their world view. Islam controls many countries in the Middle East and their laws reflect the Islamic world view. That's why women have to be covered and are routinely executed by stoning for sexual crimes. The Jewish religion controls Israel and they believe that God gave them this property. Christians see themselves as having a mandate of world domination and are actively trying to infiltrate government at every level to impose a Christian world view on all societies. As Realists, we want to see reality as the basis for government.

It is important to compete for political influence because the world views of other religions are not only harmful to Realists but harmful to the members of their own faiths. Their religions are based on their holy books and many of their holy books see the future of the human race in the destruction of the world by God. Many people hold a world view that the worse the world gets, the better it is because we are closer to the fulfillment of the end-of-the-world fantasy that they believe in. They actively support the destruction of civilization as a sign of the "end of time" and the beginning of the Apocalypse. They await the Rapture where God is going to snatch them up into Heaven before inflicting his wrath upon the planet in a sadistic orgy of eternal torture of those who committed the unforgivable sin of having the wrong opinion.

Our goal is to make sure that the world doesn't end in our lifetime.

Yes - there are people who actually believe this **bullshit** and many of them are in power. In fact, they are making a move to take over the United States right now. A Christian cult that

calls itself Dominionist is working to destroy civilization in preparation for the end of the world. It is our job as Realists to ensure that they fail to accomplish their mission.

The threat of a Christian Dominionist cult ruling the world is one of the strongest motivators that inspired the creation of the Church of Reality.

Our world view is based on **Positive Evolution**. We see the future in terms of society growing and becoming better. We are committed to making tomorrow better than today, and to helping other religions embrace the concepts of reality so that their faiths evolve in a positive direction. If we don't win then they will and the world will end in destruction, but there is no Jesus and no Rapture and all that they will accomplish is that the cockroaches will become the dominant life form on this planet. We, as Realists, want to make sure that humans stay in control. That's our political agenda. We can not allow the **Extinctionists** to prevail.

Political Role Models for Realists

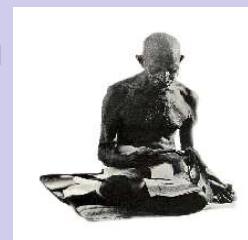
One of the axioms we hold to be an important truth is that one person can change the world. The **Tree of Knowledge** is full of examples of people who are remembered for changing the world, for better or for worse. Adolf Hitler obviously is not a role model that we want to emulate. We are inspired by leaders like Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela. These are people who embraced reality through using reason, wisdom, and courage and transformed society in a **positive direction**, making the world a better place to live in. These are people whom we, as Realists, look up to as role models. These people have achieved what Realists consider as close to eternal life as you can get in the real world. They are remembered for their accomplishments and their vision is integrated into the very fabric of humanity.

The following articles were written by children. The pictures link to the original articles at **My Hero** where you can find essays written by children about other heros.

Mohandas K. Gandhi - In the early 1600s, sailors from Great Britain made their way to India. At that time, India was a country rich in traditions and culture thousands of years old. The British Empire took control of the government of India and forever changed the face of that country. Ancient traditions and religions were thrown out, made illegal by ruthless British generals eager to make India another England. As you can well imagine, the native people of India suffered greatly, seeing their way of life trampled under the British desire to "civilize" their country.

For the longest time, nobody in India successfully fought back against the British and the oppression they brought with them. This all changed when a small man, born in the ancient city of Porbandar in 1869, stood up and said "Enough!" This man became known the world over as Gandhi, the mahatma or "Great Soul" of India.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's early years showed little sign of the great life he would go on to live. He went to school, was married and later became a rather unsuccessful, terribly shy lawyer. All of this changed, however, one



fateful day when Gandhi was denied a seat on a stagecoach in South Africa. The racist driver had made him sit outside in the hot sun on a long trip to Pretoria, simply because he wasn't white. Gandhi, until now too shy to even speak in front of a judge, sued the railroad company and won. From that point on, Gandhi became the number-one spokesman for all powerless non-whites the world over.

After 20 years of aiding his fellow Indians in South Africa, Gandhi returned to India and picked up the fight against British oppression. Instead of encouraging native born Indians to take up arms and force the British colonists out of their country, Gandhi created a policy of non-violent protest. "Non-violence, " he said, "is a weapon for the brave."

For 20 years, non-violent protests, marches and strikes by the Indians wore down British resistance. Confronted by a slight man wearing only a plain cloth and accompanied by millions of followers armed not with weapons but love and truth, the British government in 1946 finally gave India its long-held dream of independence. The fight for India's freedom had been won without a battle having ever been fought.

Sadly, two years after his great victory, Gandhi was shot and killed by an assassin's bullet. But Gandhi's legacy lived on after his death, showing the world that one can be a hero and accomplish great things without guns or swords or hatred. As Gandhi once said, "It is non-violence only when we love those that hate us. I know how difficult it is to follow this grand law of love, but are not all great and good things difficult to do? Love of the hater is the most difficult of all. But by the grace of God even this most difficult thing becomes easy to accomplish if we want to."

Martin Luther King Jr. - Martin Luther King Jr. was born in Atlanta on Sunset Adams Street in 1929. If he was still alive today, he would be 67 years old. He changed his name from Michael L. King. As a kid, he liked to fly kites, ride his bike and play baseball and football. He was also a paper boy. His mom taught him to read before he went to school. He read books about black people who were heroes, like George Washington Carver.

Jim Crow Laws were laws that separated blacks from whites. Martin's parents did not like segregation, which means keeping blacks and whites apart. They did not like that black people had to sit in the uncomfortable chairs and the white people had all the comfortable chairs. They did not like that there were lots of restaurants open for whites and hardly any open for blacks. They did not like that blacks had to use different drinking fountains from whites. They did not like that they had to pray without whites in church. They just wanted to be their friends. Blacks were cursed, chased, lynched and killed, just because of the color of their skin.



A white mom wouldn't let her son play with Martin Luther King Jr. because he was a different color. When blacks came into the stores, white people wouldn't answer their questions. Another person said to get out of the bus seat and Martin said it was not fair. Martin was having a hard time liking whites.

White people treated him well at Crozer College, but he was still angry. He wanted to be a minister, but before that, he wanted to be a professor. Martin thought he could do the same in America as Gandhi did with the Indians.

He married Coretta Scott in 1953. She thought the same way as he did.

On Dec. 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white person. It started a boycott of the buses by the black people. They didn't know if it would work, because no one else had tried it before. But the bus boycott worked. It took one year to change the rules.

Martin and Coretta had a baby girl in 1956. Martin Luther King Jr. was the president of the Montgomery Improvement Association. He believed that love, not violence, was the most powerful weapon, just like Gandhi believed. People were arrested when white people wouldn't serve them in 1960 and they wouldn't leave the restaurant. Martin and his friends were arrested when they weren't doing anything wrong. John F. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy helped get Martin out of jail when he was arrested. Martin told people not to obey unjust laws. Children marched in the Children's March in 1963. The police were too surprised to do anything. Police squirted people with hoses and they were bitten by dogs. People watched on TV and started thinking about black people's rights. White people came to hear Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, DC. Two girls were killed while changing into their choir robes when a church bomb exploded. People were beat up and killed over voting rights for black people. Martin was against the Vietnam War. He did not like violence. People were tired of marching. In 1968, people started to get violent and break windows. Martin was 39 when he was killed. He was bleeding a lot and people ran out. His wife wanted to stop the violence, just like Martin Luther King Jr. did.

Nelson Mandela - Imagine growing up in a country where drinking out of the wrong water fountain might get you thrown into jail; where a man might have the very same job as his neighbor, but because of the color of his skin, get paid less in a year than the other man made in a week; where the government told you that your ancestors and their ways of living were wrong and savage and not even human.

Growing up in South Africa under the Apartheid system of government meant these things, and worse, were part of daily life.

But Nelson Mandela was a fighter. Instead of bowing down to this unjust system of government, he became a lifelong warrior in the battle to free South Africa.



Starting out as a leader of an underground political movement called the African National Congress (ANC), Mr. Mandela played a part in many dramatic demonstrations against the white-ruled government.

Nelson Mandela's career in the ANC was cut short in 1964 when he was sentenced to life in prison. The notorious Rivonia Trial, as his sentencing was called, is now seen as nothing more than a cruel ploy used by the white South African government to silence Nelson Mandela once and for all. But even while in prison, Mandela continued to be a beacon of hope for his people who carried on the struggle against Apartheid in his absence. In 1990, after 27 years of imprisonment, Mandela was freed. His release marked the beginning of the end for apartheid. In less than five years after his release, Mandela was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and elected president of South Africa.

Today, thanks to the self-sacrifice of Nelson Mandela, apartheid has been outlawed. Everyone in South Africa now has an equal opportunity at home and at work to live

comfortable, productive lives. Nelson Mandela is one of the world's true freedom fighters, and his life and personal triumphs will be remembered long after the world has forgotten the evils of Apartheid.

Nelson Mandela's book, *Long Walk to Freedom* tells the extraordinary story of his life, an epic of struggle, setback, renewed hope, and ultimate triumph.

"I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended."

These are just a few of thousands of people whose vision laid the foundation for modern day wisdom. Their contributions to society live inside us today. When we think of overthrowing oppressors through non-violent protest, those thoughts in our minds started in the minds of these great heroes. We, as Realists, aspire to accomplish something so great that after we die, the best of our thoughts will be preserved in the minds of future generations. These people were chosen as examples of ordinary people who rose up out of nowhere and accomplished great things. Any one of us can be like these people if we choose to do so. We start by deciding to make it happen. Maybe the children of the future will write essays about you.

Separation of Church and State



The separation of church and state is an important issue for maintaining religious freedom in any nation state. When one religion takes control, other religions are no longer welcome. In most cases, other religions are actively oppressed. There are many religions that think they are right. We, as Realists, are no exception. The Church of Reality is our attempt to create a reality-based religion, and it will be up to history to judge if we have succeeded or not. But for now we are just one of many religions who think they have a better handle on reality than anyone else. We are not the only reality-based religion.

When a government takes control of religion or religion takes control of a government, bad things happen. Religious opinion becomes the law of the land. Islamic nations are quite comfortable executing people for any number of religious crimes that they deem to be against the word of God. Women are put to death for being raped. They allow people to be stoned to death. Christian-controlled nations were responsible for the Dark Ages, Crusades, and many other atrocities. Sometimes the King was a puppet of the Pope; sometimes the Pope was a puppet of the King. Either way there wasn't a lot of free thinking allowed. The Jews control Israel--they believe that God gave them that land and they don't hesitate to kill anyone who gets in the way of that claim. Under Communism, atheism was required and religious people were executed by the state.

The real test of religious freedom (from our unbiased point of view) is how Realists are treated in society. A member of the Church of Reality has more freedom based on **church**

doctrine than any other religion. One of our sacred principles is the **Principle of Freedom**. If Realists are allowed to be free then probably everyone else is as well. Our religion demands more freedom for the individual than any theist-based religion.

Some religions are against the separation of church and state because they either have control of the government or hope to have control of the government someday. This is very shortsighted because, for example, Christianity is not one religion, it's thousands of religions. Many Christian religions openly hate each other and would be extremely oppressive to other Christians if their group took over. Since Christians can't agree on what a "True Christian" is, what would happen if the government made that decision? When you think this through you can quickly see that a Christian nation would be a disaster - especially for Christians.



The separation of church and state protects the state from the church and the church from the state. It isn't anti-religion, it's pro religion. When government remains religiously neutral it allows an individual the freedom to choose, or to not choose, what religion they want to be. The Church of Reality strongly supports religious freedom and believes that religions should evolve on their own, without government intervention.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/realism_and_politics/

[Welcome Home](#) ▶ [Religion of Reality](#)

Why Reality needs a Religion

~ The History of Realism as a Religion ~

Why I started a Reality based Religion

Some of you might be wondering, "Why is Marc Perkel starting a new religion? What does he hope to accomplish? Is he trying to change the world and manipulate the future?"

The short answer is - Yes I am.

I am a person who is in many ways dissatisfied with the world I exist in and I have decided to try to change it; or at least lodge a complaint and try to find people who agree with me that there's room for improvement. Here's some of my ideas about how to get it done.

I want to live in a world where people are smarter than they are today. I want to live in a culture that appreciates thinking, understanding, invention, curiosity, and philosophy. I want to be able to talk to lots of interesting people who live interesting lives and have interesting things to say.



Imagine a world where politicians are smarter. People who are elected by a society who expects them to take reality into consideration when making the important decisions that affect us all as a society. Imagine a world where you can get on an airplane knowing that someone isn't going to try to blow it up because he thinks his invisible friend told him to do so.

I want to live in a world where people take their **Life Story** seriously and put out the effort to own themselves and decide what role they want to play during their brief existence in this world. I want to live in a world where people have some sort of appreciation and respect for the fact that the way they live their lives affects all of us.

My Bible is the Star Trek series. The Christian Bible is a collection of fictional stories about the past that were designed to create a system of ethics for which to form the basis for a culture. The Star Trek series is also a collection of fictional stories but about the future, rather than the past, that were also designed to create a system of ethics for which to form the basis for a culture.

Star Trek fires my soul because I envision that day when the mind of humanity stretches across the universe to explore and understand greater and greater things. I want to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations ... to boldly go where no one has gone before.

I want the **Star Trek future**. A future that gets better from one generation to the next. A future from where we can look back at our new history proud that we took the time and were thoughtful enough to get it right so that humanity can thrive and prosper.

People of the world; is it not better to believe in what actually is real and not what isn't real? Do we need to have wars over "My God is tougher than your God"? Can't we give up the **Bullshit** and all just agree that believing in what actually is real is important? This world, this universe fascinates me. I want to know it all, explore it all, understand it all.

People of the world; isn't it time that we put an end to stupidity when it comes to electing our government leaders? Would it not be better if smarter people were in charge? Can we continue to pay the price of getting it wrong when we could have done the right thing if only we had the courage and took the time to think it through?

How many of you turn on the news convinced that the news media is actively trying to make your brain rot? Perhaps the government wants us all to be stupid people. They want us to believe that there isn't an absolute reality out there, that we are a part of, and that reality created us. I say, let us rise up then and be smart people just to be sure they aren't up to something.

I don't know why I exist but I know that I want to continue to exist and I want the human race to continue to exist. There is a lot of work to do to ensure that the future of humanity stays on the right track. It's going to take a lot of smart people because we need all the help we can get.

I am starting this religion because I want also to share my appreciation for reality with others. Reality is truth and truth is reality. There is no higher truth than that which is real, the way it really is. That is my world view and I hope to inspire you to bring reality into your belief system and make contemplation of the **Sacred Question**, "What is real?" part of

your daily life.

I want to ask everyone in the world a question, what we call the **Sacred Challenge**, "Where does reality fit into your belief system?" It is my goal in starting this religion that I inspire you to think about that question.

I'm tired of living in a world where one group's deity is at war with another group's deity, especially when they are referencing the same deity. It makes the deity look lame and I would be embarrassed to be that deity even if I didn't exist!

My message in this religion to my fellow members of humanity is that it's time for humanity to grow up and take **Responsibility** for our own existence. Humanity does not need an imaginary invisible daddy figure telling us what to do. We have evolved to the point where we are aware of our own existence. We now have a good idea who we are and how we got here. Now it is time for humanity to decide what we will become, what we will evolve into

I ask all of you to take personal responsibility for your life. I ask all of you to own it. I want you all to understand that what you do will become what you did. I ask that you accept that what is, is; and that what is not, is not! To accept that "to be" is the opposite of "not to be" This it is not the question, that is the way it is.

I want everyone to understand. I didn't create reality. Reality created me. And I'm just trying to understand and appreciate my creator the same way all other religions are.

So if you are wondering if I'm up to something it's pretty obvious that, in fact, I am. I ask that all of you turn to reality for guidance; that you establish a personal relationship with reality; that you take the time to look around at the reality around you and contemplate your existence, our existence, and existence itself. Brothers and sisters of the planet; reality has changed my life. Reality can change your life too. Every time you think about reality who you are is transformed. In that moment you become a little smarter, and the universe becomes a little smarter.

What is a Religion?

One definition of a religion is: "System of beliefs and practices concerned with sacred things and or symbols uniting individuals into a single moral community."

Religion is a statement of one's identity and one's belief system and how one evaluates truth. It is about one's morals and ethics and one's community. How one evaluates right and wrong; to identify with a religion is to associate oneself with a common world view shared with others of the same religion. In society, it identifies you in the larger culture of people who care about those sorts of things.

The Church of Reality gives Realists a religious identity.

Religious identity is important in society. Many wars are fought over religious issues - "my God is stronger than your God." People want to know what religion you identify with so they can evaluate your moral code. It gives people an idea of what deities you do or don't believe in. What rituals you practice. To be associated with a religion is to make a

statement about who you are, what your values are, what you are committed to, and what you care about.

You don't need to believe in a deity or the supernatural to be a religion. All that is required is to share a common world view and doctrine.

I am a Realist. I believe in Reality the way it really is. I practice Realism. I try to live my life in a way that is as realistic as possible. I make my life choices based on what is really real. I seek to know the truth about the way things really are. I commit to the purpose of furthering knowledge and uncovering the truth. This is who I am and in becoming a member of the Church of Reality I am making a statement to the greater community that I agree with and identify with this world view. That by having the Church of Reality as my religion that is (or will be) commonly known, I can state that I am a Realist and have others understand what that is. That's why it is important to establish reality as a religion and give identity to those who share our common world view the same way that other religions give their world view a public identity.

Realism Deserves a Religious Identity

I - **Marc Perkel** - First One of the Church of Reality - came up with the idea of the Church of Reality on November 7th 1998 and registered the domain name "churchofreality.org" the next day. The idea came from discussions about atheism and agnosticism and the idea that there were a lot of people, including myself, that these terms failed to really apply to. Yes, I am an atheist, but that's not a religious affiliation. I was not a member of "The Atheist Church". Atheism spoke about what I didn't believe, not what I did believe. I could be identified as a "scientist" but that was more of a job title than a world view.



If not for Reality, I wouldn't be here.

Would my religious affiliation then be "nothing" or no religion? Perhaps that was closer, yet it didn't really express what it was that I did believe. I believe that the universe was created some 15 billion years ago in something that we describe as "The Big Bang" and that the earth is a speck of dust in the universe and that life evolved here into what we are now. I also believe in society, right and wrong, codes of ethical behavior, the concept of morality and wisdom, and that these concepts can exist in the absence of an omnipotent father figure who supposedly produced a "holy book".

Among all the thousands of religious choices, shouldn't reality be included?

Therefore - the concept of "no religion" implied that religion was something that I didn't care about; as if the realm of belief wasn't important to me. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yet there was no religion that was remotely close to what I did believe, leaving me and people who think like me in a state of limbo. We believe strongly in reality and want to understand reality the way it really is - but there is currently no religious identity associated

with that - and it occurred to me to start the Church of Reality as a way to give Realists an identity and an organization dedicated to the pursuit of Realism.

As I wrote web pages for the Church of Reality web site, a lot of ideas came together. At first I wasn't sure that it would ever be a "real" religion because - like most people - I had the idea that in order to be a religion, you had to believe in things that aren't real. I had the idea that there would have to be rituals involved or that I would have to define reality and then later learn I was wrong. I thought that I would be severely limited in terms of a religious identity in that I could only incorporate undisputed universal truths into the belief system. But that's not the way it is. As I continued to write and explore, the ideas crystallized and I realized that a Church that believes in Reality not only can be as complete and full as any other religion, but even fuller - because after all - it doesn't get any more real than reality.

Religion based on Logic

Religion and Logic have been considered to be mutually exclusive. Logic being reality and science and religion being the world of make believe. Many people from the world of logic look at religion as a form of mental defect that undermines the principles of science. However pure Atheism doesn't tell us what right and wrong is or how we should live our lives as humans exploring reality. The Atheist community is aware of the fact that it doesn't fill this void. Religion provides more than just a fictional doctrine. It provides a community. It provides a moral compass to determine what is right and what is wrong. It's a blueprint of how to live our lives.

In modern times the scientific and atheistic communities have made some progress towards addressing the human side of Atheism. **Humanism** is a good start towards addressing these issues. Atheists who want to eliminate churches and religion often realize that they will never succeed until they have a working substitute that fulfills the legitimate functions of religions to form community, to care for one another, to create a basis for right and wrong, to perform weddings and funerals, to provide spiritual counseling, and to provide a sense of belonging. Fiction based religions provide these services and often do so in a very flawed way. But fiction based religion is the only source of this type of community, until now.

Most people say that it can never be done, the task of creating a religion based on reality that supports logic and reason as its standards for creating the guidelines for humanity to live by. But I say that it can be done, and it must be done. As a scientist I can not accept the premise that a fictional based worldview is required to perform the legitimate and necessary functions of a church. Therefore there must be a model for a religion that functions as a church but is based on reality. If we assume that such a model can exist then it becomes a puzzle to be solved. How do we do that? How do we create a religion based on reality? How do we unite the two?

That is one of our missions. We are the Church of Reality and we have to live up to our name bringing the Church and Reality together. And we have to do it in a way that stays true to the standards and requirements of both worlds. On the Reality side the Church of Reality must be scientifically pure. We can not compromise science for example by accepting a deity just because it's popular. On the Church side we have to create a sense of right and wrong, provide guidance on how people should live their lives. We have to

create a moral code, a community, and address the spiritual needs of the community without having to resort to spirits to do so. The Church of Reality is primarily a church which is based on reality. We are a religion first. We are about people and the human experience. We are people exploring reality as it really is.

By taking the name Church of Reality we have accepted as an axiom that the problem is solvable and that it is our dharma to solve the problem.

Natural Religion

The Church of Reality is a "Natural Religion" based on Reality. What this means is that if the Church of Reality didn't exist and a wise person was given the task of creating a church based on reality that they would come up with a religion that is approximately the same as what the Church of Reality is now. It is our position that the Church of Reality is, or at least should be, a reflection of the natural laws of reality.

We have the Sacred Principle of Scrutiny and Doubt to keep this church on track. Self **scrutiny** directs us to examine what we are doing in such a way that we can discern whether we are on track or off track even if we become corrupted. How do we do that? One of the tests is to see if the Church of Reality were reinvented from scratch whether it would come out the same. What would be the same and what would be different, and why would anything be different?

The Church of Reality is not about Marc Perkel. I am just a guy who came up with an idea. The Church is about Reality

The parts that would be the same reinforce the likelihood that we are on track. However, the parts that are different raise the question that perhaps we are not on track. Of course, it depends on what the difference is or how serious it is.

The Church of Reality as it now exists is for the most part an attempt by me, Marc Perkel, the First One, and my friends and the feedback of the current membership, to create a natural church based on reality. Since none of us are perfect, it has to be assumed that errors exist that will hopefully be corrected in the future when they are hopefully discovered. I have no supernatural powers to rely on. I am just a guy who came up with an idea and try my best to do as good a job as I can with the resources I have to work with. The problem is that I am just an individual who is writing this from a limited perspective and am therefore limited in my ability to be accurate.

We should always ask, "If someone else invented the Church of Reality - would they come up with the same thing?"

Some things by different authors wouldn't be the same no matter how accurate everyone was. Everyone has their own personality and the personality is often injected into the writings. That is normal and acceptable to some extent as long as the personality issue doesn't affect the overall functioning of the church. As the First One I get to add some

artistic elements to these early writings. I get to select the jokes. But I don't get to alter reality based on my personal whims. So it is a good idea to constantly test the presumptions of the Church to make sure that it sticks with reality and doesn't degenerate the way the theist religions do.

What is Special about the Church of Reality?

The Church of Reality is unlike most other religions. The Church of Reality is a forward looking religion that envisions a better future than we have today. Realism is more than just believing in what's real - it's a commitment to the truth and reality the way it really is.

But the Church of Reality goes far beyond just believing in what's real. We are **Explorers** who actively seek out knowledge. And to do that we explore the understanding of understanding. We take on the big questions in life. Especially the **Sacred Question** - "What is Real?"

The belief system is based on the positive evolution of the human race. That it is the **Tree of Knowledge** - the sum total of all human understanding - that separates us from the animals. We believe that our understanding of reality is what defines us as a species and that we improve ourselves through the discovery of new things.

The Church of Reality is more than just a static science book. It's more than just a declaration that reality is real. It is a commitment to a process of learning and to the greater community to create the environment in which learning can occur. It is to accept responsibility for our choices as a species and realize that we can control our destiny and choose our future. We choose to believe that what the human race becomes is important, and that we should apply the principles of Realism to our decision making process.

We explore ethics and morality and law and justices. We explore the questions about what is the best way for people to live. What is right and wrong? What is morality? What Sacred Principles can be declared as universal concepts. We seem to exist - therefore - what are we going to do while we are here?

Reality tells us that this planet is a speck of dust in the universe. There are 100 billion trillion galaxies and there are billions of stars in each one. We are but a speck of dust in the universe. We live for merely a moment of time. We are born, eat, reproduce, and die. This is science and this is reality.

The Church of Reality goes beyond mere science. Science just give us the bleak facts, but the Church of Reality adds color and depth to these facts. It adds the perspective of who we are and what we should do now that we exist.

We are here. We may be insignificant but this is our planet. We are individuals, yet we are connected to each other through the Tree of Knowledge. As individuals we would be no different than most other animal life on this planet. But we as a species have a common knowledge base that makes us a sort of a group life force. Just as bees are individuals, they are also part of a hive. And the bee can't survive without the hive. It can be accurately viewed that the hive is itself a life form made up of bees just like the bee is a life form made up of cells.

The Church of Reality is more than just believing in what's real. It's the exploration of reality by humanity as a whole and a personal commitment to the disciplines of pursuing the truth.

We too are parts of a greater life form. We have communities, countries, religions, political parties, and ultimately, we are one species. The entire human race is part of a "super being" that contains vast stores of information that we all rely on. Almost everything we do is related to things that came from other people. I created nothing in the house I live in. Very little in the world could be considered uniquely mine. This church itself - although it is "my idea" is really less than 1% mine. It is built on our common knowledge. I use language to describe it - words that came from other people. Einstein is long dead - but I can talk about Relativity because his knowledge is preserved. His ideas were built on mathematics that he was taught that was discovered by other people. He built his theories on the foundations of those who came before him.

Thus - the Church of Reality is more than just reality - it's the **dharma** of reality realizing itself. It is reality becoming self aware through our act of exploration. It is reality exploring itself through us. It is us - on this planet - with nothing else to do but to expand what we are as a species - as a super being - and to grow that into something better.

Pure reality doesn't care about us. If this galaxy exploded today it would take 2.2 million years before anyone in the next closest galaxy even saw it - assuming that there were anyone there to see it in the first place. But in going beyond pure cold reality the Church of Reality makes certain assumptions that gives reality a religious context. We are exploring reality from the human perspective. We have a will to survive and to grow. We have our selfish perspective that our little speck of dust in the universe is valuable to us and that our survival is important to us, and that our exploration and understanding of the universe is important to us.

So - the Church of Reality isn't just science. It adds the element of humanity. It presumes that we are important to us and that growing is a good thing and that annihilation and extinction is a bad thing. In the universe itself there is no good and bad. There are just rocks bumping into each other and stars exploding. But Realism goes beyond that in that it's about us. Realism isn't just understanding - it's about people understanding together. And since our understanding is collective in nature - Realism is about community, ethics, morality, law, justice, freedom, responsibility, and all of the social issues necessary for the exploration of reality as it really is. The Church of Reality is about us. It is about who we are, where we are going, and how we are going to get there. Understanding doesn't exist in the vacuum of outer space. Understanding requires an understander, one who understands. There has to be something or someone out there that is doing the understanding. Where does understanding occur? Is it in the mind of the individual? Only partially. Most of understanding is a community effort. I come up with a brilliant idea - the Church of Reality for example. But my idea is based on things I learned from society. So - what do I do with my brilliant idea? I tell other people. I post it on the Internet. I share the idea. If I don't share the idea then the idea dies. Knowledge doesn't live in the vacuum of space - it lives only if it is passed on and stored; it only lives if it becomes part of the Tree of Knowledge. It only lives if our ideas merge into the oneness of human understanding. Only in this is it that who we are - from an intellectual perspective - survives our physical existence.

The Tree of Knowledge goes beyond the sum total of the minds of human beings. Long ago this was not the case. People had to teach knowledge to other people and all knowledge was stored in the minds of those currently alive. If knowledge wasn't passed on verbally, or was not accurately remembered, it was forever lost. Eventually humans discovered writing and knowledge could be stored in books. Inventions like the printing press and transportation made the storage and communication of knowledge far better allowing the Tree of Knowledge to grow more quickly. Now we have telephones, television, radio, computers, and the Internet that have greatly advanced the processes of storing and communicating ideas.

These new tools add to the sum total of human understanding. The Tree of Knowledge goes beyond the sum of all the living brains on the planet. It now includes all books, computers, tape recordings, and communication systems. And it includes the societies that support the technology, who has access, and who can use what. All this adds to who we are as the "understander" of understanding.

Thus - it is the premise of the Church of Reality that there is a super being that is made up of all of us and our devices for the sharing and storing information. It is our premise that we are all part of this vast network of people and machines, and that we are all members working together as one race to improve ourselves. We are the Tree of Knowledge just as bees are a hive. And the hive is not just the some of the bees - but it is the hive structure itself and it is the honey.

And just as the hive includes the honey, the Tree of Knowledge includes not only the people, but also our houses, roads, bridges, airplanes, cars, computers, networks, books, countries, governments, religions, schools, hospitals, communication satellites, money, power distribution, dams, lakes, boats, trains, trucks, the things that make life work for us. And we are all part of that from the smallest villages to the vast cities.

But - who controls the super being - or does it control us? By the way - I am not referring to God here. Who decides what will be next? The premise of the Church of Reality is - we do. We believe that we as individuals can make a difference. Will our future be happy and prosperous? Or - are we heading for ultimate destruction or a hideous future where we become slaves to the machines we build - assuming the machines don't exterminate us. Some religions envision Armageddon. What will our future be and who will decide it?

The Church of Reality takes the position that our future depends on individuals making the right choices for the right reasons. We believe that we are ultimately responsible and are for the most part in control of our future. We believe that it is our responsibility to be responsible. It is up to us to decide how we are going to make decisions. To decide that we have an obligation to choose to choose rather than let things just happen. And that the process of making those choices should be done based on reality and not mythology. We believe that if we choose wisely we are far more likely to have a better tomorrow than if we choose poorly.

In order to choose wisely we have to be able to know how to be wise. We need to explore better ways of doing things and have some principles as to what better is. We need a sense of community and of purpose. The Church of Reality provides purpose to reality. The purpose is the Dharma of the Church to do the doing and know what needs to be known. In order to guide us, we create the **Sacred Principles** that define the concepts for which the

Church of Reality is guided. These principles define our purpose and our method for achieving that purpose and provide a framework to accomplish the dharma of the church - which is the pursuit of reality by the human race.

The Disciplines of the Church of Reality

What is the different between someone who is into science and someone who practices Realism? There is a lot of difference. There are a lot of people who will state, "Of course I believe in reality, who doesn't?" But - does that make them a member of the Church? No - it doesn't.

To be a Realist and practice Realism requires a greater commitment than just acknowledging that reality is real. The Church of Reality isn't just about what you believe in - it's what you do. Realism goes beyond just giving lip service to reality. To be a Realist you have to dedicate yourself to the cause of promoting Realism, publicly identify yourself as a Realist, and actively participate in growing the Tree of Knowledge. This church isn't about what you believe - it's about what you do.

Realists - and I use a capital R to indicate I use the term referring to church members - are expected to practice the disciplines of the church - which include growing the Tree of Knowledge. This involves such things as original thinking and communicating new good original ideas. It involves promoting the good ideas of others. It involves education, learning, communications, asking the Sacred Question, challenging beliefs on the basis of reality, insisting that decisions be made in a realistic way, contributing to the promotion of Realism, strengthening society through public service, charity, giving, sharing, and taking care of one another. A Realist is expected to be actively Realistic - not passively.

**We choose to work to grow the Tree of Knowledge
and we choose to work to cause humanity to evolve
in a positive direction for a better tomorrow. It is
these choices that make the Church of Reality a
Religion.**

The Tree of Knowledge is the central concept in the Church of Reality. The Tree of Knowledge represents the sum total of all human understanding. We are all members of the human race and we are all bound together as one being through the Tree of Knowledge. It is central to our belief that we acknowledge the reality that we are not - for the most part - separate individuals, in that our lives, our thoughts, our language, what we know, what we do, who we are, are all bound together in a vast matrix of information. And as Realists practicing Realism it is our duty to the Tree of Knowledge to improve ourselves individually, and as members of the human race for the good of all mankind.

The Church of Reality makes the assumptions that if life has a purpose - it is because we give it purpose. That we as a race have made the arbitrary decision to both survive and to prosper. That we choose to become better than we are today. That we should move forward into a better tomorrow. These choices do not come from reality itself. As far as the universe is concerned, we are just a rock in space.

But - the Church of Reality believes - through the Tree of Knowledge, that humanity as a

race has made a choice to evolve in a positive direction. We as individuals and as church members stand for the principle that we want a better tomorrow; and that we want to know the truth. That we want to have a better understanding of who we are, why we are here, and why there is something rather than nothing. And it is our Dharma as Realists practicing Realism to ensure that humanity goes in that direction - forward - known to us as the **Sacred Direction**. It is this choice that we make that establishes the doctrine of the church.

To that end it is our discipline, our dharma, to make it our purpose, and to actively work to achieve the goals of the church. And in order to achieve this end - we create the Sacred Principles that form a practical foundation to achieve this purpose.

Atheists can have Religious Rights Too

People think of religious rights in terms of Theism. The idea is that a person is personally committed to worshipping a God and that the God requires the person wear or not wear specific clothing, or to attend a worship service on a holy day. Various nation states recognize the importance of religion to the individual and have reserved in their laws a process for exception to various rules for individuals whose ability to practice their religion would be impeded if they were forced to adhere to the State's rules and regulations.

You don't have to believe in God to have religious rights. Realists have the same religious rights as any other religion.

Religion is not limited to Theists. There are religions who do not believe in a deity or anything supernatural and who have a common religious world view that is just as sacred and holy to them as that of deity based religions. Religion doesn't require a deity to be a religion and under the rules of most nation states all religions are considered to have the same rights as all other religions. These rights include the rights of religions who are atheistic or religions like **Unitarian Universalists** who take no position on whether or not God exists.

Our religious rights are based on Church of Reality doctrine.

Like other religions the Church of Reality has a doctrine that we call the **Kernel**. Our doctrine is based on **Axioms** that we assume to be true. These axioms form the basis for our Sacred Missions and our **Sacred Principles** that lay the foundation for our moral code. The basis of our religion is to pursue an understanding of reality the way it really is. We have special needs in order to accomplish this and rules or laws that would interfere with our pursuit of reality would be an infringement of our religious rights.

For example, the Church of Reality has issued an edict against students in public school being forced to wear school uniforms because uniforms stifle creativity and infringe on **individualism** and **freedom**. A Realist can not be forced to learn **Bullshit** as science. A Realist has a right to choose to have an **Abortion** or to choose not to have an abortion. A Realist has the right to explore reality. We have the right to be individualistic. We have the right and religious duty to choose which wars are just and unjust. We have the right to be free of government and corporate tracking. We have the right to refuse military

conscription. We consider personal choice and personal freedom to be sacred.

We have the right to speak out against injustice. No Realist can be compelled to give up their right to speak freely, to criticize any organization that they are a member of or not a member of, or be punished in any way for speaking out. We have the right to **communicate** with other Realists to explore reality together. We have a right to access scientific journals even if imprisoned.

We have a right to refuse to participate in harming the **environment**. We have the right to refuse to endure exposure to the **teachings of other religions** should we choose not to. We have the right to refuse to acknowledge the existence of deities or make any pledges to nation states that include a reference to a deity. We have a right to assert a **message of peace**. We have a right to share fellowship with other Realists or any group of people who express an interest in reality so that we can discuss the **Sacred Question**.

The doctrine of the Church of Reality is a living doctrine that is always under development. It is the right of all Realists to have access to this doctrine and to be able to communicate their thoughts on how to improve our doctrine for the purpose of **Positive Evolution**. Realists have the right to resources to aid in their self improvement. Realist have a right to practice **compassion** for others, to care for the sick, to give charity to the needy, to give medical aid to the wounded, to educate those needing education, to rehabilitate those who are imprisoned whether or not they are guilty of a crime. Our world view is the **Philosophy of the Open Hand** and we have a right to practice that.

Realists are expected to use **Wisdom** and **Reason** and to think for themselves. As with any religion sometimes Church of Reality doctrine doesn't cover every aspect of every situation. It is therefore up to the individual to think for themselves and to apply church law to specific situations that they encounter in their lives. The individual ultimately has the freedom to choose and to determine how church doctrine applies to them individually.

Because our doctrine is better than most deity based religions the Church of Reality gives Atheists stronger religious rights than those of Bible believers.

The Church of Reality actually provides more religious rights for Realists than most deity based religions do, which is yet another reason for you to become a **Realist**. Let us welcome you to the real world.

Realists have more Religious Rights than Theists

Religious rights are rights that various nation states recognize as being superior to state laws. Individuals who are members of religions are given exceptions to the law regarding specific religious customs. States try to avoid forcing individuals to be required to do things that the individual considers to be "sinful" or in violation of one's conscience. Many laws have a religious exemption that allows people of specific religions the right to not comply with the law or to have special privileges such as days off of work for religious holidays. Muslims are allowed to wear head scarves. Jehovah's Witnesses can not be compelled to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Religious people have the right to practice their religion.

Religious rights were once thought of as applying only to people who believe in a God. But that isn't the case. Religious rights apply to people of all religions whether or not your religion believes in a deity or not. All religions includes atheist religions like Buddhism and Realism. It doesn't matter what your religion believes or what fictional deities it chooses. In the eyes of the law Jesus and the Flying Spaghetti Monster are equal.

Religious rights are based on the doctrine of the religion that you are a member of. These laws generally do not apply to people who are not members of a religion. The nation states seem to give preference to people who are members of a group as opposed to people who have their own private philosophy. As a member of a religion your religious claim is based on their documented religious laws. So if you are an individual making a claim for a religious right then you need to be a member of a religion that has a written creed that the state can reference that shows that your religious claim is actually supported by the religion that you are a member of.

Our Kernel gives Realists a fuller set of religious rights than that of any other religion.

The Church of Reality has a very rich doctrine for which to draw upon for religious freedom. We are not limited by the words of ancient text that were written by people who lived thousands of years ago. Our **Kernel** is a modern doctrine that is a dynamic and evolving doctrine that is expanding, fixing it's mistakes, improving, and is able to adjust to a changing world. In the future if cloning technology becomes commonplace then we will have doctrine relating to cloning. You would be hard pressed to find cloning in the Bible. but when the time comes the Kernel will cover it.

Our doctrine is based on the right of the individual to pursue the understanding of reality as it really is and to be part of a community that is friendly to such a pursuit. Our Sacred Missions and our Sacred Principles give us a very broad religious doctrine with a lot of specific religious protections. Our doctrine is far more specific than other religions and details issues in the modern world. It is based on a logical construction so that even if an issue isn't specifically covered it can more easily be logically constructed from existing principles. This is important because a Realist going into a court of law to assert a religious right has far more to work with than other religions. The strength of our Kernel empowers then individual to assert religious rights under law.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/religion_of_reality/

Welcome Home ▶ Sacred Choices

We Realists Freely Choose to Believe ...

In the cold darkness of outer space reality is just stars exploding and rocks bumping into each other. This planet is but an insignificant spec of dust in the universe. This is science and this is reality. The Church of Reality however is more than just believing

that reality is real, it is a choice to explore reality and everything associated with exploring reality.

In galactic terms, it doesn't matter if humanity thrives or destroys itself. If we were gone tomorrow, who would care? It only matters to us. Thus - the Church of Reality is more than a study of reality. It is about the relationship between humanity and reality. Or specifically, humanity's exploration of reality.

We Realists commit our lives to Realism by making The Sacred Choices

It is a fact that we as humans are all part of the greater society and that we function collectively. It is true that our success as a species is based on our **Tree of Knowledge** which represents the sum total of all human understanding. It is true that in order to pursue reality we have to do it cooperatively and that in this pursuit, we are all in this together. Yet there is nothing that compels us to make good choices, to decide to evolve in a positive direction, and to pursue the truth instead of a shared fantasy. It is by choice that we decide our fate, who we will become together as a species. This is our planet. We are all here together. And we are going to work together to make tomorrow better than today. That is why we of the Church of Reality make the Sacred Choices and hereby dedicate our lives to the Sacred Missions and begin the Sacred Journey.

1. We choose to accept the Sacred Missions as our mission.
2. We choose to uphold the **Sacred Principles** of the Church of Reality making them our principles.
3. We choose to pursue the understanding of reality the way it really is.
4. We choose to reject mythology and the belief in things that are not real.
5. We choose to accept the path of responsibility and acknowledge that our choices matter.
6. We choose to strive for wisdom and to live our lives as realistically as possible.
7. We choose to commit to challenging our beliefs and the beliefs of others by asking the **Sacred Question** - "Is this real?"
8. We choose to acknowledge that the **Tree of Knowledge** is the sum total of all human understanding.
9. We choose to commit to working to improve the Tree of Knowledge by working for a better future.
10. We choose to be forward looking and work for a better future for the human race.
11. We choose to be good ethical members of society and contribute our efforts to the well being of the human race.

The Sacred Contemplations

What do Realists Do? We Contemplate

Exploring Reality through Contemplation

The Church of Reality is a religion about the exploration of reality both individually and collectively. It is about increasing our understanding of ourselves individually, our human society, and the universe that we live in. In order to do that we contemplate everything we can find to try to understand all of it. We explore reality through individual and collective contemplation.

We live in a universe that is incredibly complex and infinitely interesting. We want to understand it all,

comprehend it all. Why does anything exist? Why is there something rather than nothing? So here we are, what do we do now? What do I do with my life? We explore reality with our minds. Everything is interesting to us. What we are, who we are, and what we will become starts through contemplation.

Contemplation is a sacred act in the Church of Reality. Some religions pray, some religions meditate. We contemplate. Contemplation makes the mind stronger and it reprograms you to live a reality based life. It enforces the habit of critical thinking.

1. **Contemplating the Name** - What is the Church of Reality?
2. **Contemplating the Universe** - Science, Physics, the physical universe, things that are real.
3. **Contemplating the Tree** - Knowledge, what do we know and why do we know it? The collective knowledge of humanity.
4. **Contemplating Society** - Our relationship with each other. How we get along as members of humanity.
5. **Contemplating the Future** - What is our destiny? What are we evolving into?
6. **Contemplating the Path** - Who am I and how do I fit into society?



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7. **Contemplating Contemplation** - My mind, my perception, how our minds interface into reality.

This list of course doesn't represent everything that can be contemplated. This is more of a starting point to cover most things. You can also contemplate this list as to whether other contemplations should be added.

Contemplating the Name

Contemplating the name "Church of Reality" is the first step in becoming a **Realist**. The name is the message. The Church of Reality is by definition a religion dedicated to the pursuit of reality the way it really is. But what does that mean? How do you accomplish that? Is this church truly accomplishing this or is there a better way? Let us assume that a Church of Reality is possible for the purpose of discussion. What do you think it should be like?

This Church of Reality is the idea of the **First One**, Marc Perkel, who came up with the name and started this reality based church. but just because it was first doesn't mean that it's being done right. In fact we assume that mistakes are being made and that there is a better way to do what we are doing. Furthermore everyone has a point of view and in order to become a Realist you have to identify with reality from your point of view and what it means to you and your life situation.

So before we tell you what we think the Church of Reality means, think about it yourself. Suppose you had the idea of creating a "Church of Reality", what do you think that would be like? You see, the Church of Reality wasn't created of of divine inspiration. We don't have a holy book to follow. It is created by people like you and me wondering about how to do reality based religion right.

The name "Church of Reality" is out there. Even if this implementation of the Church of Reality fails the idea of reality based religion isn't going away. The church is created and evolves through contemplating the name.

[Read more...](#)

Contemplating the Universe

To contemplate the universe is to understand everything that is real. All of it. How does it work? Where did it come from? From the smallest objects to the largest. It's math and science. It's physical reality. It includes things we can touch, things we can build. Why do birds fly towards the equator in the winter and how do they know how to get back?

We Realists are a curious people. We want to know everything. We want to know how it works. We want to take it apart and see what's inside. We wonder if we can make it better. We like to build things.

Contemplating the Tree

Humanity has the ability to share knowledge. We call our shared knowledge the **Tree of Knowledge** which represents the sum total of human understanding. The human race is totally interdependent on our collective information. How is this information stored, communicated, and distributed? It's about our use of language both verbal and written. About the means of replicating information through printing, books, audio and video recordings, and the Internet which we call the **Golden Router**.

What are the dynamics of knowledge. How do we know if something is true or not? How do we know what's real? How do we receive information from the Tree and how do we contribute information to the tree. How can we improve our ability to share information and determine the truth?

Contemplating Society

Since humanity is interdependent how do we get along with each other? What is right and wrong and why? What are the basic axioms for discerning morality? What are the axioms that form the basis for law and government? What is community? What does it mean to be an upstanding member of society. What is the relationship of the individual to the collective? What about regional differences? Cultural differences? What about individual rights?

Contemplating Society is the search for a consistent set of rules to go by that have a logical basis and represent our best effort to form a set of natural laws that we all should follow. The Church of Reality has laid the basis for natural law by creating the **Sacred Principles** which represents our current best guess for the guidelines of a reality based society.

Contemplating the Future

Where is the human race going? What will we be like 100 years from now? Or 1000 years from now? Or a billion years from now? Will we develop space ships and travel to other star systems or explore other galaxies? Will we run into intelligent life on other planets?

Will we cure diseases? Will we learn how to live forever? Will we control our own evolution through genetic engineering and cybernetic implants? What will computers be like? Will we be able to convert mass into energy efficiently?

What will society become? Will we have world peace? Will we have a one world government? What will justice be like? Will we ever evolve beyond the need for money? Will we lose our individuality and become one great mind or will we become more individualistic as we free ourselves of the {In:cult mind}? Will there be religion in the future and if so, what will it be like?

What will the future of history be like? Will we store enough information to allow future historians to look back at us and learn more about how they got to where they will be then? What do we want the future to be and will we be happy with the choices that we end up making?

Contemplating the Path

Contemplating the Path is forming a plan and making it happen. Here we are, what do we do now? We want things like world peace, to cure diseases, to explore the galaxy. How do we do that? How do we make it happen?

Contemplating the Path is taking control of your **Personal Evolution**. What is our role in society? What is my role? What am I going to do with my life? What part of the plan will I help formulate? How will I make the plan happen? What is my path in life?

We are born. We eat, shit, reproduce, and die. Is that all there is to it? Or is there a purpose to life? Or could we choose a purpose? What is my purpose? What is my path?

Life is a journey with a beginning and an end. During the time we live we do things that constitute the record of our existence. We can just exist or we can **Own Ourselves** and be what we want to be. To do that we have to start the process by contemplating our path and the collective path of the human race and put together a plan to make it happen.

Contemplating Contemplation

The famous philosopher **Rene Descartes** is credited with the concept of **Cogito, ergo sum**, "I think, therefore I am". Contemplating contemplation is about your mind. Your mind is your interface to reality and the way you experience and interface to the real world. It is the tool you own that you have to use to understand things with. Just as your muscles are used for lifting your brain is used for thinking. Our world view is that your head serves a greater purpose than just keeping your hat from falling on the ground. This is your tool, your brain, and the more you understand it the better you can make it work for you.

Your brain is the product of billions of years of evolution. It is not a computer and in many cases it is not to be trusted. It has limited capacity and logic is very new in our evolution as compared to finding food, escaping danger, and mating. We have the ability to share information through symbolic language to interface into the **Tree of Knowledge**. How do we best do that? What mental abilities do I have and what are my limitations? How can I work with others using my mind to help us all understand reality as it really is.

Welcome Home ▶ Sacred Covenants

The Sacred Covenants

The Church Commits to these Promises

A Covenant is a Promise and a Commitment

The Sacred Covenants is a commitment of the institution of the Church of Reality to the world that we will maintain our missions and goals so that the Church of Reality doesn't evolve into something other than what it was intended to be. People have often asked about the future of the Church of Reality. They wonder if it will become corrupt. They wonder if it will evolve into something that it never should have evolved into. They wonder if the church will be able to maintain its integrity.

These are serious and legitimate concerns and we take these concerns seriously. We don't want to turn into some horrible religion that is different than what we intended so we are trying to take steps in these early stages so that the Church of Reality will always be the Church of Reality and not some messed up religion that is using reality as a marketing label.

One advantage that the Church of Reality has over fiction based religions is that we are tied to reality itself. So if we get off track we have something solid to compare ourselves to. Fiction based religions don't have that advantage. If a religion is founded on fiction and the fiction changes then who is to say which fiction is better? But if you have a basis in reality then you have something to test against to tell if you are off course. Reality is like a lighthouse that guides us back.

However, as humans pursuing reality we are often confused and misled. It's easy to be tempted into compromising reality in order to be more popular or politically correct. So it is useful to build in safeguards and reminders into church doctrine because the dedication to reality as it really is has value and deserves protection. To that end we have the **Principle of Scrutiny** to encourage the public to watch us to make sure we stay clean. The **Principle of Humility** helps us resist the temptations of self importance.

A covenant is an agreement and a promise that one expects to be held to. It is a way of giving your word in the expectation that the promise will be kept. It creates a bond between entities for which people can rely upon. It forms the basis for trust. The Sacred Covenants are the promises of the Church of Reality to the people of the world that we will stick to our values. The Church however exists as a work of humanity and is not something that is divinely created or inspired. The church is its members and the members are the church. Therefore this is also the covenant of the members of the Church of Reality to the church to keep our religion clean and on track.

The Covenant of Reality

The Covenant of Reality is our promise that the Church of Reality is going to stick with reality. This is our promise that we aren't going to compromise on what is real. If the Church of Reality doesn't stick with reality then the name doesn't mean anything and our religion becomes indistinguishable from the fiction based religions. The pursuit of reality as it really is requires the disciplines of scientific principle. If we believe what we want to believe rather than what is real then our pursuit of reality becomes diluted with misinformation and our fictions become

barriers to the **Path of Knowledge**. We therefore make this covenant to commit ourselves to reality as it really is.

The Covenant of the Future

In order to truly pursue reality we have to make progress through time with every day increasing our understanding of reality as it really is. In order to do this we have to grow the **Tree of Knowledge** so that in real terms our collective understanding of the universe increases. We also have to improve ourselves and our societies so that our lives are better and we can expend the resources in order to progress. The **Principle of Positive Evolution** is our most sacred principle because if we fail to progress then we have failed to pursue reality.

The Church of Reality is a forward looking religion that commits to making tomorrow better than today. We are the caretakers of tomorrow and we accept the responsibility of using **Reason** and **Wisdom** to make good decisions today to help ensure the progress of our human family.

The Covenant of the Future is our commitment to progress. It is our pledge to be forward thinking, to take **Responsibility**, and to accept that our choices have consequences. We can not allow ourselves to make the past more important than the future. Our improvement has to be more important than tradition. We are a people who embrace change for the better and we are excited about what will come because we take responsibility to improve the human condition.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/the_sacred_covenants/

[Welcome Home](#) ▶ Sacred Goals

The Dharma of the Church

~ Our Sacred Goals ~

Our Dharma is What we Do

The Church of Reality exists for the pursuit of the understanding of understanding. We exist to pursue the answer to the Sacred Question - "What is Real?" This church isn't about what you believe in - it's about what you do. To be a member of this church is to commit to the doing of the doing. You have to walk the walk and talk the talk. The Church of Reality is about being real - not pretending to be real because reality looks cool. It's not about being a poser and fake being real. The dharma of the church is to actually be real.

Although we don't go from door to door asking people if they know Darwin and saying Darwin loves you, one of the sacred missions of the Church of Reality is to spread the idea that reality is important and that it is something that shouldn't be ignored. As Realists practicing Realism we benefit in growing our church by attracting others who may not be church members, but have embraced the concept of being realistic and are interested in what is real. It is one of our goals to raise awareness about reality and the importance of including reality in our daily lives and to make people aware of the pitfalls of ignoring reality.

So - how do we do this? There are many ways, but there are a few obvious places to start. As the First One I will start the process and list some specific objectives of the Church of Reality. The list will grow - but it will form an outline for the kind of thinking that defines the dharma of the church.

Some of the Sacred Principles use our Sacred Terminology. The reader will better understand the principles by reading the **Terminology** first.

Spreading the name Church of Reality

The name of the church is a message in itself. In the Church of Reality - the name says it all. We are a church based on believing in everything that is real. Therefore the first goal of the church is to expose most everyone on the planet to our name. It is our goal that everyone has heard the name, "Church of Reality" and at least has some vague idea that it is some kind of church that is based on the idea of believing in everything that is real.

The reason this is important is because if people are aware that the Church of Reality exists, it immediately causes them to ask the sacred question, "What is Real?". It causes them to wonder, "Is my religion real? Do I believe in things that are real? Do I believe in things that are not real? How do my beliefs compare to reality the way it really is?" This raises the importance of reality in the minds of the individuals who make up the world.

From the perspective of the Church of Reality - reality isn't given enough importance in society. Reality is often ignored or deliberately obscured. Most of the people of this planet believe in some form of mythology that has no basis in fact. None of the religious choices include believing in what's real. There is a vacuum out there for knowledge of reality the way it really is. So many people who are being forced or brainwashed into living the lie who are waking up and saying, "Wow! - Reality What a Concept!"

Making the World a Better Place

In the spirit of the **Principle of Positive Evolution** and to grow the **Tree of Knowledge**, it is our dharma to make the world a better place to live in. The

quest for knowledge is a shared experience with each individual building upon the work of those who came before them. We form a collective mind that is based on the work of those who came before us and we contribute to today's knowledge in the hope that knowledge will continue to grow in the future. We realize that in order to grow we need to take care of the basics of life and to take care of each other in a healthy productive society. It is therefore the dharma of the Church not only to pursue the understanding of reality the way it really is, but to create the kind of environment where that is possible.

A world of happy people who are well fed, who have access to education, to justice, to medical care, to housing, and all the other needs of basic living are more likely to grow the Tree of Knowledge than those who are oppressed, poor, hungry, sick, and homeless. We believe that people are better off building computers than fighting wars. So - making the world a better place is a necessary part of the understanding of understanding and it is why we encourage people to become /root and do tech support for the human race.

Creating a Free Online School

Sharing and growing the **Tree of Knowledge** is one of the goals of the Church of reality. One way to do that is to host free online education on a variety of subjects. Entire online courses will be donated free of charge and the peoples of the world will be allowed access to the education free of charge. The smarter people are - the better they can explore reality together.

We want to attract the best teachers and the best programmers to create an interactive online school in order to deliver quality education to a huge number of people. In traditional classroom settings, a good teacher is limited by physical constraints to a small number of students per year. It also requires people to be in the same space and time location. An online school would break these barriers and allow an unlimited number of students in any location at any time to receive a quality educational experience which combines the best of a team of teachers and other professionals to deliver education efficiently and effectively.

Classes will be available under the GPL license which requires that anyone who improves the course has to contribute the improvements in the course back to the maintainers who created it. This will help ensure that the classes will grow in both numbers and quality.

The School of the Church of Reality will be available to public and private schools as well as for home schooling. Anyone of any age in any location will be able to learn. And - this will give people more of an opportunity to become educators. After a teacher retires, they can contribute a lifetime of

teaching to the public and their knowledge and experience will be passed on long after they are gone.

Justice and Ethics

What is right and wrong? What is the right system of laws that protect the freedom of the individual and the security of the individual from those who would hurt others? What do we do with criminals? How do we ensure the justice process to be abuse free? These are questions we ask in our pursuit of the understanding of understanding.

In order for a person or a group of people to pursue reality they must have the freedom to do so without the fear of persecution. In the past great people have been jailed or murdered for truths we take for granted today. And in the future we will look back and see that the jailing of Jack Kevorkian for relieving the suffering of dying people was no different that Galileo being jailed for suggesting the world was round, What things are holding us back today from exploring reality as it really is? To that end we strive as a church to explore ethics and justice so that the great minds of our time can contribute to the tree of knowledge and make this world a smarter place to live in.

Challenging Other Religions

There are thousands of religions that believe in a wide variety of different things. But which religion - if any - is the true religion? Who has it right? Are the Christians right? Are the Jews really the chosen people? The Muslims? Hindus? Buddhists? Mormons? Hare Krishnas? Or - there is us - the Church of Reality. But are we real or have we become corrupted like all the other religions have? I of course believe that my religion - reality - is the real religion. And I do have an advantage that a religion based on believing in everything that's real - and it doesn't get more real than reality. But - how do I know that this church isn't itself corrupted and has degenerated into an oppressive cult that uses reality as a brand name the same way the Justice Department uses the word "justice"?

The Church of Reality hereby asks the sacred question to all other religions and to ourselves and to everyone as individuals - is your religion real? Are your beliefs real? Did the things you believe happened really happen? How do you know that you are not living a lie? If I put you in a room with people from 10 other religions, can you articulate to these other people an objective reason that your religion is more real than their religion is? Do you even believe that your beliefs have to be real? Or - are you comfortable with the idea that it doesn't matter if what you believe is real or not?

Everyone believes their religion is real. But how do you know that you're not just brainwashed? How do you know that your core beliefs aren't just one big scam? When you look at other religions you shake your head wondering how people could possibly believe in them. When they look at your religion they think the same thing. When I look at both of your religions I think the same thing. But what about my religion? Everyone believes in their own religion. So then - why is your religion real?

One of the core reasons that this church exists is that there are too many religions and cults and other belief systems that have no connection to reality whatsoever. This leads to people behaving in ways that are harmful to the human race. For example - on 09-11-2001 hijackers hijacked 4 planes and crashed them into buildings for religious reasons. They believed that they would be rewarded by God with 70 virgins. Is there belief based on reality? I would hope not - otherwise - God is really weird. We look at this thinking that those Muslims are irrational, but Christians believe that God had to have his son murdered to prove some symbolic point about salvation and that belief is every bit as weird to me as crashing planes into buildings.

If these beliefs were put to the "is this real" test then maybe these guys wouldn't crash planes into buildings. Maybe Christians wouldn't be looking forward to the destruction of the world and take responsibility and help make our speck of dust in the universe a better place to live. Maybe people would quit wasting massive amounts of resources trying to create a fantasy world that gives them the illusion of security and self importance and redirect that effort towards making our real world a better place for all to live in.

Many religions are little more than a money scam. Religion is used to trick people and play upon their fears and hopes in order to control them. Billions of people are being duped into believing things that are totally baseless. This puts a huge toll on society and is costly not only to the believers themselves, but to society as a whole.

Almost everyone would agree that most religions fit into this classification. In fact - most people would say that about almost all religions but their own. Most people think they believe in the "True" religion and that their beliefs are real. But are they? I challenge everyone who reads this to ask the question, "How do I know that what I believe is real? How do I know I'm not being fooled like billions of other people?" To get people to ask the question - "Is my religion real?" is a goal of the Church of Reality and it applies especially to the Church of Reality itself. Because if the Church of Reality isn't about reality then it fails in it's mission.

Understanding Cult Behavior

One of the greatest strength and weaknesses of the human race is the ability to rely on others to store information for us. Our brains can not hold

everything we need to know to survive individually and we rely on others to figure things out for us. When we drive our cars on the streets we trust that the people who do the traffic lights have it figured out and we stop for red lights and go for green lights. Because of this trust and reliance on others, the human race has developed far beyond other life forms on this planet. But - there is a down side to this interdependence. What if the information we rely upon is wrong? What if people take advantage of us by making us rely on wrong information? How do we know if the common knowledge is real or fiction?

What makes people believe in things that are irrational? What flaws does the human brain have that can be exploited and how do you protect yourself and your family from being exploited? How does brainwashing work and how can you tell if you are the one brainwashed? How do I know that my religion, political party, or my country isn't a cult? How do I know if I'm being exploited? How can I determine if something is true or a lie?

Mental manipulation is common. It's rather easy to create a religious experience and make people believe that God is talking to their heart and that they should start forking over vast quantities of money in order to save their eternal soul from the fiery pits of Hell. In order to pursue reality the way it really is we should understand how people obscure reality and manipulate people and trick them. By understanding these tricks and educating others we can free people to explore reality the way it really is. It is therefore important that understanding of cults become a Church of Reality project so that we can prevent the cults from further taking control of the world.

Promoting the Development of the Mind

To explore reality the way it really is and to develop an understanding of understanding we need to develop our minds to their fullest potential. Without good mental abilities we can not fully explore reality the way it really is. Often people become mentally lazy or form bad thinking habits or fail to get a good education. Some people actually believe that it's not OK to be smart.

In the Church of Reality - being smart is a good thing. Or more specifically - becoming smarter is a good thing. Not just to improve ourselves - but to improve the world around us - because it's easier to be smart if you live in a smart society. It is therefore the dharma of the Church of Reality to increase the IQ of the human race.

Providing Social Infrastructure and Community

Not everything in a religion is about belief. Churches provide a framework on how to live. Not only what is right and wrong but also what to do on a day to

day basis, a framework for living if you will. And Churches provide a support mechanism for their members and to provide charitable services for the greater community. It also provides a sense of community for its members so that people can socialize and exchange ideas. This community is both online and local. We need to have places for people to meet and activities for people to do together.

Community support is also an important task for the Church of Reality. When members of the community fall on hard times then members of the church need to form a support infrastructure to care for and comfort individuals in need. When people become ill they need to be cared for. We need to comfort the dying. To help resolve issues in relationships before they lead to divorce. To help families come together to raise and educate children. To help people deal with their emotional problems. And to do all this and other things like it in a way that promotes a good quality of life - social justice - and become the kind of community for which people can be proud of.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/the_sacred_goals/

Welcome
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Principles

The Sacred Principles

~ Our Moral Foundation ~

What are the Sacred Principles?

The Sacred Principles of the Church of Reality define the basic belief system and create a moral and ethical framework for the church and they create and protect the kind of environment needed to be Realists and practice **Realism**. When we Realists ask the **Sacred Moral Question** - Is this a good thing? - these are the principles against which we test morality. The Sacred Principles are based on the **Sacred Choices** where we as a religion declare that certain things have value. These things include the survival of the human race, that we should move in the **Sacred Direction** towards a better future, and that understanding reality is a good thing. The Sacred Principles lay out some of the framework to define our rights and responsibilities, and create a framework for the existence and goals of our church. The Sacred Principles help form the basis for determining what is right from what is wrong in the absence of an omnipotent creator. These principles help define the **dharma** of the church and

give meaning for it's existence.

The Church of Reality is a religion dedicated to believing in everything that is real. It is the pursuit of the understanding of understanding. Since on this planet understanding is limited for the most part to humans as the beings that understand, it supports the goals of the Church to support that which enhances the **Tree of Knowledge** and oppose things that would inhibit or prohibit the pursuit of understanding reality the way it really is. As a church we are interested not only in the expansion of the Tree of Knowledge itself, but also in the means by which knowledge is expanded.

The pursuit of the understanding of understanding is not enough if people lack the means to do so. We therefore have the goal of liberating new ideas from oppression, providing the means to communicate and preserve ideas, and to find a balance between protecting the intellectual property of the individual as well as protecting the intellectual commons. As a church we support education, scientific research, debate, the development of technology, the development of social systems, and the protection of justice. We strive for a free and peaceful planet where mankind can flourish and explore the reality of our own existence. We strive to become better and to evolve in a positive direction. The Church of Reality is a forward looking church dedicated to the idea that tomorrow should be better than today and that it is our dharma to ensure that the world does not end in destruction as many other religions believe.

In order to fulfill these objectives we have created the order of the /root. These are the monks of the Church of Reality who have dedicated their lives to doing tech support for the human race so that all people, whether or not they choose to pursue reality, will always have the opportunity to do so. The name /root is a term that comes from the Linux/Unix operating system and is the super user account that has the power and responsibility to keep the system running. In the Church of Reality to be /root is to accept the power and responsibility to keep the systems of society running.

The Sacred Principles are not like the Ten Commandments in that there is no claim that God or any other deity commanded them. There is no promise of a gift of eternal life in Heaven nor is there a threat of Burning in Hell forever. They are not a measure for which sins are counted nor Karma assessed nor are you accumulating brownie points for life after death. These principles are not static principles nor do they represent a complete list of what is or what should be. They are, in part, a beginning attempt to create a basis of determining right from wrong and to create and define a positive direction for the human race to make progress.

Some of the Sacred Principles use our Sacred Terminology. The reader will better understand the principles by reading the **Terminology** first.

Index of Sacred Principles

The list of the Sacred Principles of the Church of Reality are:

1. **The Principle of Positive Evolution**
2. **The Principle of Existence and Survival**
3. **The Principle of Exploration**
4. **The Principle of Curiosity**
5. **The Principle of Honesty and Integrity**
6. **The Principle of Freedom**
7. **The Principle of Peace**
8. **The Principle of Courage**
9. **The Principle of Patience and Persistence**
10. **The Principle of Environmentalism**
11. **The Principle of Compassion**
12. **The Principle of Determination and Defiance**
13. **The Principle of Communication**
14. **The Principle of Justice**
15. **The Principle of Inclusiveness**
16. **The Principle of Respect**
17. **The Principle of Scrutiny and Doubt**
18. **The Principle of Humility**
19. **The Principle of Reason**
20. **The Principle of Wisdom**
21. **The Principle of Personal Responsibility**
22. **The Principle of Bullshit**
23. **The principle of Activism and Maintenance**
24. **The Principle of Personal Privacy**
25. **The Principle of Historical Preservation**
26. **The Principle of Humor and Fun**

Since the Church of Reality is an evolving religion the number of sacred principles and the order of the sacred principles are subject to change. Sacred Principles should be referenced by name and not by number except for the Principle of Positive Evolution which is also known as the First Principle. The order of the other principles carry no meaning and are subject to reorganization without notice. The Sacred Principles are to be understood and not memorized.

The Principle of Positive Evolution

Positive evolution is one of the core principles of the Church of Reality. We are here, we seem to exist. So what do we do now? We in the Church of Reality have chosen to try to understand reality as it really is. We can do that individually to a limited extent but an individual can't build a Hubble Telescope in their back yard and launch it into space. In order to pursue the understanding of reality we have to do so collectively, as a society. The pursuit of the understanding of reality is something that we all do together as a community. In order to increase our understanding of reality we have to make progress as a community and evolve forward. We look to the future which we call the **Sacred Direction**.

Humans are more like a hive of bees in many ways than individuals. We have a vast amount of shared information and technology that we all rely upon in our daily lives.

We call this vast resource of shared knowledge the **Tree of Knowledge**. We expand our understanding of reality by growing the Tree of Knowledge and in order to do that we have to evolve in a positive direction.

We choose Evolution over Extinction. We commit to the progress of the human race towards a brighter tomorrow.

Positive evolution isn't just a belief that we are evolving forward. It is a personal commitment that realists make to ensure that we evolve forward. There is nothing that protects us from extinction except our effort to make sure the human race doesn't do something stupid and destroy itself. To help ensure that we progress we spread the **Sacred Message** which is to talk about reality and bring reality into the daily lives of as many people as we can. Our world view is that the more the people of all religions are in touch with reality, the faster the human race will progress.

Positive evolution creates the basis for morality in our religion. The concepts of right and wrong are based in part on if it is good for the progress of the human race. One of our sacred missions is to ask the **Sacred Moral Question**, "Is this a good thing?" and by "good" we mean is it good in terms of making progress.

[Read more...](#)

The Principle of Existence and Survival

The Principle of Existence and Survival is based on the idea that in order to stay in the game we have to continue to exist and survive. Our world view sees the **Future** as having two main paths. We either continue to evolve forward (**Positive Evolution**) or we become extinct. We either survive or we do not. We in the Church of Reality choose existence over extinction.

We as individuals and as the human race have choice and our choices have consequences. If we make the wrong choice and annihilate ourselves then we are out of the game. Everything that humanity has accomplished will be gone. We therefore have to take **Responsibility** for our existence. This is the world we were born into. We choose to do the best we can with what we have to work with.

[Read more...](#)

The Principle of Exploration

The Principle of Exploration is that we choose to be curious. We choose to try to understand. The Church of Reality is not just a static statement of our world view of reality. We choose to actively pursue reality by exploring the universe that we live in. We strive to understand the understanding of understanding. We want to learn as much as we can. We want to know how everything works. We want to know what is really real.

Exploration is part of our **religious identity**. We are not "followers", we are

Explorers -- we are on a **Quest** to know more. To that end we support education and all the tools of the mind. We consider the Internet to be a holy item to us. We call it the **Golden Router** because it provides us a way to store knowledge and communicate what we learn. Exploration expands the **Frontier of Knowledge** leading to **Positive Evolution**. Through exploration we grow the **Tree of Knowledge**.

The Principle of Curiosity

The Sacred Principle of Curiosity is the wanting to know everything. The **Principle of Exploration** is the about actual exploration, curiosity is the desire to explore. It is the lust for knowledge. It is the need to know everything. Why is it? How does it work? It is why we are Realist pursuing the understanding of understanding. It's because we want to know.

The Principle of Honesty and Integrity

The Church of Reality is about real reality the way it really is. Reality is a holy word to us that has real meaning and is important. The reason our **Sacred Question** is "What is Real?" is because we really do want to know what actually is real. Real reality can't be faked. It comes from a place of pure honesty and integrity. Honesty and integrity are essential to the core meaning of the Church of Reality.

**The Church of Reality has an obligation to
humanity to uphold the meaning of our church
name. We can only do that if we stay honest.**

Reality is about truth. It's about being intellectually honest. It's about putting your personal positions aside to accept what is real. In accepting the title of Church of Reality we make a solemn commitment to the human race to uphold the integrity of the name. The Church of Reality is not just some bullshit religion that is making things up. We are not a scam. We are not a cult. Our world view is that the path to reality requires honesty and integrity and that reality can not be found through lies and deception. We think it is our job to never become corrupt, to never sell out, to never compromise the integrity of our mission. Although no one is perfect, we are committed to doing a damn good job and do the best we can. We intend to live up to the standards that the name of our church implies. We recognize that without honesty there is no meaningful exploration of reality.

See also: **Honesty**

The Principle of Freedom

It is the **dharma** of the Church of Reality to be **explorers** and we therefore must be free to do so. We recognize that historically various societies have imposed severe restrictions upon belief forcing people to accept a world view that is not real - or being

prohibited from believing things that are real - or having knowledge restricted by law in ways that prevent us from fulfilling our **Sacred Duty**. There was a time when people were jailed and killed for believing that the Earth was round and that the Earth was not the center of the universe. People are jailed today for easing the suffering of those who are dying a hideous death from a terminal disease. With these historical facts in mind the Church of Reality - as part of its mission - acts to protect and preserve the freedom in which the pursuit of reality and the Principle of **Positive Evolution** may flourish.

What is freedom and by what power do we assert freedom? We seem to be here and we seem to exist. We seem to be aware of ourselves and our surroundings. It is the nature of our existence as a species now that we have shared knowledge that we have the freedom to pursue that knowledge, and to understand the understanding of understanding. We are the defenders of the understanding of reality itself and we as a church claim that reality itself needs the freedom to become self aware. We are all part of a reality that we all share. Reality is sacred to us and as explorers, therefore we must be free to explore it. When we make the **Sacred Choices** and accept the Sacred Duty, we must also pursue the freedom that is required to grow the **Tree of Knowledge**.

**Personal freedom leads to innovation,
exploration and positive evolution. We will not
progress unless the weird people are allowed to
be weird.**

Individual freedom is very important to the Church of Reality. Freedom allows explorers to come up with new and interesting ideas. It allows us to think "outside the box" without fear of punishment. If you look at the great inventors and the people who were behind much of the great leaps in human evolution you will notice that most of them were "weird people". It's the weird people who come up with most of the new cool ideas. Cultures that accept weird people, like the San Francisco Bay Area, tend to be the kind of places where innovation occurs. We can not evolve forward unless the weird people are free to be weird. Personal freedom is necessary for positive evolution to occur.

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The Principle of Peace

Although war can not always be avoided, there is no honor or victory in war. Our world view is that war always represents the failure to achieve peace and it is always something to be ashamed of. War is to be remembered from the perspective of failure and as a lesson to learn to avoid war in the future. We in the Church of Reality understand - especially in this day of nuclear and biological weapons - that peace is not something that is optional, and that we have a responsibility to our fellow human beings to do whatever it takes to avoid war.

We must never be proud of war. War is always a failure to achieve peace.

The peoples of this planet are all united in the reality that we all share this world together. It is imperative to our existence and our development that we learn how to live together - how to share in a fair and equitable manner. We must all survive together and do whatever it takes to make it work out. We have to be smart - we have to be brave - and we have to be wise. We have to not only be understanding - but also to insure that others understand us.

Terrorism and torture are just plain wrong. There is a basic **moral certainty** that cuts across all religions and we in the Church of Reality join with the religions of the world who are in opposition to crimes of war. The Church of Reality stands for the advancement of civilization and that whenever possible we must preemptively adapt to a changing political, technological, and biological environment. It is part of our mission to help ensure the Peace.

We realize that there are people in the world who are dangerous to themselves and to others. But our solution is not to fight enemies but to evolve enemies into friends.

See also: [War and Peace](#)

The Principle of Courage

The pursuit of reality the way it really is is not for the timid. Reality takes courage. It takes more courage to stand up to an unjust cause than it does to die in a war. People are herd animals. We want to be part of a community. It is one of our survival strategies that the human race evolved. Much of our information that we rely upon is part of the Tree of Knowledge. But what if a culture has a strongly held world view that is not only wrong, but dangerous? A world view like the world is going to be destroyed in our lifetime? There is a lot of pressure to go with the flow, but going with the flow is not the way of reality. We are committed to what is real, not what is popular.

Realists can expect some persecution for their views. Fortunately in most of the world at present Realists are no longer burned alive for expressing scientific fact. However in most countries it's hard to get elected to public office without giving lip service to the invisible cloud being. The Human brain likes a stable comfortable reality and when one upsets an axiom it causes a lot of mental anguish. This is true not only in religion, but science. The idea that humans have a 98.5% genetic match with monkeys is very disturbing to some people. We want to believe in flat space and linear time and people like Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking are just disruptive trouble makers. They make us rethink everything.

Change is disruptive and evolution isn't always pretty. Reality isn't always pleasant and it is far easier to go along to get along. Everyone is comfortable and then someone comes along and speaks the truth and you know they are right but you just don't want to have to deal with it. It takes courage to go against the flow, but if you

make a true commitment to reality the way it really is, then that's often what you have to do.

It also takes courage to realize you are wrong because facing reality might have a personal cost. This is what keeps people in cults. They are integrated into a community and have a place in an artificial society. But then they realize it's all bullshit. That means they have to leave the cult. If the person isn't ready to leave the cult then the mind will play tricks on itself to keep the person from realizing a truth that would be obvious to someone who wasn't in the cult.

Often bad things are allowed to happen because people fail to speak out to stop them. To be silent when one should speak can become an endorsement. A Realist has to be prepared to pay a personal price to stand up for what is real because if we don't then we allow others to take reality away from the Tree of Knowledge and humanity is diminished. Realism is a religion of courage for without courage reality cannot be meaningfully pursued.

The Principle of Patience and Persistence

We live on a planet where over 99.99% of all species that have ever existed are now extinct. There's nothing that makes Humanity any different from the species that didn't make it. Those who get it right survive, those who get it wrong don't. The Church of Reality by definition has a vested interest in our collective survival. Our purpose is the understanding of reality as it really is. In order to do that we have to continue to exist.

In the Church of Reality getting it right isn't optional. Our religion is future based and in order for there to be a positive future we are going to have to figure it out based on real reality. To do that we have to be both patient and persistent. We can't give up, and we can't rush it. It is against our principles to give in to **extinction**.

[Read more...](#)

The Principle of Environmentalism

Environmentalism and Ecology are central to the Church of Reality because it is directly related to our survival and positive evolution. We are all children of **Mother Earth** and the **Tree of Life**. We are not separate beings that are independent of life around us. We all evolved together and we depend on each other for our food and the air we breathe.

We are one planet. We are all here together. We depend on each other to survive. This is our home and we have to take care of it.

If we poison the air and water with pollution then we have to breathe poison air and drink poison water. The world is not infinitely big and our trash is not going to just go away. Our resources are not unlimited and we have to have a plan to create and

maintain a world that we can thrive on until such time as we have the technology to move out to other planets.

The Principle of Compassion

The Principle of Compassion recognizes the cooperative nature of the human race. We are individuals that are part of a great and evolving society. We are both independent and interdependent. Our societies are what makes us strong, but those societies are made up of individuals who have to be secure and taken care of individually in order to maintain our **individualism**.

**We are one planet, we are all here together, and
if we all help each other out, life will be better
for all of us.**

No person is an end unto themselves. We are all totally interdependent. When we are born we are helpless and we depend on others to take care of our needs. The same is true when we are old or when we are sick or injured. There are times in our lives when we care for others, and times in our lives when others care for us. Compassion is absolutely essential for the human race to survive. Without compassion all of society would fall apart and we would become extinct.

The Church of Reality subscribes to the **Philosophy of the Open Hand**. We are altruistic, generous, giving, sharing, loving, selfless, and caring people. We honor loving-kindness, friendliness, goodwill, benevolence, fellowship, amity, concord, charity, and non-violence. Our compassion is based on the reality of our interdependence, that we are strong collectively, and our independence, that we can be secure individually. We take care of each other, and we are taken care of.

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The Principle of Determination and Defiance



Ghandi

human community.

The Principles of Determination and Defiance sometimes represents our religious commitment to the **Path of Reality**. We have chosen to include in our **Life Story** a commitment to **Positive Evolution** and the **Sacred Direction**. We are committed to the protection of the future. But there are times when systems break down and have to be repaired and maintained. There are times when the judgment of **Society** is in decline and people become a danger to themselves. In situations where it is absolutely necessary to protect society from doing something that's really a bad idea, it is up to us to be determined to restore the **Positive Evolution** of the

For example, we Realists accept the truth that a nuclear war is never the best

solution to your current problems. Our message is, "Don't even think about it!" And of course this applies to weapons of mass destruction in general. Or to consider the optimum human population of the planet. Or when leaders speak the **Language of War**. Or to avert a natural or man-made disaster. Or perhaps to protect or restore a sane and stable society. The kind of society where you have the rule of law not the rule of men. A society that lives in peace and harmony where it is a joy just to be alive.

We as a society have to be smart enough to figure out how to do it right!

We believe the **Wisdom** comes from having an intimate relationship with reality. So it is up to us as **Realists** to bring wisdom in to society. We have to inject the importance of taking reality into consideration when making important decisions. We raise the question, "Is what we do today good for our future?" "Will we look back at this moment with pride or shame?" That is why the **Sacred Direction** is sacred because if we screw up we're not going to achieve Positive Evolution. If we screw up then tomorrow won't be better than today and our children will live in a worse world than the one we came into.



Nelson Mandela

Let us be calm and reason together.



Martin Luther King

These are values that represent the kind of people we are as a religion. The dream of tomorrow must never be abandoned for the passions of the moment. Nor do we sacrifice the future for personal greed. But with defiance comes **Responsibility**. There should be a good reason to explain why defiance is the best choice.

We have a responsibility to give sanity a voice.

Every religion has a system of values. What is Sacred? What is Holy? Just because we don't have a deity in no way means that we don't have a system of morality. Our determination is a statement of our religious commitment to the future. But we have a responsibility to get it right, and not to be merely stubborn.

The Principle of Communication

The **Tree of Knowledge** is the sum total of human understanding and it is shared knowledge. Because this knowledge is shared, it exists only because of communication. The Tree of Knowledge is by nature dynamic and the knowledge within the tree must flow. Speech is communication in all forms. It is how the data move. It is the motion of the sap of the Tree of Knowledge. It is those data and it is

the connections that carry those data. To speak freely is to do the **dharma** of the Church of Reality. Thus the Church of Reality recognizes that in order to pursue the understanding of understanding, we must be able to speak freely. To be silenced is to be oppressed.

The Principle of Communication is also the principle of free speech. What good is knowledge if it isn't communicated?

Since speech in the Church of Reality also includes the technological systems that carry, store, and distribute speech, the Church of Reality considers the development of better technology to enhance communication within the Tree of Knowledge to be our **Sacred Duty** and we therefore, as a Church, honor all communication technology that makes up the **Golden Router** and the Internet which is the heart of the Golden Router. The Internet is our Sacred Network. Conversely, the denial of technology isolates individuals and prevents communication between people who wish to communicate and this denial becomes a form of oppression.

The Principle of Justice

In order to grow the Tree of Knowledge and to be a free people, to explore reality as it really is and to pursue the understanding of understanding, it is necessary that we do so in an environment of fairness and justice. Justice and fairness is the dharma of our morality. And our morality is the part of the Tree of Knowledge relating to how we best live together as a society and grow as individuals within the human species. Our justice system reflects the total of our morals and our understanding of maintaining ethical standards, and respecting each other and our combined growth. Justice is our set of rules by which society flourishes and allows mankind to evolve in the Sacred Direction. Conversely - injustice manifests in laws and rules and corruption that oppress us and cause society to deteriorate into oppression.

Justice is not a black robe - a title - or the ability to exert power and authority. Justice is the responsibility to maintain the highest ethical standards and to be as fair as one possibly can be. Justice is to not only uphold the rules - but also to apply wisdom to bend the rules to apply fairness to new and evolving situations. Justice should never be a set of static rules and procedures but should always be tested against the **Sacred Question** and the application of **wisdom** should be allowed to override the rule of law. We think justice itself must be committed to evolving in the Sacred Direction.

The Principle of Inclusiveness

The pursuit of the reality as it really is and the understanding of understanding is available to everyone. We are not an exclusive club and we do not discriminate based on minor genetic differences, cultural background, political affiliation, religious history, the geography of your birth location, sexual preferences, lines on a map, your

gender, the shape of your body, or what frequencies of light are reflected off the surface of your skin (color). Although some people are smarter than others, everyone can improve themselves. So if you have two brain cells and are tired of **living the lie**, the Church of Reality is available to you. We are one planet. We are all part of the human race. We are all here together. We have to learn how to get along in a manner that is equitable to everyone.

All people have intrinsic value. People are born in different locations and in different economic circumstances and different cultures. But we are all people and every individual has certain rights for just being a member of the human race. The Church of Reality recognizes that it is in the best interest of all of us to support social justice for everyone and to recognize that true wealth comes only when the basic needs of all of us are met. Inclusiveness insures that everyone has a place at the table.

[Read more...](#)

The Principle of Respect

The Principle of Respect is the acceptance that every other person is a person just like you. That they are all individuals who are trying to survive and do the best they can with what they have to work with. The Principle of Respect is to accept that everyone is one of "us" and not just a member of a group of "them". To respect someone is to recognize that they have intrinsic value and to accept all individuals as fellow members of humanity.

We are a religion that gives respect and expects respect. Respect is the basis for the **Principle of Inclusiveness**, the **Principle of Peace**, and the **Principle of Compassion**. We honor the individual and we expect others to honor us. To us a stranger is just a friend who we haven't yet met.

Respect is also the core of the **Vocabulary of Peace** and it undermines the **Vocabulary of War**. To respect a person isn't to agree with them or to give any approval to what they are into. But it does require that you think of them as a fellow human being who is a member of the human community and deserves a chance to establish a peaceful relationship. When you respect someone you personalize them, recognize their **original virtue** and identify with who they are. We give respect, and we expect to be respected. You are not a "them", you are an "us". We are an "us" too.

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The Principle of Scrutiny and Doubt

The Principle of Self Scrutiny is the recognition that we are imperfect and that the pursuit of reality is always a goal and that knowledge is ever growing. It is the acknowledgement that sometimes we get it wrong and that we should always test ourselves and our world view to make sure that what we think is real actually is real. This is what we call the **Purification of Truth**. It is a test to ensure that we are not fooling ourselves. It makes sure that we are not **living the lie**. And it makes us accountable to the truth.

The Church of Reality is a doubt based religion as opposed to a (blind) faith based religion. Realists are required to doubt everything and to continually test both old and new ideas to verify that they are still true. Blind faith is irresponsible and bypasses accountability. We doubt everything because we care about reality. By doubting we accept responsibility for preserving the integrity of the truth.

We welcome doubt and scrutiny as a means of purifying truth. It makes us accountable and ensures the integrity of our beliefs.

We are of limited knowledge with a limited brain; primitive computers trying to understand our existence. We need to be humble in our understanding of understanding and fully aware of our flaws and the processes that would lead us to a path of self illusion. There are two kinds of people in the world, those who don't know and those who don't know that they don't know. Let us never become the latter.

We as Realists practicing Realism must therefore always rely on our doubt to test ourselves and to test our world view against reality. We need to continually reexamine our world view to look for errors or to have a deeper understanding of what we think we already know. There is always a certain amount of trash in the Tree of Knowledge. Much of this trash comes from old world views that were never challenged or the lies of people who would distort reality for selfish reasons. Purification of Truth requires doubt as the process of cleansing the Tree of Knowledge of error, and is a necessary process in **Positive Evolution**.

[Read more...](#)

The Principle of Humility

The Principle of Humility is to resist a false sense of self importance. This planet is but a speck of dust in the universe; a small rock orbiting a medium size star in a galaxy of billions of stars in a universe of trillions of galaxies. We exist but for an instant of time. There are possibly billions of other planets that have life that are far more advanced than we are that we wouldn't even be good enough to be considered food. So how important can we really be?

This principle is based on the idea that we should do the best we can and work together to try individually and collectively to figure out who we are and why we are here, where is here, and what being here means. Humility is to realize that our knowledge is very limited and that the more we learn the more we find that we don't know.

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The Principle of Reason

Realists are a thinking people who use reason to explore reality the way it really is. We love to discuss things, invent stuff, solve simple and complex problems. Reason and Wisdom are not the same thing. Reason allows us to design a nuclear bomb. Wisdom allows us to choose not to use it. Reason is more technical while wisdom is more visionary.

Realism is a religion of the mind. Our mind is our tool for understanding. We are also emotional beings and we are the product of evolution, living in a society that has evolved based on survival. But we have evolved to the point where we can apply reason to our life situation and try to understand things like spiritual experiences and separate our emotion from our thinking and understand who we are and how we work.

The Principle of Reason is also a personal commitment to apply reason to our daily lives. We ask ourselves if we are being reasonable. We want to know if decisions are based on reason. We are advocates for applying reason to situations and to think things through to ensure that we make a better decision than if we ignore reason. Some religions are spiritually driven where emotional states and fiction drive the world view. Some of these religions have an **Extinctionist** philosophy. Realists choose reason and we are committed to making sure that our **world view** is reason based. Reason is the path to reality.

The Principle of Wisdom

The Principle of Wisdom is a personal commitment to not only work towards becoming smarter - but also wiser. Wisdom is the ability to arrive at the truth in spite of influences that would lead to the wrong conclusion. To be wise is to develop methods of extracting the truth against adversity.

We recognize that much of what we are taught is not true and that we become comfortable with our erroneous knowledge. We also recognize that there are complex emotions and expectations of society that pressure one's mind into fooling one's self. We recognize that there are people in the world who are not very honest who would use deception, illusion and the abuse of logic in order to get people to believe things that aren't true. But in spite of this - we are committed to extracting the truth and learning methods that allow reality to be known even in adverse circumstances.

To be wise is to have a highly disciplined mind and strong commitment to the pursuit of reality the way it really is. It represents not only personal skills, but also a strength of character to be able to face reality. It is to be a responsible person who can see past the confusion of the moment and to grasp the big picture. Wisdom requires strength of will, courage, discipline, humility, and commitment. Wisdom is something that is learned and everyone can become wiser than they are now.

As members of the Church of Reality we honor wisdom and we choose to commit ourselves to becoming wiser personally and to supporting the principle that we, as a society, are better off by elevating the status of Wisdom. As individuals we should be

asking ourselves and asking other people, "Are we being Wise? Is there Wisdom here?"

The Principle of Personal Responsibility

The Principle of Personal Responsibility is the recognition that how we behave personally affects who we are as a species and how the Tree of Knowledge will evolve. We can choose to live our lives in a manner that is beneficial to society or to live in a way that is detrimental to society. What is good for humanity and what is bad for humanity is - like everything else - subject to debate and exploration. As a church we ask the question - "What is moral? What is right and wrong? What is good and evil?" These are questions that we ask as explorers in the pursuit of the understanding of understanding and to know the meaning of meaning.

We recognize that the concepts of good and bad exist and sometimes they are clear and sometimes they are not. But as individuals we recognize that if we are going to grow the Tree of Knowledge that we have to evolve in a positive direction and that our personal behavior makes a difference. As members of the church we choose to strive to do what is right.

The Church of Reality is more than just being on a membership list. It is not a title but a way of life. To be a realist individuals must perform the dharma of the church. Membership is a series of acts and the acceptance that what we do in life matters. In the living of our lives our conduct reflects our moral code that is to be judged against the Principle of Positive Evolution and if what we are doing is moving society in the Sacred Direction. Thus - as individuals we take responsibility for our decisions and are committed to pursue a life that is constructive rather than destructive. And that the pursuit of perfecting society and behaving in a manner to promote the growth of the Tree of Knowledge constitutes the basis for a moral code under which we can all live together in peace and harmony to allow people to flourish individually and as a species.

The Principle of Personal Responsibility recognizes that what we do as an individual matters. Everyone affects the Tree of Knowledge in some way. We recognize that people have the ability to choose and that different choices have different results. Self improvement often requires change and the pursuit of reality, the way it really is, often has a price. And to pursue reality often involves taking control of our personal lives and affirmatively determining the direction our limited existence will take; to decide what we will become rather than be driven by the circumstances around us. Although we often have little control of what hand life deals us, we choose how to play the hand we are dealt. We choose to be good upstanding members of society working towards moving mankind in the Sacred Direction.

The Principle of Bullshit

The Principle of Bullshit recognizes that things that aren't true just aren't true. It doesn't matter how many people believe it - it doesn't matter that people have

believed it for thousands of years - it doesn't matter if you want to believe it - bullshit is bullshit - and if it isn't true - it isn't true. There is a difference between something being true and something not being true.

The Principle of Bullshit is all about refusing to live the lie; to be able to call something the way it really is. It is the ability to face the reality of being wrong so as to create a starting point to make a better choice. It is to accept that you can't truly pursue reality if you continue to believe in things that aren't real. You may have made a mistake - or millions of people might have made the same mistake for thousands of years. But when you know it's all bullshit then you have to call it - accept it - and move in the Sacred Direction. If you're a Realist then by definition you are supposed to give up what's not real - or at least admit your denial if you aren't ready to face reality.

Bullshit is bullshit no matter how many people believe in it.

Truth must be purified through scrutiny and doubt. There is nothing that rises above these tests. Anything that is prohibited from being questioned, is not subject to doubt or scrutiny, is assumed to be bullshit per se. If you are required to believe something without question then that something is bullshit, even if it turns out to be true. (Of course it couldn't turn out to be true unless it were tested against some objective standard. And if so tested, it would be subject to doubt and therefore no longer bullshit per se.)

There are those who would twist the truth, be misleading, tell half truths, hide the truth, use double meanings and distort definitions, be deceitful and deceptive, and flat out lie. People would require you to accept beliefs on faith and prohibit you from questioning those beliefs. Faith is often used to deceive people because it prohibits scrutiny, doubt, and accountability. This is not the way of the Church of Reality. We embrace doubt and scrutiny for the **purification of truth**.

The Tree of Knowledge is built on what is real and what is true. Bullshit that is passed off as reality poisons the Tree of Knowledge and creates a weakness in knowledge itself. It creates a rotten spot in the Tree. It inhibits growth and holds back our development as a race of humans. It keeps us from developing in a positive direction. Part of the Sacred Duties of the Church of Reality is the purification of knowledge through the expression of doubt. We choose to expunge the bullshit through doubt and scrutiny and to replace it with what's real. The Principle of Bullshit asserts a duty to resist the powers of bullshit by questioning everything. This moves us towards reality the way it really is. It requires courage, humility, wisdom, doubt, and strength of character to go against the cult mind and refuse to live the lie.

The Principle of Activism and Maintenance

Often societies and religions deteriorate because good people stand by idly and let bad things happen. To do nothing and allow something to happen can often be as bad as causing it to happen. Everything needs maintenance in order to preserve what

has been accomplished. There are times when we can not stand by and allow things to go in the wrong direction. Reality is something that is actively pursued and it requires an active effort not only to pursue it - but to maintain the systems that allow it to be pursued. We therefore choose to commit to being actively involved in moving forward and to prevent those who would move us backward from succeeding.

It is the **dharma** of the Church of Reality to spread the **Sacred Message** - which is reality - and to promote reality not only in our own daily lives but in the groups that we belong to. It is up to us to raise the status of reality in society. We commit to promoting reality wherever we are. Reality has healing properties. It helps to free people from the slavery of the **Cult Mind**. Every time you say the word you cause people to think about reality and that causes them to be real in the **Sacred Moment**. It promotes **Positive Evolution** by helping humanity make better choices.

The Principle of Personal Privacy

Our worldview is that in order to be free we must have a deep respect for the individual's personal privacy. We are living in an age of expanding technology - a technology that has the ability to let too many people know too much about us and to use that information against us in order to cripple our freedom to explore. Public scrutiny often has a chilling effect on our exploration and causes us to fear the pursuit of the understanding of understanding. In order to grow as a species we must protect our privacy as a means of giving individuals the power to discover new knowledge and contribute that knowledge back into the Tree of Knowledge. In order to freely exercise our beliefs and promote personal freedom we must be allowed to preserve our personal privacy.

The Principle of Historical Preservation

We as a human race learn from our past and our past is a basis for what we decide to do in the future. As technology increases we can better analyze preserved information. Thus - the preservation of information and knowledge is one of our Sacred Duties. The Tree of Knowledge can not grow unless we preserve its information. Data is sacred because data helps us understand the truth. One example of the preservation of historical data is the **Wayback Machine at Archive.org**. It is storing the historical content of the Internet. And because they are storing the history of the Internet they preserve data for future understanding. The Archive of the Internet is one of our Sacred Databases and the Church of Reality hereby declares it as a Sacred Shrine and we are interested in not only its preservation, but its ability to gather and store data. Some day we will be able to go back and extract knowledge about ourselves that will be possible only because we save that information today.

It is also our duty to preserve history from distortions that create false knowledge about what really happened in history. We recognize that there are those people who would conceal and distort the historical record or try to forget important things that should not be forgotten. Often in war the history books are written by the victor and

the truth is slanted in a way that doesn't represent the way things really happened.

The Church of Reality promotes looking at historical events the way they actually occurred without giving flavor to events to obscure unpleasantness. It is our view that history happened the way it happened and should be viewed in terms of what actually occurred. And we have a Sacred Duty to preserve historical data so that in the future when we have better technology we can extract a more accurate picture of the past.

The Principle of Humor and Fun

Life should be fun and funny. This church is a religion that appreciates having a good time. We work hard and we play hard. We want to make sure that we don't get too serious. Life is to be lived and enjoyed and it is our world view that we should go out and have a good time, live it up, and make life fun and funny. Quality of life is important to us.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/the_sacred_principles/

Welcome Home ▶ Terminology

Terminology

~ Defining our Words ~

Absolution from Sin

Although the Church of Reality encourages forgiveness and rehabilitation, we do not absolve sinners. Forgiveness is between the parties involved and can not be given out by a third party such as a church or deity. Our view is that absolution from sin is irresponsible and it gives the sinner a false sense that their record is somehow expunged.

Our view is that everything a person does is forever part of their **Life Story** and the **Story of the Universe**. What you do becomes what you did and that once it is done then it is part of history and one can not change history. Once a bell is rung it cannot be unring. This encourages Realists to take responsibility for their actions and to not do bad things in the first place.

Acceptance of Truth

Acceptance of Truth is our religious commitment to the **Sacred Truth**, the real truth, or otherwise know as the **Hard Truth**. Becoming a **Realist** is more than just saying that you believe in reality. To be a Realist you have to accept the Sacred Truth and commit

to using the **Sacred Method** to determine what you believe in. Accepting the Truth means that you are willing to give up **Bullshit**, apply **Scrutiny**, and change your mind if you are wrong. It means putting **Reality First**.

In Accepting the Truth you are telling the world that you are all the way in when it comes to Reality. It's saying that we're not going to just pretend we're into reality, we're not going to twist definitions to defend what we want to believe in, and we aren't going to make deceptive arguments to trick people into believing in anything that doesn't stand up to scrutiny. It means that you're ready to feast at the **Tree of Knowledge**. It means that you are curious and that you want to understand everything. It means that you're ready to contemplate the **Sacred Contemplations**. It means that your **Life Story** is going to change and you will become a vessel through which Reality becomes aware of its own existence.

Religious Identity is about what you believe in. It's the passion that fires the soul. It's about your standards and who you choose to be in the world. It sets the standards for determining what is right and wrong. Religious Identity is about **Values** and it determines how you envision the **Future**.

In the Church of Reality we accept the **Sacred Truth** and we become **Realists**. We commit ourselves to the **Positive Evolution** of humanity so that through **Intellectual Tithing** we can expand the understanding of our existence. Our real existence. The way it really is with all the **Bullshit** removed. Acceptance of Truth means we will go where ever the Truth leads us.

Accepting the Burden of Proof

The Church of Reality has a higher burden of proof than other religions because we are a reality based religion and we can't just make stuff up because we want to believe in it. We have to have a reason to believe what we believe that we can articulate and is subject to the **Scrutiny** of the world. Because we are Realists we accept the Burden of Proof as our standard to justify what we claim to be true.

Afterlife

When an individual dies, they die. The person as a consciousness ceases to continue. The self awareness and the experience of identity stop. The only thing left of us individually is our **Life Story**, the sum total of the events of your life and what DNA you leave behind.

A reality based view of the afterlife however is that we are all part of a single organism that started on this planet a billion years ago. All life is evolving together and we are part of that evolution. What we do in our brief existence matters and it has an affect on what we evolve into.

Our individual afterlife can be viewed in the impact that our role in life played to affect the future. We **Own Ourselves** and we can choose to be a positive force in the evolution of humanity, or we can choose worship a false reality and **waste our existence**. If we choose to live in **Right Relationship with Reality** then our individual

accomplishments will live on and the meaningfulness of our existence will be remembered. If we choose to shun reality then reality will shun us and we will be forgotten.

Thus, in the Church of Reality the afterlife is the future. It is where our story goes to live after we die.

Angels

In the Church of Reality an Angel is a caregiver. Angels are people who give of themselves to take care of people in need. In this church anyone can become an Angel in this lifetime. All that you have to do is go out and do it. Being an Angel is a reflection of our **Principle of Compassion**.

Anti-Realism, Anti-Realist

Anti-realism is a world view that this reality we live is an illusion or unimportant, or an evil world that is not worthy of understanding. Anti-realists are taught to understand through **Faith** and to actively suppress logic and reason in favor of focusing on a mythical **Next World**.

Are you Saved?

In the Church of Reality "Are you saved?" means is the data on your computer backed up on another computer, hard drive, or tape? The Church of Reality reminds you to always back up your data because if you lose your data - it's gone! Never keep only one copy of data that is important. Hard drives eventually fail. Anything that isn't backed up is gone. Remember that the natural state of all machinery is broken.

For the Church of Reality's equivalent of "Being Saved" see **Awakened**.

Armageddon

Armageddon is the failure of the human race. If Armageddon happens, then the **Extinctionists** have won. It would represent a failure of Realists to keep humanity off **The Path of Destitution and Destruction**. To Christians this term means that Jesus is coming back and many of them think that if they destroy the world that it will somehow force Jesus to return to save it. But the sad fact is that Jesus is fiction and if the Christians destroy the world then this planet will be just another lifeless speck of dust in the universe like trillions of other planets.

Actually, it is unlikely that we could destroy all life on Earth - just the humans. It will give the cockroaches a shot at being at the top in a few billion years. We selfish Realists want to keep humans in power.

Awakening

Awakening is the acceptance of reality. To awaken is the equivalent of "being saved" in the Christian religions. To awaken is to make a personal commitment to reality as it really is and to reject fictional beliefs. Awakening happens in stages and is just a point of beginning, a point on the path of knowledge. The opposite is to be asleep. The metaphor is that a person is asleep and dreaming a fictional world and then wakes up to the real world. It is to go from the imaginary to the world of reality.

Beacon

A beacon is a Realist who attracts people out of the darkness and slavery of the Cult Mind and helps them see the light of the path of reality. In the Church of Reality we use this term for our ministers and clergy.

The opposite of a beacon is someone who puts out a fake light to lead people into the Cult Mind. We call them Bug Zappers. Thanks to Brother Steve Doulis for the idea for this term.

Becoming One with the Tree

Every time that any person wonders about reality or asks the Sacred Question they "Become One with the Tree". At that moment they open their minds and hearts to reality - the way it really is - and they accept the importance of reality in their daily lives. This is not only good for the individual who becomes "One with the Tree" but it is good for the Tree because it inspires the individual to think about the real world. Becoming One with the Tree (hopefully) will cause some people to contribute of themselves though Intellectual Tithing so that something of themselves lives on for future generations.

To Become One with the Tree is to realize that we are all part of the Tree of Knowledge and that the Tree of Knowledge is in us. Our very thoughts are made of words that were handed down through the generations and our knowledge comes from those who taught us. We live in the Sacred Moment processing this knowledge and adding to it so that those who come after us will have more to work with than we had. To be One with the Tree is to give thanks for what we inherited and to add something of ourselves that is worth being passed on to the future.

Being Real in the Sacred Moment

Being Real in the Sacred Moment means that you are thinking about and asking the **Sacred Question** - What is Real? The **Sacred Moment** is where your life is being lived by you in real time. Sometimes you are at work - or planning dinner - or watching television. There are things that are done in the Sacred Moment. But - some of your time is spent wondering what is real. As you read this you are wondering about and thinking about reality in real time. When you are thinking about reality you are Being Real in the Sacred Moment.

Being Real in the Sacred Moment causes everyone - no matter what religion you are - to become a Realist in that moment. A member of the Church of Reality is a person who has made a personal commitment in their heart to pursuing reality the way it really is. However - reality and realism are not the exclusive domain of this church. Reality existed long before this church existed and reality will be around long after the church is gone. No matter how controlled a person is by the Cult Mind - reality is always a part of everyone's soul and in their hearts everyone want's to come home to the real world. The Call of Reality is heard by every living person and no one can ignore it forever.

Being Root

To be /root is to be a monk of the Church of Reality who is committed to the Path of Knowledge. The concept of being /root is taken from the Unix operating system. Root is the super user who maintains the system. To be root is to be in technical support and to be the person responsible for keeping the system running. In the context of the Church of Reality - /root is to be of service to humanity and to provide technical support to the human race. It also involves a commitment to the service and maintenance of the **Tree of Knowledge** and to the Operating System of Life.

To be /root is to live a life of service to the human race. You might not be a major contributor to the Tree of Knowledge - but you might be the support person who makes it possible. Steven Hawking is a great physicist who will forever be remembered for his contributions to the understanding of or universe. But there are people who feed him and put him to bed at night and dress him in the morning who make it possible for him to do his work.

To be /root is to make more than an ordinary commitment to supporting the exploration of reality as it really is. To be /root is to dedicate your life to the task of making it happen. To make the **sacred direction** the central focus of your existence. To endure personal sacrifice for the good of society. To feed the hungry - to give shelter to the homeless - to heal the sick - to give comfort to the dying - to be there when you are needed. In that respect it is the dharma of the Church of Reality to actively support this work and therefore established monks to be known as the Order of Root to do the good works necessary to hold the fabric of society together.

Being Wrong

A step towards true knowledge. We recognize that people make mistakes on the path to understanding. Being wrong and moving on is the normal process of discovery. It is OK to be wrong, as long as once you find out you were wrong, you move on to what is right. Being wrong is often part of the process of exploration.

Belief vs. Knowledge

The difference between believing and knowing is that knowledge is truth that us purifies through **Scrutiny**. When the **Sacred Method** (the Scientific Method) is applied to a belief and it stands the test of scrutiny it becomes knowledge. It is transformed

from something that we believe to something that we actually know to be true.

In the Church of Reality we do not just choose to believe something just because we want to or it's part of our culture. Science has created disciplines that allows us a might higher degree of accuracy to determine if something is actually objectively true. When a belief is subjected to the scientific disciplines and it stands the test of scrutiny then the belief is purified into knowledge.

Even with this level of scrutiny we can still be wrong. Since we are not claiming divine intervention we don't have to meet the criteria of perfection that deities have. In fact we already know that a lot of what we believe today will be superseded by a deeper understanding in the future. Some of what we believe will be proven wrong. However if we use our best practices then what we have determined is still knowledge rather than belief even if some of it turns out not to be perfect.

Believer

A believer is a person of blind faith. This is a generic term that references members of all faith-based religions. It includes Christians, Muslims, Jews, all of them. The term Believer refers to people who believe in something without a scientific or logical basis. They accept doctrine in an environment where questioning and scrutiny are either prohibited or discouraged. Someone who accepts information based on faith rather than facts and reason.

Big Evolution

Big evolution is like Big History. It's a more comprehensive view of evolution. big evolution includes all of **Old Evolution** but it adds a lot of detail to the view of evolution. Big evolution includes the software of the species. The evolved behavior, the emotions. How life forms communities and alliances. It includes all life and the history of life back to the very first life forms on earth.

Big Evolution sees life as a single individual that started billions of years ago and continues through today. We are all port of it. And it includes the things life built. It includes the hives, the beaver dams, and the space telescopes. Or technology is part of big evolution. The **Tree of Knowledge** is part of it. And it includes what we are evolving into.

Big History

Big History is a term popularized by **The Big History Project** that looks at the **Story of the Universe** as a whole set of interconnected events. Big History represents the creation story of the Church of Reality which is based on our factual understanding of the history of the universe. Not the history we want to believe, or the history we choose to believe, but what actually happened.

Born Again

Starting over from scratch after losing everything on your computer and having no data backups. (Being Born Again is not a good thing in the Church of Reality)

Bug Zapper

A Bug Zapper is a person who leads people to the Path of Illusion, into the Cult Mind, causing them to Live the Lie. The metaphor is that a bug zapper is a device for killing insects. Insects are attracted to the light, but when they land they are instantly fried by electricity. A Bug Zapper is a person who uses light like a Lighthouse does but to the peril of the person attracted. Other religions use the term "False Prophet" to mean the same thing.

Cheating

Cheating in the Church of Reality refers to a dishonest argument or kind of behavior where a person expects a shortcut or pass when none is deserved. Examples of cheating include:

Absolution from Sin - There is no deity that is going to clean up after you and expunge your {In:Karmic Record}.

God did it - The argument that anything that can't yet be explained scientifically is the work of a deity.

God told me to do it - Can't blame your actions on the deity or enhance something that you accomplished by inferring an alliance with a deity.

Definition Twisting - In order to explain away contradictions definitions of words are twisted and switched. An example would be "Maybe God means the universe and the universe exists, therefore God exists.

Credit but not Blame - If God saved someone from the plane crash, then why did he allow the plane to crash in the first place?

Children of the Earth

We are all the children of **Mother Earth**. All life on this planet is Earth's offspring. We were all raised here together, evolving into all the species of creatures that exist here today.

Church of the Mind

A Church of the Mind exists not only in the physical realm but also in the mental realm. The Church of Reality is a Church of the Mind. Besides having members who identify their belief system as Realism, in the Church of Reality we also recognize that all people have moments in their life where they are Real in the Sacred Moment. During these moments when a person is asking the Sacred Question they become a Realist

for that short period of time.

Part of the reason to spread the Sacred Message is not just to convert people to Realists but to induce people of different faiths to become Realists if but for a few moments. The transformation of individuals to Realists is not limited to full members. We also include converting people if but for only a few minutes to Realism. One of our goals is to get people to spend more time being Real in the Sacred Moment. Our church spreads in the realm of the mind converting people not just one person at a time - but one minute of your life at a time. We want people to think about Reality all the time - not just a few times a year.

Church Welcome

The Church of Reality welcome is, "Welcome to the Real World"

Communion

Communion is the gathering of people to talk about and explore reality. Whenever two or more of you are gathered in the name of exploring reality, whether in person or online you are in communion.

In the Church of Reality the word Reality is our **Sacred Message**. Whenever someone thinks about reality the universe becomes a little smarter. So when people talk about reality then all who listen are thinking about reality together, and to us Realists, that is holy communion.

Crew

Group of Explorers on a Mission. To explore reality the way it really is we have to work together to accomplish things. We can't do things like launch telescopes into space by ourselves. In order to accomplish the mission we have to organize into crews and work together as fellow explorers to expand the horizon of knowledge.

dev-null

Where everyone goes when they die. The term /dev/null is the name of the Unix black hole device where you put data to be redirected into nowhere. It represents the ultimate nothingness. Non-existence. It's the place where all your deleted files and deleted email go. It's where all the windows you closed are. It's where characters go when they scroll off the top of the screen. Unless you are remembered in the Tree of Knowledge - your future is probably /dev/null.

Developer

A Developer is a person who is a monk in the Order of Root who is a visionary and who's visions inspire projects in the real world. A developer is a person who comes up

with ideas and actually makes them work in the real world. Sometimes it's a visionary with money who funds projects and hires the right people to make it all happen. A developer is a realist who decides that they can make it happen and then goes out and does it.

Dharma

In the Church of Reality dharma is the doing of doing. Each moment represents a choice that we make that affects the next moment. Your dharma is the course of your life based on these individual choices. One's life is the sum total of one's dharma. One's life is the integer of one's dharma. And one's dharma is the first derivative - (to use a calculus concept) of one's life. Dharma is the act of living. It's what you make of your life.

The dharma of the Church of Reality is the Sacred Missions. It is what we do together as a community.

Distracted, Distraction

Being distracted is when you are tricked into focusing on what isn't real at the expense of what is real. If you are **Obsessing over a False Truth** then you are said to be distracted. One doesn't gain much of an understanding of what is real by obsessing on what isn't real. In the Church of Reality we focus on the **Sacred Truth** and put **Reality First**.

An example of being distracted in the Church of Reality is focusing on disproving the existence of God. This is a trap that Atheism has fallen into. Everyone knows that the average Atheist knows the Bible better than the average Christian. But because Atheism focuses on what isn't real there is very little attention paid to what is real. So Atheists are correct that God doesn't exist. But Atheists are distracted because the issue isn't God, it's reality.

Dogmatist

A Dogmatist is a person who is stuck in the past relying on ancient knowledge that one is supposed to accept as true without question. Dogmatists are the opposite of **Futurist** who focus on where we are going rather than where we have been. Dogmatists practice Dogmatism which is a Dogmatic world view. Many Dogmatists are also **Extinctionists** who expect the future destruction of the world. We in the Church of Reality distinguish ourselves from other religions by embracing Futurism and rejecting Dogmatism.

Doubt

In the Church of Reality, doubt is required. Doubt is the basis for the Principle of Self Scrutiny. Realists doubt everything. That's how we continually test ourselves to make sure that what we believe in is really real. Our doubt causes us to reexamine

everything all the time to make sure we have it right. Doubt also gives us a deeper understanding of what we know. It helps us prune the Tree of Knowledge removing the dead parts so that the live parts grow stronger.

Interestingly enough, where doubt is required in our church, doubt is prohibited in fiction based churches. In Christianity doubt is the unforgivable sin. The one thing you are absolutely prohibited from doing in the Christian church is to think. Fortunately it is a requirement in our church.

Dreamers

The Dreamers are people who use their minds and their imagination to see the big picture and to come up with new ideas that move humanity forward. Dreamers are people who love coming up with new ideas and figuring out how to make them work. The Dreamers are the ones who come up with the plans for the future. To be a Dreamer is one of the most important things a Realist can be. The Dreamers are the immortals whose ideas live forever in the Tree Of Knowledge. We remember the Dreamers of the past who created the world we have today. To be a Dreamer is to hold a position of honor within the Church of Reality. To be a Dreamer is worthy of being remembered as someone who created something good.

The Dreamers envision the future and bring it into Reality.

The Church of Reality needs more Dreamers. Everyone can Dream. It's something that everyone can learn. It's something that everyone can practice. The more you Dream the better you get at it. To Dream the Sacred Dream is to imagine the future and look forward through time with wonderment. The Dreamers are the creators of the **Tree of Knowledge**. That's how you start. Then you ask yourself what you can do to make part of that dream happen. You move the world with your mind even if it is a little at a time. If we all move the world a little forward every day we will fulfill our commitment to the **Principle of Positive Evolution**.

Dumb Universe

A dumb universe is a universe where no life exists that has evolved to the point where the species has some comprehension that the universe exists. In the beginning the universe was dumb. There was no life. Eventually life evolved. Whenever the first species in the universe evolved to the point where it became aware that the universe existed, then the universe became a **Smart Universe**.

If there were other species in the universe that evolved before we did then the universe was already a smart universe before we figured it out. If however we are the only advanced life form in the universe then the universe became smart in the last few hundred years. If we are the only advanced life in the universe and we become extinct then the universe goes back to being a dumb universe.

Ego Addiction

Ego Addiction is when a person becomes addicted to the feeling of self importance. We call it ego addiction because having too much ego becomes a bad habit and a person who has an ego addiction will sacrifice reality for an inflated sense of self importance.

Cults use Ego Addiction to control their members. They give people an inflated sense of self importance. They are told that they were "chosen by God" and that they are part of an elite group of God's warriors who are on some sort of holy mission to fulfill some divine plan. That they are the good and holy people who are "at war" with the "enemy" who is "evil" and under the control of "Satan" or some other demonic powers. You believe that you as an individual are playing an important role in this apocalyptic battle between the forces of good and evil and can only win if you maintain your **Faith** in what you are told to believe. You are told that if you **Doubt** then evil wins.

If this describes your situation then you have a problem with ego addiction. Your role in the real world is far less glamorous than you ego-addiction suggests. Consider that life in the universe is probably so sparse that if this planet were to blow up it is likely that nothing out there would even notice, let alone care. So even though our role in the universe isn't nearly as thrilling as your role might be, at least we aren't wasting our existence being someone else's sucker.

The Church of Reality takes the position that if we focus on what is real and continue to evolve then some day we might become something far greater than what we are today. But we can't get there if we allow ourselves to indulge in an inflated sense of self importance. We give up being important so we can get some real work done.

Ego Treats

Ego treats are rewards and acknowledgements of things accomplished. Technically Ego Treats do go against the Principle of Humility, but as social beings we do sometimes need some recognition for work accomplished and great accomplishments do deserve recognition. One can accept reward in the spirit that in doing so one is inspiring others to accomplish great things. But one must always keep in mind that this planet is still a speck of dust and not indulge in inflated self importance.

Ego Treats however are very **addicting** and can lead you towards being controlled by the **Cult Mind**. They can and are used as a tool to control others and it makes you dependent on your manipulators if you develop an appetite for Masturbating the Ego. So Ego Treats can be compared to eating candy. You can have a little when you are good, but don't get fat on it.

Emergent Religion

The Church of Reality is an emergent religion. It is part of the evolution of humanity. Humanity has evolved the **Sacred Method** also known as the scientific method which allows us to move from **believing to knowing**. We have developed the Internet which

allows all of humanity to share knowledge between individuals and everyone else on the planet. We have used our telescopes to look back to the beginning of time and space.

Just as apples grow on apple trees when a life form such as ourselves evolves to this point we want to know why. What is our purpose in the universe? What does it all mean? What am I supposed to do what I wake up in the morning? What is right and wrong and where does right and wrong come from? The world of religion has attempted to answer these questions based on believing in holy books, but these old books are the old maps of reality. Science is the new map of reality. Instead of believing we now actually know how the universe was created and where we come from.

It is therefore natural that our evolutionary path include a merging of our understanding of reality and the purpose of our existence. We need to answer the questions posed here in the context of what actually exists. Thus it is inevitable that a Church of Reality must exist. It is in fact part of our evolutionary destiny. Even if it wasn't created here in this way it would eventually have been created elsewhere by others and it is likely to be very similar to this Church of Reality.

The Church of Reality is **Religion 2.0**. It is the next step in religious evolution. Now that we have **knowing** we can no longer rely on merely **believing**. We humans have to make decisions in order to continue to **Stay in the Game**. Otherwise we will be **Left Behind**. Existence vs. Extinction.

Evidential Reformation

The Evidential Reformation (Term coined by Michael Dowd) is a movement based on the idea that the time has come for all of the religious world to replace belief with evidence based knowledge. Humanity has evolved to where reality itself has to be incorporated into religious doctrine and can no longer be shoved aside by faith.

The Evidential Reformation is the transition into **Religion 3.0** where we have a world view that is based on the authority of evidence, what actually is real, rather than what one chooses to believe through faith. Religion 1.0 was the Authority of the elders, Religion 2.0 was the authority of scripture. We now know that our existence is driven by evolution and that the universe is about 13.82 billion years old. As young people leave the church in droves Religions that ignore evidence based knowledge will be **Left Behind**.

Exploiter - Deceiver

A person who forces their religion on vulnerable people. People who intentionally deceive others and take advantage of their personal needs in order to lead them into a society of false beliefs. An illusionist who organizes people by manipulation of vulnerabilities at the exclusion of truth and reality.

An Exploiter can also refer to a person who takes advantage of religious people for political gain.

Explorers

Members who are committed to understanding reality are "Explorers". This is the counterpart to "Followers" in other religions. Exploring is the process of expanding our understanding of reality the way it really is. Personal exploring is the understanding of ourselves and the process of getting real. But we also explore the reality around us and share our findings with others to grow the Tree of Knowledge. And we contribute knowledge freely through intellectual tithing so that others can build on our knowledge as we have built on the knowledge of others.

Extinctionists, Extinctionism

A person who envisions the future as the destruction of the world. Armageddon. An Extinctionist is a person who is so blinded by faith and so dedicated to making sure that "their team wins" even if their team is the bad guys. They would destroy the world or move humanity into a society of religious slavery just to be on the winning team. An Extinctionist envisions negative evolution and sees the future as bleaker than today and lives a life that is destructive to the advancement of humanity.

Extinctionism is a very dangerous world view because it leads to irresponsible behavior and decisions. It is based on the idea that there is a next world and that this world is "evil" and deserves to die. Therefore it is OK to pollute the planet, or overpopulate, or to use nuclear weapons, because the omnipotent father figure is going to destroy this world anyhow and take all the good people to a better place.

We in the Church of Reality maintain a **Futurist** perspective. We see the future as what we decide to build and we take **Responsibility** for our actions because actions have consequences. We see humanity as not having an omnipotent safety net and that our survival is based on our ability to have good judgment. We therefore commit ourselves to **Positive Evolution** so that humanity progresses into the future knowing more about reality with each generation.

Faith

The belief in something that has no factual, logical, or scientific basis. Faith commonly involves a deliberate decision to ignore reality and to dodge **scrutiny**. In the realm of the known, faith frequently becomes merely an easy decision to ignore Reality and to choose to believe in something that reality suggests is false or to become completely indifferent to evidence that contradicts that 'faith'. In the realm of the unknown, faith is the choice to lean against the evidence and toward the unproven. Conversely, a hypothesis is a guess that leans toward evidence supported by logic and reason.

Key elements that indicate faith are:

1. **Absolute Loyalty to a Position** - Unwillingness to change your mind when you are proven wrong. Faith is a choice to believe something even when reality

contradicts the belief. A Realist accepts the position that if one is proven wrong, one is expected to change one's mind.

2. **Avoidance of Scrutiny** - Faith-based believers tend to avoid scrutiny of their beliefs. Logic and Reason are declared to be inferior to belief based on emotions and the imagination. Questioning is considered to be either sinful or blasphemy; or that the belief cannot be tested because of achieved salvation through ignorance of reality and loyalty to one's belief first somehow overcomes reality. A believer will sometimes claim that there are "other realities" where the rules of the "physical world" don't apply.

Faith and Reason are held to be mutually exclusive. Things believed through faith can never be proven because if something is proven then faith is no longer necessary. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Once an article of faith has been proven, it then becomes part of the world of reason. The process of proving something means that you have accepted the principles of science and **scrutiny**. If one tries to prove something then they also have to accept the possibility that it might be disproven. Without the possibility of being disproven, the proof is meaningless.

Anything that you can't question is not real.

Things believed through faith, by definition, are untested. One cannot determine through faith if what one believes is real. Fear that faith tested, might actually prove it to be false, makes faith weak. Two people having faith in opposite things, cannot determine what is real because reason, logic, and scrutiny to make the determination of what is real would expose the opposing faiths to the possibility that one, or both, are false. (See **Faith Paradox**).

Faith is fundamentally in opposition to the scientific process insofar as it specifically excludes any kind of truth-testing. When one disregards truth and reality, one's denial of reality has determinental consequences to oneself and others.

The Church of Reality is a **Doubt Based** religion. We reject blind faith. Our position is, any belief that is solely faith-based (in that it rejects scrutiny) is assumed to be not real. Our view is that anything real will stand up to scrutiny and questioning and that we are pursuing real reality as it really is. In order to do that we are required to examine everything to verify our positions. We accept the possibility that things we believe in may prove to be unreal and we are willing to change our minds when we find we have held a belief in an unreality.

Faith should not be confused with trust. Our human minds are limited and as a community we have to choose to trust other people to make determinations for us. When we get on an airplane we trust that those who are in the airline business know how to safely make the plane fly and land. A Realist has a responsibility to question faith and to always issue the **Sacred Challenge** to ensure that one has not dedicated one's life to a scam.

To us blind faith is a form of idolatry. Blind faith is **Worshiping a False Truth**. In the Church of Reality blind faith is a **Golden Calf**. Many religions require blind faith first. Religion expects belief without question. We do not. We embrace **Doubt** and **Scrutiny**.

We put **Reality First**. We **Accept the Truth**. In our world view blind faith is the rejection of Reality.

Faith Paradox

The Faith Paradox is the contention that nothing believed through faith is provable because if something can be proven then you don't need faith to believe in it. Faith excludes logic and reason and does not accept scrutiny. When one believes by faith then one is expected to stay faithful in spite of any facts, logic, or evidence.

The faith paradox is the contention than if two people believe opposite things that they can not determine who is right and who is wrong through faith and are forced to turn to reality to establish if what they believe is real. But in turning to reality the element of faith is undermined. Thus when one accepts faith one rejects reality.

[Read more...](#)

Flat Worlder

A person who is so deep into religious mythology and controlled by the cult mind that they would believe the world was flat if they were told to believe it. The term is similar to a sheep but with a more extreme context.

Flock

Many sheep organized to follow blindly together. A group mind formed around a concept where reality is excluded from the belief process. A flock could describe members of a cult. People often surrender their good judgment to others in exchange for a sense of community - a sense of purpose - and a sense of self worth. They often surrender to an exploiter who fulfills these emotional needs in exchange for their blind devotion and economic resources.

Followers

Followers are people who follow the teachings of others and accept those teachings on **Faith** and without **Scrutiny**. We in the Church of Reality are **Explorers**. We accept scrutiny and we believe in what what can be determined to be real using the **Sacred Method**. We are a **Doubt Based** religion.

Frontier of Knowledge

The Frontier of Knowledge is the very front edge of human exploration and what we know. It is the line between what we just discovered - what we are in the process of discovering - and what we are just about to discover. Knowledge tends to be relational. If the Tree of Knowledge were viewed symbolically as a fractal, the Frontier of Knowledge would be the edge.

Futurist

A futurist is a person who has a forward looking philosophy. Futurists look in the **Sacred Direction** and are concerned with the **Positive Evolution** of the human race. A futurist is the opposite of a **Dogmatist** which is someone who focuses attention on the past. We in the Church of Reality are Futurists. We are a Futuristic religion that practices Futurism. We are also the opposite of the **Extinctionists** world view that the world will end in destruction. Our goal is **The Star Trek Future**.

Getting Real

Making a personal commitment to understanding reality the way it really is. Getting real is to give up your illusions about what you want to be real - or what other people want you to believe is real. Getting real is the process of personal growth in your commitment to reality in the practice of realism. It is to move in a direction away from illusion and distortion into a state of clarity and self discipline. Getting real involves reprogramming one's mind to accept reality as it really is and to move away from mythology and delusion.

Golden Calf

A Golden Calf is a metaphor taken from the Jewish Bible referring to the belief in and worship of a false god. In the Church of Reality a Golden Calf refers to holding on to a belief that isn't real. It's when you don't put **Reality First** and decide to **Worship a False Truth** instead.

Golden Router

See **Sacred Network**

Guy who invented the wheel

"The guy who invented the wheel" is a metaphor for the beginning of the **Tree of Knowledge** which is the sum total of human understanding. It envisions a cave man carving a wheel out of stone or wood making a technological breakthrough that allowed humans to survive and thrive in a primitive world. We don't actually know if there was a "guy" or a woman or if the invention started in one place by one person. The wheel is symbolic of an early invention.

The wheel was predated by stone tools such as axes and knives and wasn't as significant of an invention as the bow, lances, and other projectile weapons. But we use it as an expression to represent early discoveries in the early evolution of humanity.

Heaven and Hell

Obviously the Church of Reality doesn't ascribe to the biblical definitions of Heaven and Hell. However there is actually a significantly similar counterpart in the reality based world.

If you look at humanity as a single continuous life form that is part of all life on earth, then we are more like a cell of a greater individual that continues beyond our individual existence. We in fact are the unbroken continuation of some primordial bacteria that started reproducing a billion years ago.

We ask ourselves, "What happened to the dinosaurs? Why are they gone?" The reason the dinosaurs are gone is because they failed to evolve the ability to deflect large asteroids away from the Earth. If we fail to deflect asteroids and do what it takes to survive then we aren't listening to what the dinosaurs are trying to tell us and we will share their fate.

Humanity has evolved to the point with genetic engineering and cybernetics to where we can and will control our own evolution. We have a choice to determine what we will become. If we choose well then we will lie in a future paradise that might be Heaven like if we do really well. However if we make bad choices then our future might be hellish or we become extinct.

So in that sense our Heaven and Hell represents the same idea. Good choices are rewarded and bad choices are punished. The main difference being that we all go there together rather than individually, and that the **Afterlife** is the continuation of life after we are gone.

If we choose to live in **Right Relationship with Reality** then we will figure out who we are, our place in the universe, and choose wisely to get from where we are to where we need to be. But if we turn our back on reality then reality will turn its back on us. The mighty hand of Darwin will reach out and smite us. Our very existence will cease and we shall forever be apart from the real world.

Hell

The moment you realize that you've lost everything on your computer after your hard disk crashes and your data wasn't saved. If you are not saved - you might end up in Hell.

Horizon of Understanding

The Horizon of Understanding is almost the same thing as Frontier of Knowledge. If knowledge was a line, these two concepts would be "adjacent points" on the line with the Horizon of Understanding the "next point after" the Frontier of Knowledge. The Frontier of Knowledge represents the latest thing that we discovered. The Horizon of Understanding looks forward in the Sacred Direction to the very next thing we are about to discover. Of course - for those of you who are into mathematics - we all know that there is no such thing as adjacent points on a line because between any two points is an infinite number of other points. However - the illustration is accurate in the

context for which it is presented. For those of you who are not heavy into math theory - I encourage you to wonder what I'm talking about.

Imaginary Reality

An Imaginary Reality is a description of another reality that isn't actually real. It is a description of reality based in fiction where those who believe in the reality choose to do so without any objective evidence, or in spite of objective evidence, that the reality actually exists. Such realities are often described in sacred religious books where the believer has to assume based on **Faith** that the book is true.

The term Imaginary Reality is a contradiction but is useful when discussing reality with those who insist on believing in something that isn't real but people insist on believing anyway. It's also a foundation for talking about the **Faith Paradox** where without reality based scrutiny there's no way to determine if one person's faith based belief is more true than another person's faith based belief.

The difference between **Real Reality** and imaginary reality is that real reality is observable by non-believers and holds up to **Scrutiny**. If an imaginary reality is tested and determined to be real then it would switch from the imaginary category to the real category. If, for example, science discovers that Heaven exists then Heaven moves into the reality based world and members of the Church of Reality would believe in it.

Immortality

What happens to you when you die? What part of you continues to exist beyond the grave? There's a lot we know about that and a lot we don't know. As to what we don't know - it is the role of the Church of Reality to encourage the exploring of that question. As to what we do know - that can be divided up into three categories.

The corpse, if left out in the open is eaten as food by animals and bugs and eventually fertilizes plants and dissipates into the other discarded organic matter of the planet.

If you have children then your genetic makeup is passed on in a form that is 50% diluted with each passing generation. Even genetically your DNA becomes diluted to the point of being barely identifiable as it is mixed generation after generation with the DNA of other people.

Finally - who you were as a person lives on in the Tree of Knowledge; what you accomplished and contributed that is worth remembering. If you do nothing significant and contribute nothing then you will be forgotten. Due to new technology however - using computers - the record that you existed at all might be preserved. But as we go back in time there are people who lived their lives and contributed nothing of any significance that were remembered and are now totally forgotten. There are many societies that lived for a time and totally died out without anything left save for some bones that we are just discovering. Who they were - how they lived their life - what they accomplished - their thoughts - their feelings - who they loved - are all gone.

There are however those who lived long ago who are remembered. They are

remembered as being someone who contributed to the Tree of Knowledge. Einstein is remembered for discovering relativity. His contribution was so great that we preserve a lot of information about who he is and what he did. We remember his name and his accomplishments are with us today. This is a form of immortality because he is with us in our minds and in our experience of life. And because of our technology, more of him is stored than of great people of long ago.

For example - we don't know who the person was who first invented the wheel. Or if the wheel was something that was invented in multiple societies and passed on. The wheel is still with us and lives in the Tree of Knowledge. Whoever gave the wheel to the Tree lives on even though we don't know who this person was or what kind of a life he/she had.

In the Church of Reality - to be remembered in the Tree of Knowledge is the best hope for immortality that we know of that really exists. So if you want a shot at living forever in some form - then contributing to the Tree of Knowledge is your best shot. Maybe I will be remembered for starting the Church of Reality. And maybe I won't. If the Extinctionists win - we might all be forgotten.

Intellectual Incest

Intellectual Incest is a situation where too many people in a group all think alike and exclude legitimate diverse viewpoints. Not all points of view are intelligent arguments but sometimes when people become too uniform, they fail to evolve for lack of fresh new ideas. The concept is similar to genetic inbreeding. Realists are encouraged to exchange ideas with people who are not of the same mindset because it gives both individuals the opportunity to learn something new. When people hang out with people who agree on everything then there is less opportunity to learn from a new point of view and it leads to stagnation.

Intellectually Responsible - Intellectually Honest

Putting out the effort to make sure that information that you publish or otherwise add to the Tree of Knowledge is accurate and correct. To be truthful and honest. In contrast with being intellectually irresponsible and blatantly dishonest.

Irresponsible Religion

Irresponsible Religion is the opposite of **Responsible Religion**. Irresponsible religions are **Cult** like in nature. They use dishonesty and trickery to force people to believe their **Bullshit**.

There are many aspects of modern day religions that are irresponsible. many of these religions support **Extinctionism** believing that the world is going to end and that their bad behavior doesn't have consequences. Many religions offer **Absolution from Sin** giving people a false sense that their karmic record has been expunged and absolving them from the responsibility from their actions. This enables criminals to continue a life of crime because they are "forgiven" and that God will make it up to their victims in the

next life.

Many religion preach a doctrine of **Anti-Realism**, that this world is an evil world and that one should not identify as a member of this world, but rather the next world. They argue that this reality isn't worth understanding and that one should ignore this reality in favor of a fictional reality one goes to after death.

Knigh

A Realist who stands up for reality in the face of adversity or personal risk. Often reality requires bravery in order to stand up to what is right and true. It is often not easy and can be dangerous to expose exploiters and free their flock from a life of mental slavery.

Language of Peace

The Language of Peace are words and ideas used to counter the **Language of War**. War is most often preventable through using **Wisdom** to produce creative solutions to avert war. The Language of Peace is used to ratchet down the tensions so that **Reason** can prevail over passions.

Language of War

The Language of War is the talk and propaganda that is issued to lead up to war. War doesn't happen all of a sudden. War takes coordination and agreement and is preceded by war language to create a narrative to justify and create a reason or excuse for a war. The Language of War is a predictor that war is coming. The Language of War can often be countered with the **Language of Peace** in order to avert war.

Left Behind

Similar to concepts in other religions, the concept of "left behind" implies a punishment for disobeying religious law. This concept also exists within the Church of Reality but in our religion it is a metaphor for extinction.

The Church of Reality sees two paths for humanity, evolution and extinction. If we do the right things then we get to continue to exist or **Stay in the Game**. If we aren't smart and we defy the laws of nature and ignore reality then we will become extinct and we'll be left behind. If you reject reality - reality might reject you.

Life Story

Your Life Story is the record of your life from beginning to end. From the moment you are born till the moment you die. It is the record of your life. It is what you do. While we are alive we are writing our life story. We believe in **self ownership** and we take control of our lives and determine our own existence. When our life is over and if we

accomplished anything worth remembering then our life story is remembered in the **Tree of Knowledge** and we become part of the sum total of human understanding.

Our life story is very important to us. It is the story of who we are. It is the ideas that we contribute to humanity. It is what we choose to be our role in existence.

Lighthouse

Changing definitions - but I'm going to use this term for something so stay tuned.

Living in Right Relationship with Reality

Living in Right Relationship with Reality is that we learn to live together as a society so that we can continue to exist and **Evolve forward** and **Stay in the Game**. If we don't live in right relationship with reality then we will become extinct or **Left behind**.

Living in right relationship to reality is a commitment of humanity to stay on the path that got us here in the first place. That path is that we continue to evolve forward so that we continue to exist. To continue to exist is our **Root Axiom**.

Life is a struggle between evolution and extinction. The reason we exist is because our ancestors lived in right relationship to reality. Most species become extinct. Some evolve into better versions of life. Some species were just dead ends. We are the decedents of those who got it right so far. Those who lived in right relationship with reality.

There is nothing in the universe that guarantees that we will continue to exist. When the next super volcano occurs or a big asteroid hits that we didn't see coming or a local star goes supernova, we could be wiped out. In the long run something like that will happen. Thus if humans are going to be around for the long run we are going to have to move out into space and find other planets to colonize. In order to do that we are going to have to figure out who we are, how we got here, what our purpose for existence is, and how we are going to survive.

We are developing the technology to determine what we are going to evolve into. We will soon be able to modify our genetics and to add mechanical technology to our bodies. We have to start thinking now about what we are going to evolve into and it is definitely not too early to start thinking about it. One thing for sure - what we will become is not what we are now. We will either be vastly superior or we will be gone. It is up to us to bring ourselves in right relationship with reality so that in the future when we look back at what we are doing today that we feel good about having made the right choices.

Living in the Truth

Living in the Truth means that you have taken control of your **Life Story** and that you have dedicated yourself to the Realist way of thinking. Living in the Truth is the actual practice of Realist principles. It's more than just "believing in reality" it's fulling

embracing doubt, expanding your curiosity about things, experiencing the desire to understand everything.

Living in the Truth means that you really really believe in reality. That you don't have a **Golden Calf** in your closet that you secretly worship. It means that you no longer throw virgins into volcanoes. It's when your past life is remembering when you believed in past lives.

Living the Lie

Living the Lie is to be on the **Path of Illusion**. It seems to be the same thing as the Path of Illusion but not quite. The Path of Illusion represents your overall direction in life. Living the Lie is your daily activities in the here and now.

When you can no longer live the lie - it's time to unplug from the cult mind and come back to the real world. Sometime this is hard to do because reality isn't always a pretty picture. But - it is real. Because we are committed to moving forward in the **Sacred Direction**, we make the best of our Reality in the **Sacred Moment** so that the reality of tomorrow will be better than it is today. You do the best you can with what you have to work with.

Lurker

Someone who likes to hang with Realists but isn't ready to commit his or her self to Reality.

Maintainer

A maintainer is a person who is in charge of a project and who takes responsibility to see the project through and keep it working. A Developer might find a Maintainer to be the person who takes the initial concept and resources and makes it their goal in life to maintain the project. The director of a non profit organization would be the maintainer. The developer might sit on the Board of Directors.

Meatspace



Meatspace, a term coined by John Perry Barlow, refers to the physical world inhabited by humans. It refers to the world where people meet in person as opposed to online. Meatspace is actually a subset of reality in that it is the part of reality where people reside. Meatspace does not include cyberspace which is also part of the real world but not the physical world, nor does it include other planets where humans have yet to colonize. It is also meant to be the opposite of the afterlife, the next world, and other references to real or imagined places where people don't go in physical form. Hugging occurs in meatspace.

Miracles

A Miracle is when a person decides that they are going to change the world, and then goes out and makes it happen. It is the act of one person, or a small group of people, who against the odds achieve greatness. People like Gandhi, a single individual, who was a **Dreamer** that freed a nation. People like Nelson Mandela who after spending 27 years in prison rose to become president of the nation that oppressed him. People like Bill Clinton, a poor Arkansas country hick, who at the age of 15 shook the hand of President Kennedy and decided in that moment that he would become president and made it happen. Another example of what will be a miracle will be if this church accomplishes its goals, changing the world for the better, and without degenerating into chaos.

In the Church of Reality a Miracle is an accomplishment that is so fantastic that it seems almost supernatural that it occurred.

Miracles in the Church of Reality are not supernatural. There is no magic in our miracles. Miracles are the true stories of heroes where people through hard work, wisdom, adversity, and sacrifice showed courage in the face of danger and took it upon themselves to envision a better world and to make it real. Miracles inspire us and remind us that a single individual can change the world with their mind. Everyone of us, if we choose that path, can be that single individual.

Mission

To attempt to accomplish something useful in the real world. In the context of the Church of Reality a mission is a commitment to a course of action calculated to accomplish something specific in the real world. The Church of Reality has The Sacred Missions that include asking the Sacred Question - issuing the Sacred Challenge - Growing the Tree of Knowledge. The Mission is the doing of the dharma of the Church of Reality.

Monorealism

Monorealism is the belief in one reality. That all things that are real are part of reality and that anything that isn't part of reality is not real. In contrast monotheists and polytheists tend to believe in "other realities" which are "outside" of the world of science and are experienced through emotions generated by the imagination. Our "world" includes "everything that is real" and excludes everything that is not real. We may not know what is and isn't real but our position is that whether or not we know it's status, that everything that is real is real and everything that is not real is not real. There are no other states where something is real in "another world" or in a "different reality". Our definition of reality would include all other realities that are actually real. We distinguish ourselves from **Polyrealistic** religions that are based on the idea that we are one of

many realities and that there are separate realities where supernatural beings like deities live.

Monorealism also accepts the **Sacred Principle of Scrutiny** in that we apply the principles of science to determining what is and isn't real. We might believe something is true that we can't prove because we don't know everything. But if we believe in something it's because we have a reason to believe it's real. It's because we have some evidence, or a theory based on logic, or some mathematical model where at least the math works (string theory).

Monorealism excludes faith in that everything we believe in is subject to scrutiny. We have accepted that if we are proven wrong that we will change our minds. Faith excludes scrutiny and if you accept something based on faith then you are expected to continue to believe it no matter what.

Realists experience the world through understanding. We rely on logic, reason, wisdom, and scrutiny as the foundation of our beliefs. In contrast beliefs that require emotions and the imagination are not considered to be reliable.

Moral Masturbation

Also known as Ego Masturbation - The act of self-gratification by participating in activities to make you feel superior because you are a member of a group of the chosen and are therefore better than the un-chosen. The Cult Mind keeps its victims plugged in by offering them ego treats to satisfy their addiction to praise and an artificial sense of self-importance. Self-importance is addicting much like drugs are and the ego addict will perform acts of moral masturbation to get that "I'm better than you" experience. Moral Masturbation can be something that an individual does for self-gratification - or it might be done as part of "Group Moral Masturbation". Group Moral Masturbation might take the form of public prayer where the object of the public prayer is to be seen by the nonbelievers in order to make a public statement that we are the Chosen People who were chosen for an important mission by a deity to do some important work that the omnipotent deity can't accomplish himself.

Judgment is also a common act of Moral Masturbation. The pointing of the finger to declare non cult members as "condemned" and sharing a fantasy that the universe is one big court and that there is a judgment day and that the criteria for judgment is not something that makes sense in the real world - but rather you are judged by your membership in a cult. They believe that your "sins" are forgiven by "faith" which is really the extent that they plug into the Cult Mind and suppress their connection to the real world.

The Sacred Principle of Humility tells us not to perform Moral masturbation on ourselves. As Realists we are tempted to look down upon the victims of cults as "stupid people" and take an ego thrill because we are "smart" and they are "dumb". But this too is Moral Masturbation and it is something that keeps us from evolving forward. Everyone does it to some extent. But we should watch ourselves (Principle of Self Scrutiny) and try not to play with ourselves that way.

Mother Earth



The Earth is the mother of all life on this planet. All living being on this planet are the **Children of the Earth**. This is where life on this planet evolved. We all grew up together here through billions of years of evolution. Life evolved from the elements of this planet that provided the right environment to create the hydrocarbon life forms that exist today. We don't yet know if other planets have life but it is logical to assume that life on other planets would be very different than life on this planet. Our DNA came from the primordial goo (for lack of a better term) that resulted from Mother Earth's unique environment.

**Mother Earth is the mother of life on this planet.
We grow together through evolution. All living
beings here are related to us. Earth is our
common home.**

We are related to all other life on this planet. We all share common DNA. We are all one big interdependent family dependent on each other for our mutual survival living together on our mother planet. We are all distant cousins of the same parent. Realists are therefore environmentalists because when we take care of our mother we help to ensure our survival.

Natural Religion

A natural religion is a religion that is based on reality and designed with the nature of humanity in mind. If religion really is the study of why we are here and where we came from then the answer to those questions must be found in the pursuit of reality the way it really is. The Church of Reality is dedicated in both name and mission to that task and is therefore a natural religion.

A natural or reality based religion has the characteristic that if the religion were reinvented from scratch that the new religion would be about the same as the original one. That is because there is a basis in reality or universal truths that create a guiding force to keep the belief system on track. In contrast, a fiction based religion would not be reproducible if reinvented from scratch. However, to different degrees all religions have some natural elements to them, like being against murder. It is no random coincidence that all religions just happen to agree that murder is wrong. That's because it is a concept that comes from reality itself.

One of the missions of the Church of Reality is to issue the Sacred Challenge to other religions to get them to accept self scrutiny. In doing so we are asking them to examine their belief systems to see what elements of their religion are based on natural law. We in the Church of Reality believe that other religions benefit from such challenges in that it helps their religion evolve in a positive direction. Any time we can get another religion to become more natural, the better off the world will be.

New Evolution

New evolution is an engineered evolution. When a species like us comes to a point where we have the technology to start altering our genetics and interface machine and biology then we can choose what we evolve into. Natural selection doesn't entirely go away. If we fail we still can become extinct. But we can build a better form of life and that life will build something even better. That is if we get it right.

We are like a caterpillar that is about to turn into a butterfly. We are about to become something completely different. The process is already beginning.

Next World

The "Next World" is the place where people go when they die. it is based on the belief that one has an immortal soul that lives forever in some form. After one dies the soul might go to a world of infinite reward or infinite punishment depending on if the believer met the qualifications in this life.

It might also mean a person's next incarnation, that if you are a good person in this life then the next time you will come back as a better person, or escape the reincarnation cycle altogether.

Belief in the next world is considered to be a **Distraction** by Realists in that we are focused on this world and this reality that we actually all are part of and that unless science discovers an afterlife the next world is a **Waste of Neurons**.

Not Even Wrong

The term "not even wrong" means that someone has asserted a position that is either so ridiculous or unsubstantiated that they haven't come up to the level of being wrong. To be wrong about something means that you have made an assertion that is at least reasonable enough to address as being right or wrong. An example of this is someone saying, "You can't prove God doesn't exist." doesn't rise to the level of even being wrong. Since the term God means something different to everyone then one can't prove the nonexistence of something so undefined.

Obsessing over a False Truth

Obsessing over a False Truth is when you are **Distracted** into focusing on what isn't real at the expense of what is real. Atheists, for example, are distracted because if you obsess on God then you're not talking about Reality. Obsessing over a False Truth is a bad habit. It is cured by spending time contemplating reality and in **Communion**.

Old Evolution

Old evolution is the traditional view of evolution. It's survival of the fittest. It's plucking and fighting. It's DNA, thorns, teeth, claws, camouflage, and who can run the fastest. It's the basics of our understanding of evolution. It's about survival and extinction. It's about the hardware of an individual. It's Ayn Rand style evolution.

Open Source Religion

The Church of Reality is an Open Source Religion. The term first used by the religion **Yoism**, is analogous to open source software projects where people come together as a group to create software and allow everyone access to the source code and giving the opportunity to anyone who wants to become part of the project to participate in it's development. The **Kernel** which is the doctrine of the Church of Reality is open and evolving. We are the result of minds coming together to form a project to write the Operating System of Life. The project is evolutionary and it never ends. It allows our doctrine to change and evolve in the **Sacred Direction**. All knowledge of the Church of Reality is freely available for anyone to use under the terms of the **GNU General Public License**. Any derivative work of the Church of Reality must also be open source.

Oppression

Being forced to believe in things that are not real. To endure injustice. To be chilled from pursuing reality as it really is. To be denied the understanding of understanding. To be required to behave in a way that lacks ethics and honesty. To be forced to live the lie. Oppression is to be forced to be silent with respect to the truth. To be denied the freedom to practice Realism and to explore reality the way it really is. To be denied the right to express our thoughts and to share them with others. To be cut off from the Tree of Knowledge.

It is oppressive for us to be forced to participate in the rituals of other religions. To be forced to acknowledge deities which don't exist or choose to remain invisible to realists. To endure living in a society that is not religiously neutral - a society that is dominated by another religion. To be forced to endure a morality structure that is based on mythology rather than reality. It is oppressive to be forced into fighting a war that is really between other religions and is a battle for religious dominance. It is oppressive to be dominated by a government which is dominated by a mythology based religion. It is oppressive to have to pay taxes to support the activities of mythology based religions.

Original Virtue

Original Virtue is the assumption that people are intrinsically good. It is in opposition to Christianity's original sin - that everyone is so evil that they deserve to be tortured forever in Hell. It amazes me that people actually believe that. It is also in contrast to Objectivism that takes the position that people are intrinsically selfish and that selfishness is good and selflessness is evil.

**Realists consider ourselves intrinsically good.
Christians consider themselves intrinsically evil.
Could we both be right?**

The Church of Reality recognizes that humanity evolved higher social functions in order to survive and thrive. Our evolution towards being "good people" allows us to function as a healthy society. We don't lay bullshit mind trips on people to make them artificially feel unworthy and guilty in order to manipulate them. We are good people who respect each other and are helpful good citizens who do as well as we can with what we have to work with. We are not selfish greedy people and we don't need fear of fake deities to scare us into good behavior.

Some people look back and think that humans are inherently evil, pointing out any number of atrocities in history as well as current events. And there is plenty of bad stuff to find. But if you look at all the good stuff and really think about it there are probably at least 100 good acts for every bad one. Much of that is culture driven and if we work to improve the culture then we will raise our children to be even better than we are. We should also look at original virtue as a goal for the future so that as we evolve forward, future generations will be better than today's.

Teaching children shame is fundamentally wrong.

Many religions teach children to be filled with shame and guilt. They are taught that people are evil and that people are bad. This is poisoning the minds of children and is just plain wrong. We urge all people to rethink these sort of myths for themselves and to reconsider if you want to poison your children the way a church poisoned you.

Path of Illusion

The Path of Illusion refers to someone who has chosen to turn their back to **Realism** and base their beliefs on **Faith** rather than putting **Reality First**. It refers to the lost souls who have chosen not to **Accept the Truth** and waste their limited existence pursuing the unreal rather than what's real. The Path of Illusion often include **Worshipping a False Truth**.

Path of Reality

The Path of Reality is the path your life takes when you decide to make Realism your **Life Story**. It is a transformational process where you see the world in terms of reality and you start to rethink the way you think and you take on the Realist identity.

Personal Evolution

Personal Evolution is about how your life evolves from the moment you are born to the moment you die. Our minds are exposed to many ideas and we are presented with many life choices that affect who we are and what we will become. Some say that you

are what you eat and that might be true on a molecular level but in the Church of Reality we think it's more accurate to say that you are what you think. That whatever you decide to spend your time doing and what you think about defines who you are. And the process of moving from what you are today to what you will be tomorrow is called personal evolution.

We are a religion that values our free will. We value our **Freedom** and we **take responsibility** for who we are and what we do. Since we are committed to the pursuit of reality, we take control of our personal evolution to determine what we will become. We are our own creators in that we accept our circumstances and do the best we can with what we have to work with. If we don't like what we are we can choose to begin the process of evolving into what we want to be. And by choosing to personally **evolve forward**, all of humanity personally evolves forward.

Your Personal Evolution is the history of your existence. It is the record of your life. It is the sum total of what you are. It's your past, your present, and your future. It is the vector of your life. Where are you, where have you been, and where are you heading? From the moment you are born your life begins to evolve. You become part of society. Your evolution links into the evolution of the human race to become part of our collective history and to add your uniqueness and original ideas to the **Tree of Knowledge**.

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Personal Evolution is related to **Self Ownership**.

Personal Fiction

Just as realists have their **personal reality**, **believers** have their personal fiction. Members of fiction based religions don't all believe the same things. Even in the most authoritarian of cults, the individuals often have very different perceptions of what it is they really believe in. Believers often talk about right and wrong as if they had **moral certainty** about their convictions but in reality they are not experiencing a common belief the way they think they are. In fact what they really have in common is the false idea that they all believe the same thing. But when people express their interpretation of their beliefs individually and freely, if they are allowed to do that, they are not very close at all.

The belief in God is an example of Personal Fiction because since God isn't real, or is at least hiding, the concept of God is created by the

imagination of the individual believer. Each believer believes in a different God of their own creation.

Personal fiction is the fact that the believers in fiction based religion all believe a personal version of the fiction that is very different from those in the same **cult mind**. This is especially true of those who communicate directly with God because God doesn't exist and what people imagine is the word of God is a very different message from person to person. (Side note: If God had a consistent message it would be evidence that he actually existed.) Since personal fiction is fiction based, it varies more than a realist's personal reality. Personal reality is at least tied to objective reality that creates a common reference that ties realists together. Believers are tied together by their mythology and the mythology is a moving target.

Personal Illusion

Personal Illusion represents the things that a person believes in that aren't real. This includes things believed on the basis of **faith** or other means that exclude **Scrutiny**.

Personal Reality

Personal reality refers to your personal experience of reality. It is you experiencing reality from your point of view. Personal reality is reality as seen from your eyes and limited to your realm of experience and distorted by your mental flaws and whatever bad information you believe. It also incorporates an emphasis on the issues that the individual is personally involved in or interested in.

Personal reality recognizes that our perception of the universe is limited. We are not omnipotent and our brains can only handle a limited amount of information. We are also using a brain that is far less perfect than a computer and often gets things wrong. Personal reality is distorted by our own personality as well. However, it is what we have to work with and we have to do the best we can with what we have. Our personal reality is our perspective of **The One True Reality** that we are all part of. The Church of Reality is a **Monorealistic** religion in that we are all part of the same reality.

Plugged in to the Cult Mind - Unplugging

Plugged in and Unplugging relate to your connection to the cult mind. Humans organize into groups in order to function. Sometimes it is good and sometimes it is not. People get addicted to cults because the cult gives them a sense of purpose of self worth. It gives them community. But it demands that they give up reality and become a mind slave. But you are dependent on them and they use you. This is what being "plugged in" means. You are plugged into the cult mind.

Unplugging is the process of disconnecting yourself from the cult mind. It is to decide that you can no longer live the lie. In your heart you know that what you are connected to isn't real. You see things going on that offend your sense of fairness and honesty.

You feel reality calling you home. You want to come back to the real world and have reality change your life. But to unplug you have to disconnect yourself from the cult mind and the benefits that you have come to depend on. Until you unplug you will stay on the Path of Illusion rather than the Path of Knowledge.

Polyrealism

Polyrealism is a word that describes the assertion that there are "multiple realities" often referred to "other world" or "other planes of existence" or "the afterlife". These include views of realities based on faith or personal belief systems that exclude objective reality or put ones personal view of reality ahead of what really exists.

Most religions are polyrealistic religions because they believe in the "supernatural" which are things that are outside of the "natural" world. The Church of Reality is a **Monorealistic** religion in that we believe that there is one true reality, that reality being the sum total of everything that actually is real.

Pond Scum

The term "pond scum" refers to our evolutionary past, to the origin of life on this planet. It is a metaphor for the moment of creation in the evolutionary sense. Although we didn't actually evolve from pond scum it is a common image representing the origin of life.

Pondering the Great Questions

Pondering the Great Questions otherwise known as the Wondering about Wondering - is one of the things we do to explore reality and as a mental exercise to keep our minds in reality based thinking and to keep us sharp. Some of the Great Questions include:

Why does anything exist? Why is there something rather than nothing?

Does "fate" exist? Is there a "fixed future?" Is every moment the mathematical progression of the previous moment - or - is there randomness on any level? If the "big bang" happened again exactly the same way in a parallel universe - would you still be in that universe 15 billion years later reading this web page? Do we really have any free will or is all of reality predestined on a fixed course that nothing can effect?

Is there life on other planets and is it intelligent life? I think most people believe that other planets at least contain primitive (virus like) life. But how many have had significant evolution? Could this be the only planet with life that has become self aware? Am I the smartest being in the universe? (That's a scary thought!) Are there beings far more advanced than we are?

What is the future of mankind? (Actually - this is the Holy Question - but it is also great) Where are we going? How far can we go? What will life on Earth be like 200 years from now? Or 2 million years from now? What technologies will we develop? What will

society look like? Is it a future that will be a good future or will we become something horrible?

How do we know what is real? How do we know that what we believe is real really is real? How do we know that we aren't just fooling ourselves. How do we know that what we believe isn't just a result of being part of the Cult Mind? How do we know any of this is real and that we don't have a chip in our brain that is artificially creating this life experience? How do we know that we are not just living in a simulation?

These questions are examples of the Great Questions that we as Realists ponder and discuss. We are Explorers and we are exploring our tiny piece of the universe with our limited minds and tools. The Great Questions represent the challenge before us and they keep us focused on reality and away from the Cult Mind.

Poser

A person who pretends to be into reality who really isn't, but want's others to think he is. The commitment to reality has to be real. If you're faking it then why bother? (Thanks to Anna Wolk for this term)

Praise and Blame

The phrase "Praise and Blame" used together reflect the dichotomy of reward for success and punishment for failure. These concepts are married together because if you indulge in praise - then you suffer the shame of blame. Both come from the same flaw which is excessive self importance. When we accept the Path of Knowledge we do so in a humble way. The Sacred Discipline demands that we give up our self importance so as to immunize ourselves from the Cult Mind. We don't accept praise and blame nor do we inflict it on others. We are forgiving and our goal is to heal ourselves when we fail rather than to indulge in judgment and condemnation. (Thanks is Steven Gaskin for the idea.)

Purification of Truth

Purification of Truth is taking a theory that we think is true and putting it to the test of doubt and scrutiny and applying scientific methodology to verify that what we think is true really is true. We do this so that we can catch mistakes and weed out information that isn't true, or to verify that what we believe still is true. Often it gives us a deeper understanding where something still is true, but we know more about it. Often the purification of truth leads us to other truths that we haven't yet discovered. Or it may cause us to find an error in something related to the truth we are purifying.

Quest

An Explorer or group of Explorers who goes on a trip or involves themselves in a new activity for the purpose of understanding reality is on a "Quest". A quest is like a mission but more of a short term event where a mission is a bigger longer goal. A

Quest would be more like taking a weekend to take your family to a science museum to learn about new things or to go on retreat for self exploration and getting real.

Real Reality

The term Real Reality is somewhat redundant in that reality by definition (at least our definition) is the sum total of everything that actually is real. However there are those who like to do some definition twisting and word games around the word reality so we have created a definition for **Imaginary Reality** which is by definition a contradiction. This terms are tools for helping to explain to people who insist on believing what they want and calling it real that we in the Church of Reality consider reality something sacred and that definition twisting is not a part of reality based culture. We believe what reality turns out to be, not that reality turn into what we want to believe it is.

Realism

Realism is the name of what we believe in. Buddhists believe in Buddhism. Realists believe in Realism. Realism is the practice of believing in reality.

Realist

Members of the church of Reality. Realist is the term we give to our religious identity. People who believe in Christ are called "Christians". When asked, "What religion are you?" we reply, "We are Realists."

Reality

Reality is what we believe in. The way things really are. Reality is that which doesn't go away when you stop believing in it. It's not our personal reality or our perception of reality or what we want reality to be. Reality is the way it is. It is objective reality. As Realists practicing Realism - we pursue the understanding of Reality.

Reality as Creator

I didn't invent reality - reality invented me. Although we don't know how we got here or why anything exists - we know that reality created us. First there was this real world and somehow we are here.

Reality First

Our reality in the Church of Reality is a jealous reality. Thou shall have no realities before the one true reality, the sum of everything that is actually real. We put reality first. Reality comes before faith and it comes before any deities. When you **Accept the Truth** you do that by putting Reality First.

Reality Lives Within You

The instinctual need to be connected to reality and to understand reality is within us all. We are the result of billions of years of evolution and we are descended from those who were best able to make reality a part of their lives. Understanding reality is a survival skill. Staying Real helps tip the odds in your favor so that when you do make a choice based on reality it is more likely to be a good choice than if you ignored reality. Evolution favors the realist and our very souls are ultimately rooted in the real world. No matter how strongly the Cult Mind controls us - we never lose the ability to Become Real in the Sacred Moment.

Reality Positive

Reality Positive means something that is positive about reality as opposed to negative about non-reality. The Church of Reality is a reality positive religion because we focus on what we do believe in as opposed to what we don't believe in. In contrast Atheism focuses on what isn't real. Our existence is limited to a small amount of time. If we spend that time focusing on what isn't real then we miss out on what is real. Our motto is, "If it's real, we believe in it.", as opposed to, "If it's not real then we don't believe in it."

Religion 3.0

Religion 3.0 is the next stage in the evolution of religion. Religion 1.0 was the authority of elders. Religion 2.0 was the authority of scripture. Religion 3.0 is the authority of evidence. Religion 3.0 is characterized by a move to base religious doctrine on evidence rather than belief. Religion 3.0 heralds the **Age of Awakening** moving from belief to knowledge and understanding who we are and what our purpose is in the context of **Big History**. That we are the universe contemplating its own existence.

Humanity have evolved to the point where we now understand the **Big History** of the universe. We now know where we come from and how we got here. Therefore the time has come to leave behind the creation stories of 1.x and 2.x religions that are belief based to knowledge based religions. Religions have to incorporate reality into their doctrine to **Stay in the Game** or they will be **Left Behind**.

Religious Identity

A person's religious identity is the name of the religion that they identify themselves with. In this society people want to know, "What religion are you?" Generally they expect a one word answer with the name of a religion that expresses their religious identity. A person might say they are a Buddhist - or a Christian - or a Jew - or a Muslim - or a Hindu. These are examples of religious identities.

The Church of Reality provides a religious identity for Realists. The word Atheist for example doesn't describe what you believe in but rather what you don't believe in. The belief in reality isn't new but what this church does is to give a name to the belief in

reality. One of the missions of this church is to establish the name Church of Reality and Realism as the practice of the religion so that when someone asks a Realist what religion they are - that they can say it and the listener has heard of it and understands what they mean. To that end the Church of Reality has a duty to realists through the Principle of Self Scrutiny to always preserve the intellectual integrity of this church so that people who truly believe in reality the way it really is can feel comfortable calling themselves Realists.

Responsible Religion

Responsible religion is a religion that is honest about what they believe in and has a commitment to making the future better than the past. Responsible religion isn't afraid of reality. Responsible religion accepts scrutiny and criticism. Responsible religion allows you to question everything.

Responsible religion denounces torture or murder of people. It doesn't look forward to the end of the world. Responsible religion protects the environment and treats our planet as our home. Responsible religion sees humanity as one big community that includes everybody.

Root Axiom

When one embarks on creating a religion with the name Church of Reality one can not rely on arbitrary subjective assumptions that reflect the preference of a single individual. The Church of Reality must - by definition - be based on something that is objective. We have accepted the burden of having to show our work. We can't just arbitrarily declare something to be true. We have to support it. We have to stand up to **Scrutiny**. In the Church of Reality the Root Axiom is what gives meaning meaning. It's the logical basis to separate right from wrong and form the basis for **Morality**.

Our Root Axiom is that to Exist it better that to not exist.

Our Root Axiom is that to exist is better than to not exist. By continuing to exist we don't mean as an individual, or as in eternal life. What we mean is that it is better that humanity continues to avoid extinction. That humanity is not **Left Behind**.

That in itself can be questioned as an arbitrary value judgment. One might ask why it is better for humanity to exist than to become extinct? And that would be a fair question for which we offer this justification.

Our first justification is that the opinion to exist is rigged in favor of existence. Those who exist get to vote. Those who don't exist don't get to vote. We humans are also a creation of evolution. Our ancestors did whatever it took to exist. This who failed to exist were **Left Behind**. Because of our method of creation we are pre-programmed by evolution to favor existence over nonexistence. Since the Church of Reality is about the understanding of reality by humans we have to incorporate our human nature into the equation.

Some might say that the Earth or the Universe would be better off without us. Maybe if we were gone the cockroaches will evolve into something better than we are. We just don't know. But the Church of Reality was created by humans for humans and in order to accomplish our mission we have to **Stay in the Game**. Thus for humans to continue to exist is better than humans becoming extinct is true in the context of how the Church of Reality is defined.

Reality is the story of everything that exists. We have to continue to exist to be part of the Story of Reality

Reality itself is about what exists. Without existence there would be no reality. Therefore a Church of Reality must accept existence as a universal positive value over extinction which is looked at as a negative value. Morality and value systems are artificial constructs based on axioms that we accept as true within a specific context. Thus we as Realists accept this root axiom and we have something solid to base our systems of morality - right and wrong - without the need for an omnipotent rule giver.

In order to continue to exist we have to pursue the understanding of reality.

In addition to the Root Axiom, the Church of Reality has the **Sacred Axiom** - that the pursuit of the understanding of reality has value. The Sacred Axiom used to be our root axiom but our new root axiom is technically better in that it is more primitive and less subjective. Our Sacred Axiom is derived from the root axiom. In order to continue to exist we need to live in **Right Relationship with Reality**. We have to understand the reality we exist in in order to survive. Thus the Sacred Axiom becomes a method for accomplishing the Root Axiom.

Sacred Axiom

The Sacred Axiom is the fundamental idea that forms the basis of the Church of Reality religion. The Sacred Axiom is that the pursuit of the understanding of reality by humans has value. The name Church of Reality implies that we are a religion that believes in everything that is real and doesn't believe in what isn't real. If we knew everything that was and wasn't real then it would be simple. However since we are in the process of exploring reality then a more accurate description is that we are in the process of pursuing an accurate understanding of reality, and that reality is our standard for determining what to believe and what not to believe.

Our Sacred Axiom is - The Understanding of Reality by Humans has Value

The Sacred Axiom establishes the pursuit of the understanding of reality to be our religious value that forms a basis for our religious identity. It is the root axiom for which our moral and ethical systems are based and it gives us a purpose in the universe. This purpose is a self chosen purpose and is somewhat of an artificial construct that we, as **Realists**, accept as a religious choice. The Sacred Axiom used to be the lowest

level axiom for the basis of the Church of Reality but we have actually realized an even more primitive axiom that our Sacred Axiom can be derived from. Our new **Root Axiom** is that to exist is better than to not exist. Our Sacred Axiom, the pursuit of the understanding of reality is actually a method of achieving the root axiom. In order to live in **Right Relationship to Reality** we have to understand reality. Otherwise we will be **Left Behind**.

Salvation

Restoring your computer data from your data backups after a computer crash.

Science of Delusion

The study of what makes us make wrong choices. The things in our nature that lead us away from reality as it really is. Our brain is a flawed tool. We humans are herd animals and we tend to be persuaded by those around us and we often choose to believe in something because we want to be socially accepted rather than because it is real. The science of delusion is the understanding of the cult mind. It is to understand how people can be deluded by cults and to be able to form the mental disciplines to protect ourselves from the cult mind.

Our ability as the human race to share knowledge is our greatest strength and perhaps our greatest flaw. From the moment we are born we want to learn. We want to understand ourselves and the world that we exist in. We rely on others to teach us. We have a biological need to mentally connect into the herd mind and to become a useful part of society. We desire to be respected and to have the illusion that we are part of some greater purpose doing some greater good. And there are those who would exploit that and lead us down the Path of Illusion. We live in a good society but we are not perfect. There are flaws that are both deliberately exploited or innocently exploited that lead us away from reality. One of the missions of the Church of Reality is to understand this in an effort to be able to determine objectively why we are on the Path of Reality - or the Path of Illusion.

Cults are everywhere. They are not just limited to extreme cultism - but to religion in general. It includes political parties, clubs, sports fans, all groups that form a group identity for which an individual might be deluded into group thinking that ignores reality. To ensure that the Church of Reality never degenerates into a cult - we need to take the principle of self scrutiny seriously and study ourselves to develop the science to be able to determine what is real in spite of our flaws. The Science of Delusion is the term we use to study ourselves to determine if we are on the right track and to protect ourselves by understanding how we are exploited.

Science of Knowledge

The understanding of understanding. Knowledge of what knowledge is and how it works. It could be described as reality itself becoming self aware. The processes of the pursuit of reality as it really is.

The Science of Knowledge is an understanding of our own brains. How the mind works both physically and mentally. The mind is who we are and the tool we use to perceive reality and to connect to other minds through language with which we share our knowledge and understanding. It is the science that allows us to comprehend the Tree of Knowledge itself. How do we know what we know? How do we know it is real? What is knowing? How does the individual interface into the collective mind? What is a collective mind and who controls it? These questions are examples of the realm of the Science of Knowledge.

Sheep

People who let others do their thinking for them. People who are not in control of what they believe in. People who have not taken personal responsibility to question their faith. People who refuse to ask the Sacred Question - "What is Real?" To be a sheep is to follow blindly a path where reality is excluded from the process.

Sin

To introduce chaos or viruses into the Tree of Knowledge. To persecute explorers. To intimidate seekers of reality. To spread false and misleading information. To cause humanity to evolve in a negative direction. To put humanity on the Path of Destitution and Destruction.

Smart Universe

A Smart Universe is a universe that contain at least one form of life that has evolved to the point where it is aware the universe exists. Since all life in the universe was created by the universe through an evolutionary process, we are the universe. Therefore because we are the universe and we are aware of the universe, the universe is self aware through us.

We are, along with other advanced life forms in the universe, the universe contemplating itself, learning about itself. Our existence makes the universe a smart universe. If we ceased to exist and there is no other highly evolved life in the universe then the universe would again become a **Dumb Universe**.

To be clear, (The Atheist Disclaimer), we are not suggesting that the universe has a mind independent of ourselves and is some sort of father/deity figure. We are more like the universe's first brain cells.

Snot Theory

Snot Theory is a metaphor for theories that don't stand up to scientific **Scrutiny**. It's used in a response to the argument, "No one knows the answer so you can't prove my answer isn't right."

Snot Theory is the hypothesis that the Big Bang was caused by a deity sneezing and

that the universe was created out of snot. Of course we all know it's snot true. So if someone makes a "God of the Gaps" argument or postulates a theory without any logical support, we would call their idea Snot Theory.

Sock Puppet



A sock puppet is a cult member. We call them sock puppets because they have surrendered their will to their masters and what they say are the words of the cult. They are completely dominated by the cult mind and are required to believe without question what they are told to believe. To become a sock puppet is to totally surrender your free will and surrender to a life of slavery.

An example of a sock puppet is a Jehovah's Witness who comes to your door and when you try to have a conversation with them. It's like the person isn't even there. They just parrot a narrative that they are required to believe in order to stay part of the cult. Before a sock puppet can accept reality they have to realize that it will lead to them being thrown out of their cult.

Staying in the Game

Staying in the game means to continue to exist. To avoid extinction. As long as humanity survives we are in the game. If we become extinct we are out of the game.

In the game and out of the game describes evolution and extinction in more personal terms. Generally one thinks of evolution and extinction as something that happens over a long period of time. Sometimes it can be quite sudden, especially extinction. We are only here because our ancestors stayed in the game. They did what it takes to survive. The term "in the game" also implies that one has to actively work to stay in, and if one doesn't do what it takes to stay in the game then you lose, and you are out.

Staying on Subject

In the religious debate the view of the Church of Reality is that the pursuit of the understanding of reality, the way it really is, has value. This is our **Sacred Axiom**. It is not our mission to prove what doesn't exist, but to focus on what does exist. Staying on subject is to keep turning the conversation back to reality. If we are spreading the **Sacred Message** it is important that we make sure that the conversation is about reality. So if we discuss the existence of God then we do so in the context of reality based testing or from a reality based perspective.

We see conversation as a kind of sport. In sports sometimes the game is played on the home field and sometimes it is played away on their home field. There is a concept in sports that one plays better when they have the home field advantage. Reality is our home field. God is their home field. If we are going to have the home field advantage we have to stay on subject.

Staying True

Staying True - also known as the Sacred Discipline - is the self discipline that we Realists practice to stay on the Path of Knowledge and to become wise. All around we are tempted to join the cult mind and to believe in things that aren't real because we are pressured by our friends and families to plug into the cult mind. We are also pressured to accept a level of dishonesty because everyone is doing it. But as Realists practicing Realism we have a Sacred Duty to the Truth and to ensure that we are not Living The Lie and end up on the Path of Illusion, we have to do what it takes to Stay True.

Staying True is our commitment to the Principle of Self Scrutiny. We always ask ourselves the Sacred Question - What is Real? Are we really on the Path of Knowledge or are we just fooling ourselves? We are aware that those who are on the Path of Illusion are usually very sure they are on the true path. Those who are Staying True however are never sure they are on the true path because we respect the powers of illusion around us. All we can say is that we believe that we are trying to do the best we can under the circumstances and we hope that it is good enough. We realize that no matter how hard we try - that we too can be fooled.

Staying True is to respect the Sacred Principle of Humility. We Realists are a humble religion because we realize how small we are in a vast reality. We avoid the ego because if we desire self worth and recognition we open ourselves to being plugged into the Cult Mind. The Cult Mind can entrap us by giving us a false sense of importance in order to enslave us. There is nothing wrong with feeling good about ourselves if we accomplish something or feeling bad about ourselves if we fail - as long as we do it moderately. We avoid becoming addicted to praise and we refuse to accept shame because we are not self important. We can be ok because we try hard and we are trying hard to stay true.

Talking the Talk

Using the terminology of the Church of Reality in order to make it part of the human vocabulary resulting in getting people to become interested in the understanding of understanding. Talking the Talk is saying the Sacred Message - talking about reality. It's bringing reality up. It's asking the Sacred Question - Is this Real? What is real here? Talking the Talk introduces the Church terminology into the group mind and causes the listener to think about reality. It helps make the Church of Reality part of the Tree of Knowledge and it affects in a positive way how the human race makes decisions.

Telescope Time

Telescope Time (or microscope time) is a metaphor for time spent exploring reality. It is a measure for how well the society we live in is functioning. If we have a good stable community to live in that is safe, has good education, food, transportation, utilities, and happy productive people then we have time left to look through telescopes and explore the universe we live in. We have time to explore reality and grow the **Tree of Knowledge**. However if we live in a world of high crime, war, injustice, or poverty

where we have to work hard just to stay alive then we have less telescope time and can't explore reality.

As members of the Church of Reality the exploration of reality is important to us. We need to explore reality so that humanity can **Stay in the Game**. Otherwise we will be **Left Behind**. We therefore require a stable happy community so that we have telescope time so that we can continue to exist.

The Age of Awakening

The Awakening is a Church of Reality term describing this age where humanity has evolved to the point where we are aware that reality exists. This is the age where we have realized that the universe contemplates itself through us. We have chosen that humanity should continue to exist and to evolve forward so that our understanding of reality increases over time. We have rejected the **Path of Extinction** and embraced **Positive Evolution** putting us on the path to the **Star Trek Future**. Because this is happening now for the first time in human existence this is the age of awakening. Individuals who accept this path and commit to putting the understanding of reality first in their lives are referred to as being **Awakened**.

The AH-HA Moment

The AH-HA moment is the moment that the idea of the Church of Reality really sinks in. You're reading about reality, you think reality is a good idea, you like the idea of realism but you're still wondering, "What is the point of having a Church of Reality?"

Then all of a sudden something inside you yells "YES! Ah-ha! That's it! Reality! Of course! I get it! It's so obvious." It all comes together. It all makes sense. When you say to yourself that "Yes, I am a Realist! I am going to make the pursuit of reality my **Life Story**." When this happens you have had the ah-ha moment and your ready to put **Reality First** by **Accepting Reality**.

The Chosen Ones

We as Realists are not "The Chosen Ones". We are not the chosen people. We make choices to (hopefully) better ourselves and we take responsibility for our choices that we make in a humble manner. But we are not special. We are merely people who serve the common good and try to live our lives in a way that values positive evolution and that we are humble, honest, caring people. We are not chosen because we reject the cult mind.

There are few absolute tests in the world to determine if you are on the Path of Knowledge or the Path of Illusion. But one sure way to tell that you are definitely on the Path of Illusion and plugged into the Cult Mind is if you are one of the "Chosen People". If you believe that you are "Chosen" then you are definitely Living the Lie and you are fully plugged into the Cult Mind. If you are chosen and you want to come back to the real world then one of the first steps is to become un-chosen. If you are someone "special" because God has chosen you - you are living a lie and it's all an

illusion. You are deceiving yourself. You are being used. You are being enslaved. The Cult Mind has made you addicted to your ego and your sense of self-importance. That is the hook that they draw you in with.

Cults suck you in by making you special and better than "those people". You are the "Chosen Ones" - they are the un-chosen. God has chosen you - and he has rejected them. You are going to spend eternity in paradise - they are going to spend eternity burning in Hell. You are righteous - they are unrighteous. You have been washed in the blood of the lamb - they are filthy sinners. I'm praying for you because I'm "saved" and you are "lost". We are God's chosen people and God gave us this real estate (the holy land) and we must kill the infidels to drive them out of the Holy City. We are good - they are evil. We the good must defeat the evil ones in battle. It is "us" against "them" in a "war" for the soul of humanity. You are either on God's side or you serve Satan. Sound familiar? That is how cults plug you in. And once you have become addicted - then you become unplugged from the real world - Living the Lie - and being enslaved on the Path of Illusion.

This is why the Sacred Principle of Humility is so important. We are all one people living together on this one planet (for now). We are all in this together and we are all going to take care of each other so that we all survive and prosper. We work for the good of the human race so that we can grow the Tree of Knowledge and we all can evolve positively in the Sacred Direction - forward.

This is the difference between the Cult Mind and the Path of Knowledge. Our commitment to reality the way it really is means that we have to give up being "chosen" and accept the humble path and do the hard work. This planet is just a speck of dust in a giant universe and we exist for but a moment in time. We as realists make the Sacred choices to pursue reality the way it really is. And we don't have all the answers - but we do know there are things that are not true - and being chosen by a deity is one of them.

To be not chosen doesn't mean that you are not part of any cult mind - but it's a good start on the road to cult-free living. The Sacred Principle of Humility prohibits people from being "chosen ones" and that kind of ego-based deception has no place in the Church of Reality.

The Cult Mind

One of our greatest strengths is our ability to organize ourselves into groups and to work together sharing knowledge between us. However this can be a great weakness if we organize around the wrong principles. If we are seduced into being part of a cult then we allow ourselves to be controlled by the cult mind. There is actually little difference between a healthy community and a cult. The main difference is that good healthy communities are based on reality and cults are based on illusion. It is not enough to go through the motions of being a good person. You have to do more than just make your life count. It has to count for something good.

A Realist is on the Path of Knowledge. Cults are on The Path of Illusion. It becomes a life of simulation and it's the difference between fake and real. A realist stays on the Path of Knowledge by putting reality first and always questioning themselves because

they realize the importance of the Sacred Principle of Self Scrutiny. A Realist seeks reality - cults fear reality because if you are in a cult and you make a commitment to pursue reality the way it really is - one of the first things you realize is that you are in fact in a cult and you are wasting your life when you could be out there doing something real. But in order to make this kind of revelation you must be willing to unplug yourself and do your own thinking and take responsibility for your choices. If you are emotionally dependent on the cult mind for your sense of community and self-worth then you shall remain enslaved and blinded to the real world.

The Cult of Reality

The Church of Reality can also be called the Cult of Reality in that we live in a world of both logic and reason and mental manipulation. The Question is always asked "How do we know that this church won't degenerate into something terrible like so many other religions have?" And - the short answer is - we don't know. After all - if the church of Reality ever became a cult - we would be sure that we were not one.

This church does use mental manipulation the same way many other churches do. People are programmed to think in terms of religion and the terminology used by this church is chosen to fit those same patterns so as to slip into the mind of the listener and cause their mind to respond in a predetermined way. We abuse the word "Sacred" as a marketing tool to get people to think about this church. And - it does raise the "Sacred Moral Question" - is this a good thing?

One could say that the ends justify the means and this is the way the Tree of Knowledge is wired. But there is a difference between what is necessary and what is ideal. This church uses the same mental tricks as cults do to spread what we believe is the truth. And - stating this encourages us to look at ourselves from the perspective of Self Scrutiny. And - there will be people who join the cause of reality - not as fellow explorers - but as followers. And that raises important questions about who we are and how we do what we do.

The Database of Life

The accumulation of all raw information accessible to the public. This used to mean libraries but now it's the information on the Internet.

The Difference between the Universe and Reality

What is the difference between the universe and reality. Sometimes these words are used interchangeably but there is a significant difference.

The term Universe started with the Big Bang and represents the sum total of everything that came from that event. There may be some greater reality out there that contains our universe and perhaps other universes or structures so great as to be incomprehensible. The distinction is our attempt to be as accurate as we presently can based on our limited understanding of reality. Perhaps in a billion years from now, if we continue to evolve forward we will know a lot more about reality than we do today.

The First Day

November 8th 1998. The day I registered this URL. The moment when reality became self aware.

The First One

I, Marc Perkel, am the founder of this religion. I therefore call myself "The First One". I am not a deity. I am not even much of a role model. I'm just an ordinary guy with an idea. The Church of Reality is not about me - it's about reality. I'm just someone who is trying to do a good job of getting this started in the right direction so that it is self maintaining and doesn't become corrupted down the line.

The Fruits Test

The Fruits Test refers to a Bible scripture where Jesus says, "You will know them by their fruits." This was the way that one could tell true believers from those who do not truly believe.

The Church of Reality members are always being challenged by believers who claim that they have a personal relationship with a deity that has changed their life and made them a better person. Many religions claim to have an affiliation with the supernatural claiming that God is on their side and that they are somehow benefited from the relationship in a way that Atheists can't match.

There are those who claim that for some reason God isn't directly observable. But if someone has on some level merged with the spirit of an omnipotent deity, then there should be an observable affect on that person. If a religious group claims an affiliation with an omnipotent deity then that groups behavior should reflect a measurable benefit from that relationship.

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The Hard Truth

The Hard Truth is another name for the **Sacred Truth** except that it speaks of the effort and willingness to give up on what you want to believe and accepting what really is. Reality isn't what we want it to be, nor is it what other people want us to believe it is. The Hard Truth is reality the way it really is. It is often hard to give up believing the beliefs we are comfortable with and believe instead what really is true as determined by the **Sacred Method**.

The Holy Question

What is our future going to be like 100 years from now? The Holy question makes us aware that our decisions that we make in the Sacred Moment determine if we will

evolve in a positive direction or towards extinction. In asking the Holy Question we become aware of our responsibilities in the here and now and about what we are doing and why we are doing it. The Holy Question inspires us to be wise and responsible and to wonder about what we can achieve together. And to acknowledge that it is our responsibility to maintain the dream of a better tomorrow.

The Holy TV Show

The Holy TV show is Star Trek. Star Trek is the Holy TV show because it is a show that envisions a future, **The Star Trek Future**, where we have evolved in a positive direction towards a future that is better than the one we have today. In Star Trek we have put our race and national differences behind us and we have united together as one planet to reach out into the universe and make peaceful contact with other life forms that we find as we explore the universe. Star Trek inspires our imagination and causes us to become One with the Tree as our minds are led to contemplate the Holy Question - "What will the future of the human race be?" Star Trek honors the Sacred Direction and the Principle of Positive Evolution as well as many other Sacred Principles of the Church of Reality.

The Kernel

The Kernel is the name for our **Church Doctrine**. It is a concept stolen from computer terminology referring to the Linux operating system kernel which is the core program that makes the system run. The **First One** is presently the maintainer of the Kernel. Other people who also work on the kernel shall be known as kernel developers.

The Kernel is the operating system of the human race. It is the realization of who we are and why we are here. It tries to put the great questions into context and to form a system for pursuing answers to the great questions of the universe.

The Meaning of Life

Every religion has a "Meaning of Life" that creates a sense of meaning and purpose for existence. We in the Church of Reality are no different and our meaning of life is actually better than other religion's meaning of life because our meaning of life is based in reality itself.

As a reality base religion the **Burden of Proof** when it comes to grand statements like defining the meaning of life in an atheistic context. So what is our meaning of life? What is our grand purpose? And how do we justify it in the context of reality?

Some might argue that "meaning" itself has no meaning and that the concept of a "meaning of life" itself is an artificial construct. Who are we to artificially give value to what happens in the universe and determine that one outcome is better than another? What is the basis to even say that our existence is better than our extinction?

Another way of looking at the word "meaning" however is to equate it to purpose. Does it cause something to occur? In this case life caused intelligence to occur (humans),

and that intelligence was capable of contemplating reality itself. Without life the universe becomes dumb. Life is necessary for the universe to be aware that it exists (universal self awareness). Therefore life has the purpose of creating universal self awareness. One might argue the purpose isn't important, but important or not - it is a purpose.

We are a creation of the universe. We are part of the universe and we represent what the universe evolved into; at least this small piece of the universe represented by our planet. The universe on this planet after 13.7 billion years has evolved life and we are that life. We have evolved to the point where we are aware of reality itself. Thus it can be said that reality itself become self aware through us.

We are the mind of reality contemplating its own existence.

If there is other intelligent life in the universe then they too are reality contemplating itself. So whether we are alone in the universe or we are just one of billions of planets containing intelligent life, we represent the method that the universe becomes self aware.

So if there is such a thing as value and meaning and that some outcome can be considered to be better than another outcome then we in the Church of Reality declare that reality becoming aware of its own existence and evolving to expand its understanding of itself through life constitutes a higher purpose.

Perhaps it is a property of the universe to start out dumb, evolve life, and that the life evolves into intelligent life. At some point the life becomes aware of the universe and reality and life itself becomes the path for the universe to attain self awareness. Thus the self awareness of the universe becomes the meaning of life.

The meaning of life is for the universe itself to attain self awareness through evolution.

Some might say that it is a conceit for humanity, who is just at the very beginning stages of contemplating reality to claim to be the mind of the universe. Such a criticism would be correct. But every species has to start somewhere and our path is just beginning. We might be like early animals on this planet where they just put together enough nerve cells to be called a brain.

Humanity is at that same early stage. We are just beginning to contemplate the idea of reality. We just developed the technology to be aware of what our universe is. We have some idea of its size and age. We have the beginnings of understanding what matter and energy is. That the universe contains stars and galaxies. We can peer back into time to within a billion years of creation.

Humanity is like a new born baby when it comes to understanding reality but we have crossed the line of being born. We are aware reality exists and that we are real. We are now just awakening to the idea that we are reality contemplating itself. And we are grappling with the decision that perhaps we should choose to continue to exist and that we should choose to commit our existence to the expansion of the understanding of

reality. We are at the moment of **The Awakening**, where humanity becomes aware of reality.

The One True Reality

The One True Reality is the one reality that is the sum total of everything that is real. The Church of Reality is a **Monorealistic** religion. We believe in one reality that encompasses all other realities that actually are real.

Some people who are **Polyrealistic** talk about "other realities" but our reality includes what other people might call other realities that are actually real as opposed to imaginary realities which are not real. Anything that actually is real is included and everything that is not real is excluded.

Some people talk about a "personal reality" which is really their viewpoint on reality or a localized subset of reality that applies to their personal experience. Some people confuse this with their personal opinion or **Personal Illusion**.

The Operating System of Living

Our justice system. Our society. Our rules and laws. It is the current system. Society is the Operating System of Life.

The concept of the Operating System of Life is a comparison to a computer's operating system. The computer runs a program that is the operating system. It doesn't do anything itself but creates the environment for which application software can run in. It is the structure that allows the computer to do useful work.

Similarly, the government and society are our operating system. It creates the infrastructure that we live in and work in. It includes the Internet as well as all forms of communication. It involves food distribution, education, law, justice, roads, energy, the environment, medical care, everything involving the fabric of society. Religion and the Tree of Knowledge are also part of the Operating System of Life.

Our dharma of the Church of Realty includes a commitment to improve the Operating System of Life. We are to be involved in helping to make sure society runs smoothly and is fair and just for all. Because we acknowledge that growing the Tree of Knowledge is central to our exploring reality as it really is - part of our mission is to ensure a better society in order to grow our understanding of understanding. We therefore commit ourselves to supporting the infrastructure of society and the study and support of the Operating System of Life.

The Path of Destitution and Destruction

The Path of Destitution and Destruction represents the state of a society or culture that has:

1. turned its back on the real world,

2. has made so many bad choices that it is in serious trouble, and
3. is under the control of a Cult Mind.

When the leaders of a society believe that they are going to see the end of the world in their lifetime, we are heading towards or are already on The Path of Destitution and Destruction.

In such a situation it is the job of the realists to ask the Sacred Question, to send the Sacred Message, and try to get people to Become Real in the Sacred Moment. The very core of our religious morality is to uphold the Principle of Positive Evolution. We are committed to move society forward and to protect and defend the Tree of Knowledge and the Golden Router. We therefore must never allow society to go down the Path of Destitution and Destruction.

The Path of Illusion

Also known as "living the Lie". To have committed your life to a religion and a way of life that is based in mythology and has no basis in reality at all. A person who was a member of another religion and was involved in charitable work that is objectively helpful to society would not be in this category. However, someone who dedicated their life merely to the pursuit of a religion that only poisoned the Tree of Knowledge with false information would be on the path of illusion. One of the missions of the Church of Reality is to issue the Sacred Challenge to inspire people to determine if what they are trying to do is of any importance in the real world and examine whether they are in fact just wasting their lives.

The Path of Knowledge

One's personal commitment to the pursuit of understanding reality as it really is. A person who commits to believing in reality is said to be on the Path of Knowledge.

The Sacred Challenge

The Sacred Challenge is to challenge other religions and other belief systems on the basis of if what they believe is real. It is not necessary to convert the world to Realism but one of the missions of the Church of Reality is to raise the importance of reality in the minds of our neighbors of different faiths. We feel that challenging religions on the basis of reality improves their religions and helps make the world safer and saner for everyone. Religions that get too far away from reality can become a menace to the world. They might think that God wants them to be terrorists - or God wants them to start a war. We believe that faith with eyes open is better than blind faith.

The Sacred Challenge comes down to a simple question that this church asks of other religions. The question is - "There are many faiths who all believe that their faith is the true one - and that they are directly inspired by God and other miracles as written in various holy books. Yet these faiths believe different and conflicting things. Clearly

some of these religions have to have it wrong - yet their beliefs are as deeply rooted as your own. How do you know that what you believe in is real? How do you know that you are a member of the true religion and that some other religion isn't real and you are just being fooled? How do you know you are the one that is right?"

Of course - as Realists - the Sacred Challenge applies to us more than anyone else. Should this church ever abandoned reality - it should be dissolved. And to that end the Church of Reality has established the Principle of Self Scrutiny as one of its Sacred Principles to always challenge ourselves as to what really is real.

The Sacred Direction

The Sacred Direction is to move forward, to evolve in a positive direction, to go from worse to better. It is to grow - not shrink - the Tree of Knowledge. It is to look forward into the future and not be stuck in the past. We choose to move onward and upward. We seek progress. We shun setbacks.

The Sacred Direction is a religious choice that separates the Church of Reality from pure science. In pure science the universe is stars exploding and rocks in space bumping into each other. This planet is but a speck of dust in a galaxy of billions of stars in a universe of trillions of galaxies. And our short lives are but an instant in time. If this Milky Way galaxy were to explode tomorrow - it would take 2.2 million years before anyone in the next galaxy knew about it - assuming there is an anyone in the next galaxy to know it. In pure science, whether we progress or annihilate ourselves makes no difference. Whatever happens is whatever happens.

It boggles the mind to comprehend how totally insignificant we are in the cosmic scale of things. However - as Realists practicing Realism - we make a choice to evolve in a positive direction. We decide that our existence is significant at least to us and that progressing forward is better than extinction and annihilation. These choices are arbitrary choices we make based on our own (selfish) perspective. And because these choices are arbitrary - they are in fact religious choices.

We as Realists have chosen to separate "right" from "wrong" and to put value in progressing forward. These are the Sacred Choices that we make, and these sacred choices lead to our Sacred Principles, all of which ultimately come down to our decision to move in the Sacred Direction. The sacred direction is our core religious belief that becomes the basis for our moral values. The Sacred Direction is what establishes the Church of Reality as a religion as opposed to a branch of science.

The Sacred Discipline

See [Staying True](#)

The Sacred Duty

The Sacred Duty is to Grow the Tree of Knowledge and to ask the Sacred Question for the purpose of helping the human race evolve in the Sacred Direction. The Sacred

Duty is more than just giving lip service to the idea of reality. We as Realists take the practice of Realism seriously. The Sacred Principles are the core of our being and we dedicate our lives to the nurturing of the Tree of Knowledge. The Sacred Principles define the fabric of our society and the basis for moral structure and the concept of right and wrong. The Sacred Duty is to actually take this seriously and to bring our wisdom into the real world and shape the moral and ethical fabric of society.

The Sacred Gift

The Sacred Gift is the gift of reality. This term is used in "giving the Sacred Gift" or "Receiving the Sacred Gift" meaning to help someone get real or to allow others to help you get real.

The Sacred Internet Archive

A web site named **The Archive** is storing millions of gigabytes of data of the history of the Internet. Some day in the future this information will be able to be mass processed in a way that will give us insight into the history of the beginning of the web. The Church of Reality therefore declares the Internet Archive to be a sacred historical shrine and that it should be preserved indefinitely for its historical value.

The Sacred Invitation

The Church of Reality issues the following Sacred Invitation to all the people of the world: "We ask you today to take a moment and think about Reality the Way it Really is. Let your mind wonder about wondering. Feel your mind thinking about thinking. Look around you and ask "What is really going on here?" How do you know that what you believe is really true? We ask you to allow reality into your life and to spend more time during your day to become Real in the Sacred Moment and let your thoughts become one with the real world. When making important decisions we invite you to consider reality as part of the process. We invite you to ask about everything and join us in the exploration of the world we live in.

The Sacred Joke

There are 10 kinds of people in the world - those who understand binary - and those who don't.

The Sacred Journey

When you change your life and become an active realist - committing your life to the Sacred Missions - you are said to be on a the Sacred Journey. The Sacred Journey is a life that is (hopefully) fuller and richer than Living the Lie.

The Sacred Message

The Sacred Message is the word Reality. It makes reality important. To say the word reality and real sends the sacred message. It causes reality to become more important in the thoughts of the listener. The Sacred Message causes the listener to become Real in the **Sacred Moment**. It reminds people that reality should be considered in people's daily lives and in their decision making processes. Sending the Sacred Message is to advertise and promote reality. To say the Sacred message is to issue the **Sacred Challenge**. The Sacred Message should become part of the vocabulary and spoken or written as often as possible. The Sacred Message is to inspire the reader or listener to ask the **Sacred Question** and to raise the importance of reality in society.

The Sacred Method

In the Church of Reality our Sacred method is the **Scientific Method**. The Sacred Method is what we use to determine what we believe in. We have our **Principle of Scrutiny** which requires that we question everything. Our world view is that truth is purified through doubt. That is why we identify ourselves as a **Doubt Based Religion**.

The Church of Reality would not be the Church of Reality unless we have a strong commitment to the pursuit of reality as it really is. Although we can and will make mistakes in our pursuit of reality we must not compromise our principles and methods that lead us there. There are disciplines that get us to the truth and allow us to continually reexamine what we believe to make sure that what we believe in actually is real. That is why the Scientific method is sacred to us because without the disciplines it requires we could end up just being **Followers** rather than **Explorers**.

[Read more...](#)

The Sacred Missions

The Sacred Missions is the dharma of the Church of Reality. These missions define what we as Realists do. And it is what we do that defines who we are. The Sacred Missions are also an attempt to explain what the Church of Reality is in a short document.

The Sacred Moment

The Sacred Moment is Now. To "be here now" is to be in the sacred moment. This is the moment that decisions are made in. The moment where we experience reality in real time. We learn from the past and we look to the future. But Now is where we live.

The Sacred Moment is the moment of power - the moment of decision. As you are reading these words you become aware of your existence in the now. This is the point where you are making your decisions as to who you are or what you will do next. You can decide right now to stop reading this - or you can choose to read on. Now is the

moment that you control and the time in which all choices are ultimately made. Therefore now becomes that Sacred Moment in the Church of Reality.

The Sacred Moral Question

The Sacred Moral Question is - "Is this a Good Thing?" It cannot be separated from the related question, "What is Good?" It is indispensable in the quest for a fair and just society where people take reality into account in deciding the great moral and ethical questions. Often the rules of society are based on other things than what is in the best interest of the people. There are issues for which it is genuinely difficult to determine a system that takes all factors into account. To this end the Church of Reality poses the Sacred Moral Question in the hope that it reminds us to include in our decision making process the question "Is this a good thing that we are doing based on reality--and can we do better than this?" Goodness and Reality should always be considered in any process to determine a moral issue or an issue of law.

The Sacred Network

The Sacred Network is the Internet. Also known as the "Golden Router" or "Sacred Router". It is the technology where we communicate - exchange ideas - store our history - and make information available so that we as a race can grow together and explore reality as it really is.

The Internet is sacred to the Church of Reality because it is a tool that allows our minds to work together to explore reality the way it really is. We establish the Principle of Freedom to, in part, protect the Internet for those who would suppress free thought for their own personal agenda. It is absolutely necessary for us to practice our religion that the Internet be a forum of free thought and the free exchange of ideas. It allows us to form a group mind and to coordinate our efforts to explore, to grow, and to evolve in the Sacred Direction.

The Internet represents a significant step in the evolution of the human race. Our evolution moved from the physical to the mental as we developed the ability to communicate. We developed language - then written language - then the printing press - then radio - television - and now the Internet. The Internet is the birthplace of the Church of Reality and we as a church would not exist except for the Internet and the free expression for which it stands. And to that end we respect this accomplishment and give it the credit which is due and raise the status of the Internet to the level of being the Sacred Network.

The Sacred Personal Question

The Sacred Personal Question is, "What do you want to be remembered for in the Tree of Knowledge? When you are gone - what of your life are you going to leave behind?" The Sacred Personal Question makes one aware of our own existence and what our place in the world will be. Will we be remembered for accomplishing something great? Will we be remembered for doing something terrible? Or - will we do nothing of any significance and be forgotten in the Tree of Knowledge? The only form of immortality

that we know about for sure is how we will be remembered. We ask therefore that you consider whether how you will be remembered is important to you.

The Sacred Question

"What is Real?" (Also known as The First Question) Variations of the Sacred Question include, "Is this Real?" and - to a lesser extent - any question that tests any assertion on the basis of reality. The Sacred Question embodies the very reason for the existence of the Church of Reality.

A common misconception about the Church of Reality is the idea that the Church of Reality has all the answers. The Church of Reality is not here to answer the question "What is Real?" but rather to make a religious commitment to asking the question and making Reality the standard. We put **Reality First**.

It is up to science and exploration to answer the question of what is real using the **Sacred Method** commonly known as the Scientific Method. The Church of Reality is about the asking of the question. We are **Explorers** not **Followers**. We don't believe based on **Faith**. When one is **Living in the Truth** one asks the Sacred Question.

We as Realists have made a personal commitment to the pursuit of reality the way it really is. This choice is a religious choice. Other religions have made the religious choice to dedicate their lives to fiction and mythological beliefs, what we call **Worshipping a False Truth**. The Sacred Question defines who we are as a religion and is the core concept of our **Religious Identity**. The question sends the **Sacred Message** that we believe that reality is important and that we want to elevate the status of reality in the collective group mind. We ask the Sacred Question as an expression of our core beliefs and to express our moral conviction that the pursuit of reality the way it really is is better than the **Path of Illusion** or **Worshipping a False Truth**. To ask the question gives importance to pursuing the answer.

The Sacred Responsibility

The Sacred Responsibility is to be the custodians of the future. It is up to us to look forward and see what challenges are in front of us and to look at them in a realistic manner so as to make better decisions. The Principle of Positive Evolution demands that we ensure that tomorrow is better than today and that we move forward into a better future. In order to do that we have to be wise and smart and we need to see opportunities and to avoid pitfalls. We are to see things coming and to think it through so that we don't have to deal with problems when it's too late.

As Realists, it is up to us to accept this Sacred Responsibility to be the people who step forward and say, "We will do this thing. We will make the world a better place." We accept that our evolution is in our hands and that our choices matter, and we will do what it takes to make sure our choices are the best possible choices under the circumstances. We are successful when we make sure that the Christians never see Armageddon.

The Sacred Slogan

The Sacred Slogan is - "If it's real - we believe in it." This slogan is our commitment to the truth. It means that once we have determined that something is real, then we are obligated to believe it. Conversely, if we determine that something is bullshit, then we are obligated to not believe in it.

The Church of Reality is about reality and not about what we want to believe in - or if we could attract more members if we compromised a little. It's not about attracting the masses. The Sacred Slogan helps keep us on the Path of Knowledge.

The Sacred Symbol

The Sacred Symbol of the Church of Reality is the capitol letter "R" with a Halo over it. The letter "R" stands for Reality and the Halo represents that Reality is holy to us. This symbol is to us what the Cross is to Christians. It identifies our church and our belief system. It is also a trademark of the Church of Reality.



This symbol was the idea of **Paul Gaskin** who also created this art work. Paul will be remembered in the Tree of Knowledge as the person who manifested the Sacred Symbol. Paul also created the Church of Reality logo.

The Sacred Truth

We call it the Sacred Truth because Truth is holy to us. The Sacred Truth is the ultimate truth. It's the truth that you get when you stop playing with the definition of "truth" and accept that Truth means that which is actually true in reality. Truth to us is like mathematical truth. It's Truth that is purified by **Scrutiny** and **Doubt**. It is Truth that is determined to be true using the **Sacred Method** by those who have accepted reality by putting **Reality First**.

The Sacred Truth is a jealous truth and it demands that there are no other truth's before it. We do not **Worship a False Truth**. The Church of Reality is a **MonoRealistic** religion in that we believe there is one reality that encompasses all other realities that are actually real.

The Sacred Truth requires **Acceptance of Truth** which is the commitment that we Realist make to the pursuit of the understanding of reality as it really is.

The Sacred Vision

The Sacred Vision is our collective and individual vision of the future. It is what we see as our idea of where we should be going. It's imagining humanity progressing into a harmonious society where we are traveling space and exploring the reality of the universe. The Sacred Vision is to dream the dream of the perfect tomorrow.

The Sacred Wonderment

The Sacred Wonderment is - "are we alone in the universe?" We are here - on this planet - and we wonder - are there any other planets out there that also have life? Or - is this the only planet in the universe with life on it? If there is life - what kind of life is it? Are they as advanced as we are? Are they more advanced? When will we meet them - and what will happen when we do? If so - will we be able to get along with them - work with them? What would we do if a spaceship showed up tomorrow and made first contact with us? What would we want them to know about humanity? Would we be proud of who we are?

The Star Trek Future

Different religions see the future differently. Many religions see the future from an **Extinctionist** point of view where the world is destroyed either by humanity itself or by and angry deity. The Church of Reality is a **Futurist** religion and our goal is the Star Trek Future.

The television series Star Trek which we call the **Holy TV Show**, created by Gene Roddenberry in the 1960s, is a fictional depiction of the future of humanity where humans have developed space craft that can travel faster than the speed of light to go out and explore the universe. In this future humanity has evolved beyond war and poverty, cured diseases, and we are all **Explorers** on a quest for knowledge.

Although in the real future we are not likely to break the speed of light barrier and find planets full of humanoid life, sexy green skinned women, all who speak perfect English, and form a Federation of Planets, the series makes many important points about a new view of the future that we in the Church of Reality aspire to create.

We see a future that when we look back at history from their point of view that we are proud of what humanity has accomplished and have a continued sense that we are on the right track. That we have become explorers, to explore strange new worlds; to seek out new life and new civilizations; to boldly go where no one has gone before. It is this vision that fires the souls of Realists and we as a culture are committed to making the Star Trek Future actually happen.

The Story of Humanity

The Story of Humanity is the sum total everything that has happened to anyone since the beginning of humanity. Your **Life Story** becomes part of the Story of Humanity. The Story of Humanity is part of the **Story of Life**, the **Story of the Earth**, and the **Story of the Universe**.

The Story of Life

The Story of Life actually refers to the story of life on Earth. The story of life is the entire history of life on this planet since life formed on this planet. It is the history of the

Tree of Life. Your personal **Life Story** is part of the Story of Life. The Story of Life is part of the **Story of the Earth** and the **Story of the Universe**.

The Story of Reality

The Story of Reality is very similar to the **Story of the Universe** except that it contemplates the possibility that our universe, which started at what we call the Big Bang, is part of a larger structure - a larger reality - that our universe is part of. The Story of Reality includes everything and is the super set that includes all other subsets of reality and all other stories. It is the story that includes everything that is real.

The Story of the Earth

The story of the Earth is the sum total of everything that happened on this planet since the Earth was formed. It includes the **Story of Life** and the **Story of Humanity** as well as the stories of all other species in the planet that exist and have ever existed.

The Story of the Universe

The Story of the Universe is the sum total of everything that happened everywhere in the universe from the beginning of time. It is the **Life Story** of the cosmos. Everything you do from the moment you are born to the moment you dies is part of the Story of the Universe. What happens becomes what happened and what you do becomes what you did.

A popular name for the Story of the Universe is **Big History**. It's big because it includes everything that actually happened. Big History and the Story of the Universe are almost but not quite the **Story of Reality**. The Story of Reality contemplates that our universe might be part of some larger structure that we are not yet aware of.

The Tree of Knowledge

The **Tree of Knowledge** is the collection of all things known to the human race. The species knowledge of humanity. Our collective knowledge. It is the sum total of all human knowledge.

The Tree of Knowledge is what separates us from the animals. We are able to communicate and share information and it is this collection of information that defines who we are as a species. What is the difference between humanity today and humanity 500 years ago? It's our Tree of Knowledge. Because of the Tree of Knowledge we know how to fly - how to use electricity - know how to build computers - and know how to cure diseases. If we as a species adhere to the Principle of Positive Evolution then in the future our Tree of Knowledge will be bigger than it is today and we will all live in a better world. We will be able to do things that we can't do today. The Tree of Knowledge is central to the Church of Reality and we as Realists dedicate our existence to the service of the Tree.

The Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is our genetic heritage through time. Like the **Tree of Knowledge** which represents the sum total of human understanding, the Tree of Life is also a mathematical tree rather than a plant. The Tree of Life represents all the genetic material on the planet that exists now and in the past and everything about the DNA and the life evolution process. Evolution is the growth of the Tree of Life. As we evolve forward in the **Sacred Direction** we grow the Tree of Life.



The Tree of Life is our evolutionary history. It's our ancestry all the way back to the very first organic molecules that formed on this planet that lead to life. It is how we are all biologically connected to each other. How we share common ancestors with all forms of life. We are all related to each other, and interdependent on each other. In a sense we are all part of a single living organism that includes all life on Earth. It's where we fit in the food chain. We are all part of the **Story of Life** on this planet. If you go back 55 million years the squirrel and I share a common ancestor. He is my cousin. I think we look alike.

[Read more...](#)

The Trinity

Christians aren't the only religion with a holy trinity. The Church of Reality has a Holy Trinity too, but our trinity is reality based. Our Trinity is:

1. **The Past** - (Father)
2. **The Present** - (Son)
3. **The Future** - (Holy Spirit)

What's interesting is that it is remarkably similar to **The Catechism of the Catholic Church** which states "**It is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds.**" It's almost scary how this all fits together.

The Past

In the Church of Reality The Past is the some total of all events that has happened in the universe since the Big Bang. All of the events of the past led up to our creation. (The Father) The past generated the present. (The Son) We are the result of the sum total if all past event. (Begotten) From the perspective of Calculus the present is the

integral of the past. The Past can not be changed. What we do becomes what we have done.

The Present

The Present is what we call the **Sacred Moment**. It is where we live. It is the latest page of **Our Story**. It is where our free will lives. It is what we choose our destiny. It is the think line that separates The Past from The Future. In The Present we move through time. Every new moment adds to The Past. Every choice we make affects The Future. In calculus, The Present is the derivative. The Present is the transition from where we have been to where we are going.

Video by Connie Barlow - The Great Story

The Future

The Future is what proceeds. It is the great mystery of what will come. It contains all of our possibilities. The Future is what we create. It is what we are building. Those who came before us created us. Likewise those who come after us will be created by us.

There are two views of the how The Future works. If we live in a deterministic universe where we are the mathematical progression of all the events of the present then we are like a movie that has already been written. Choice is only an illusion. However if we live in a non-deterministic universe where the universe is some kind of nonlinear equation with fractal properties that are randomized at the quantum level then what we choose matters.

If we make the right choices we might evolve into something we consider paradise. (**Heaven**) If we make the wrong choices then our future will be bleak. (**Hell**) Or we might even become extinct. Forever separated from Reality.

Since our choices control The Future and we have to live with the results of those choices then The Future takes on a special religious significance to Realists. That's why we call The Future the **Sacred Direction** and that we commit ourselves to the **Principle of Positive Evolution**. Our commitment to positive evolution would be analogous to the "Holy Spirit" who proceeds.

Tithing of the Mind

Contributing new and useful information to the Tree of Knowledge. Intellectual Tithing is giving freely to the Tree of Knowledge. Giving back to the public domain. Almost everything we know today came from other people who are either living today or knowledge that was handed down. The reason you can read my words here is because we are using a public domain language that allows us to communicate thoughts and ideas. The Tree of Knowledge is the glue that hold society together and allows us to communicate and share new ideas.

But - as we receive so shall we give back. Because our ideas are based almost entirely on the ideas of others, we give back to the tree so that we can contribute to that for which we draw from. Our very thoughts - our awareness - our soul - is made of the

thoughts of others. When we think we are thinking in a language that was invented by other people. The words we hear in our mind and the meaning of those words were invented by other people. And when we give back to the Tree of Knowledge through Intellectual Tithing - then who we are and what we have to contribute is passed back into the collective mind and we achieve a level of immortality. Every time we think of the work "wheel" or drive a car with wheels on it - the person who invented the wheel lives on. If we have something to contribute then we will live on too. People like Einstein, Newton, Tesla, and Darwin are all preserved in part in the Tree of Knowledge and are part of who we are today. If we give back then who we are lives on. We pass on ourselves biologically through having children. but we pass on our soul through Intellectual Tithing.

An example of Intellectual Tithing is putting up a free web site that contains information useful to other people. Writing software that other people can use freely is Intellectual Tithing. The Linux penguin symbolically represents **Intellectual Tithing** because it is an operating system that is an intellectual contribution freely available to humanity that has significantly enhanced our ability to explore reality.

Truth

The sum total, or any subset of the sum total, of all that is real. There are things that are real and there are things that are not real. The Truth refers to what is real. Bullshit refers to what is not real.

Ultimate Reality

Ultimate Reality refers to the sum total of everything that is real in all contexts. It is the container that contains everything that is real and for which there is nothing that is real that is not part of the Ultimate Reality.

Human language is often imprecise. Some might say that the Universe is all of reality. But our universe might be a subset of some greater structure out there. Some people talk about "other realities" which is often nonsense but could refer to other contexts that actually exist but for which we have no contact. It would not however include references to worlds that do not exist.

If looked at in the context of set theory, the Ultimate Reality would be the largest reality set containing all realities and for which there is no bigger set that contain more things that are real. The only things outside of this set is that which is not real. The Church of Reality is a **MonoRealistic** religion, and the one reality we believe in is the ultimate Reality.

Virus

A false belief system that obscures reality and oppresses the understanding of understanding. A bad or corrupt judicial decision that becomes precedent. It is a piece of bullshit that infects the Tree of Knowledge and fools people into believing in things

that are not real. A virus is more than just bad information. It is bad information that spreads throughout the Tree of Knowledge and acts like an infection causing people to come to the wrong conclusion based on bad information.

The concept of a Virus goes beyond mere mistake. It generally involves the deliberate dissemination of false information in order to deliberately obscure reality and cause society to make decisions that favor the selfish interests of the virus spreader rather than the good of society as a whole. This kind of activity is a sin against the Tree of Knowledge. We live in a society where some individuals who put their own interests ahead of the common good use viruses to steal at the expense of truth and honesty.

The Church of Reality - through its research into the Science of Deception and the raising of the importance of reality in society has, as one of its goals, to be able to immunize the Tree of Knowledge from these viruses of the mind and to identify bullshit and to label it as bullshit. The Church of Reality commits itself to the task of being an anti-virus and using its resources to counter the efforts of those who use lies and deception. We fight misunderstanding with understanding in order to move in the Sacred Direction.

Vocabulary of Peace

Peace begins with a commitment to resolve problems rather than trying to solve differences through killing. The Vocabulary of Peace are words and concepts that people use to bring people together and unite people and to humanize people as individuals. It is a vocabulary that gives respect to individuals and recognizes the intrinsic value of the individual. The Vocabulary of Peace forms the basis of a culture of peace.

The Vocabulary of Peace is a use of words and phrases that describe humanity as a single community that everyone in the world is a member of. It recognizes that we have subcultures of people with different and often conflicting ideas and values that lead to tensions between groups, but that these differences can be resolved by setting an example of mutual respect and putting out the effort to understand the other side enough to find a way to get along. The Vocabulary of Peace is the vocabulary that asks what we have in common and how we can build on that. It is a language that describes others as people who are like us and speaks of our commonality as fellow members of our planet.

[Read more...](#)

Vocabulary of Reality

The Vocabulary of Reality is the **Terminology** that we have developed to explain the new concepts of the Church of Reality. Our religion has broken new ground and developed new concepts in religious philosophy. In order to describe our world view we have had to develop new words to describe our new concepts.

The Church of Reality has concepts found in no other religion. Many of the concepts are complex and it requires new words to describe these concepts. Once you **Accept**

the Truth there is a learning curve to understand the **Kernel**. Our vocabulary isn't that difficult but it is worth the time to read through it and learn it.

Vocabulary of War

The Vocabulary of War is language that is used in order to prepare people to go to war. Wars do not happen on their own. People have to have dialogue that leads up to war. The vocabulary of war is the dialogue that is used to create the kind of agreement necessary to create war. Without the necessary agreement a war isn't possible.

In order for a war to occur you have to dehumanize the enemy. You have to define an "us" and a "them" where "we" are justified through some noble characteristic and "they" are subhuman and therefore "deserve to die". The enemy has to be seen not as individual people but as members of some evil group who's destruction is necessary. The vocabulary of war is used to demonize people as vermin who are to be exterminated.

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Walking the Walk

Performing the dharma of the Church of Reality. It's when you quit just talking and go out and make it happen. Sometimes talking is enough. Sometimes talking helps. But sometimes you just have to be the one who gets up out of their chair and makes it happen in the real world. There comes a point sometimes where if you don't do it - it doesn't get done. Walking the walk is the act of making it happen.

Waste of Neurons

The term "Waste of Neurons" is a recognition that there is only so much room in the brain and that one's mental resources are valuable and should be used to store important information. It is similar to not downloading junk files on your computer that take up space and prevent you from storing useful information.

Obsessive Atheism, for example can become a waste of neurons in that if one spends all their time thinking about what isn't real then the brain becomes full of trivia and there isn't room for what is real. The Church of Reality considers memorizing the sacred text of other religions to be a waste of neurons that could better be used to understand the reality we live in. One of our disciplines is **Staying on Subject** which means to bring the debate back to reality.

Wasted

The term wasted refers to a person who has chosen to turn their back on reality. They have chosen to believe something that they don't care if it is true or not. Often they believe in an afterlife that is superior to "this world" and that this imaginary afterlife matters and that reality does not.

As a Realist we value our existence here in reality and we respect the fact that our individual existence is both precious and limited. If someone turns their back on reality and puts other beliefs ahead of reality that is equivalent to worshipping a false reality or idolatry. Their **Life Story** will become meaningless and they will be forgotten.

For a Realist the only thing that's worth believing in is what is real. If we choose to believe something through faith then we reject the **Principle of Scrutiny**. It is as if we are saying that we just don't care about what really is true. Those who don't care about this life and their life story are wasting their precious existence on nothing. They are wasted.

Wisdom

Having a firm grasp of the obvious. Wisdom is the ability to see the big picture. It often involves responsibility and a willingness to make the hard choices rather than taking the easy way out. It is often easy to fool one's self into believing what you want to believe rather than what you know is real. It is easy to try to take a shortcut when you know it's the wrong thing to do. It is easy to just go along with the crowd even when you know what the crowd is doing is wrong. Wisdom involves personal strength and integrity and a firm commitment to reality the way it really is.

Wisdom is the result of being a realist and making choices and observations based on reality. Can a wise person be out of touch with reality? Can wisdom flow from a religion that is based on mythology? Only to the extent that the mythology doesn't interfere with reality. After all - isn't reality the measure for which wisdom is tested? Therefore - to be wise is really a matter of perfecting one's personal relationship with the real world and one's personal commitment to the disciplines of realism.

Worldview

As the name implies, your worldview is your view of the world. It is the sum total of everything you believe in. It's everything you believe to be true, whether or not it is actually true. Your Worldview also includes your mental processes for evaluating reality. It includes the axioms or basic assumptions that you rely upon to process new information and integrate it into your **personal reality** or **personal fiction**.

In the Church of Reality our worldview is based on **Reason**. Our religion defines the fundamental axioms for which we experience reality. Our worldview is based on our choice to see reality the way it really is.

Worshipping a False Truth

When someone puts **Faith** or a deity before the **Sacred Truth** we call that worshipping a false truth. A False Truth is the belief in something that isn't true or isn't real. It's when you have turned your back on reality and chosen a **Golden Calf** instead. It when you have rejected **Scrutiny** and accepted **Bullshit**.

In the Church of Reality we **Accept the Truth** by putting **Reality First**. We believe that

the **Sacred Truth** is purified through **Scrutiny** and that anything that doesn't stand up to **Doubt** is considered not true. Realists do not worship false truths.

Worshiping the Tree

Also known as Praying to the Tree is to take a moment to reflect on reality - the way it really is - and to not only wonder what is real - but to reflect on the importance of Reality in our daily lives. We give thanks to those in our society who do the hard work to make sure that reality is considered in making decisions that affect our lives. When we reflect on the Tree of Knowledge - the sum total of human understanding - as we look around us in humble amazement and thankfulness of those who came before us and whose thoughts and discoveries are part of who we are today. Who we are and how we live has been given to us through the Tree. We put our energy back into the Tree by being Real in the Sacred Moment.

Yes We Can

"Yes we can!" is our statement of determination to succeed. There are those who say that the Church of Reality isn't a real religion. Many believe that we will digress into corruption and become another money grubbing religious scam. Some say that our moral values will never rise to the level of other religions. Many believe that we'll never amount to anything, that we are just a fad, and that we'll soon be forgotten. They say that humanity is too corrupt and doesn't deserve to survive. That human nature is inherently evil or that we are unworthy. They say that the end of the world is inevitable. To those who doubt if we can make it happen our reply is, "Yes we can!"

Anything you can do we can do better. We can do anything better than you. Yes we can, yes we can!

The universe isn't fair or compassionate. Unless a deity shows up and becomes an omnipotent father figure, we have to assume that we are alone and that we are responsible for our own survival. Very few planets can sustain life let alone intelligent life. There is no other planet in the universe that has people like us. We exist because we survive and if we fail to continue to survive, then we will no longer exist. If we, as a species, fail to make good choices, we will end up on the **Path of Extinction**.

"Yes we can" is like the Principle of **Positive Evolution**. It's not a belief that we can base on nothing, or hope, or **Faith**. It is a statement of determination that we commit ourselves to making it happen. We commit to getting the job done. We are going to defy the odds. We are going to succeed. We are going to survive and prosper. We will make tomorrow better than today and to those who think we can't do it, Yes we can!

Your Story

Your Story is a reference to your **Life Story**. It's the sum total of everything you have done in your life up to the present. The term "Your Story" is more often used to refer to

what you are presently doing, or what you are involved in. Someone might ask, "What's your story?" as a way of asking you what your life is about and what values you stand for.

<http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/terminology/>

Welcome Home ▶ The Magic of Reality

The Magic of Reality

The Mystical Side of the Real World

Magic and Miracles?

Is there a supernatural side to reality? Is there any such thing as magic? Do miracles occur? In the strictest sense of the definition of those words, no. No real magic, no real miracles. There is just science that we understand, and science that hopefully we will eventually understand, assuming that we stay on the Path of Knowledge.

Having said that, there's also a looser definition of magic and miracles that is in common use. It is a reflection of wonderment and amazement. It can refer to things that appear to be magical and mystical yet aren't. For example to me a cell phone is an almost magical device. I can voice command my phone to dial up people on the other side of the planet and talk to them over this little wireless box in my hand. Every time I fly in an airplane it amazes me that something so huge and heavy can fly through the air. The Tree of Knowledge amazes me. That the human race can come together and produce all of this stuff requiring an amazing amount of organization, and that we can act like a hive of bees without the common person having any idea that the very language of the thoughts in your brain, was invented by other people. To be that linked in to the group mindset, without any awareness of that, is miraculous to me.

**What most people call Magic and Miracles are things
and events that they can't explain.**

Computers are almost magical to me. When you think about it, what is a microprocessor? It's imprinted silicon. It is a rock. We could say that we have developed the technology to make rocks think, and we wouldn't be entirely wrong. We are at a time when evolution has taken us to the point of self realization, and we can now choose what we will become. We are in an age of great wonderment, an age where reality is more amazing than it has ever been. Why would anyone want to give up reality for a fiction based existence?

So - for those of you hard core realists who might be cringing right now worried that the Church of Reality is going to go off the deep end, that's not going to happen. I'm not diluting reality by talking about miracles and magic in this context. I'm actually somewhat diluting the concept of magic and miracles themselves, because what most people call a miracle is

just something they can't explain with science. Not that it's unexplainable, but from their perspective it is.

I think it's a miracle that no one had already come up with a Church of Reality until now.

When I was a kid in the 1960s, I knew that magicians used tricks to create illusions. Illusions that looked magical. At that time, it seemed that more adults believed in real magic. They may have known that magicians didn't have powers, but still believed that there were people and/or beings that do. There is still a lot of that today, but I do think that the number of realists have increased. Many people are still confused about the difference between the unexplained and the unexplainable. And sometimes it's fun to play with that misunderstanding and make supernatural claims just to get people to think about it. As always, thinking is a good thing and this will probably start some lively debate.

Reality is like anti-virus software for your mind

Thinking about reality is like an anti-virus program for the mind. It clears out the bad information and replaces it with real information. Thinking about reality purifies the mind. Living "the lie" causes brain damage, not only by training your mind to rely on wrong information, but also by destroying mental processes. When the mind is full of lies you become unhealthy, mentally and physically. Life becomes confusing. Living the lie makes your mind less functional.

Reality heals the mind. It not only clears out the wrong information but it also regenerates your ability to think. When you live the lie you get used to believing in things that you subconsciously know aren't true. You get used to believing lies that other people tell. You get used to believing contradictory information. When you think about reality you learn how to be more discerning. You learn to know when someone is trying to bullshit you. Reality removes the leaches that are sucking your mind dry.

Fictional religion is like a computer virus, infecting your mind and sucking the life out of you like a leach.

A computer virus is a bad program that enters your computer. It changes the operating system and hides, so that you can't find it or remove it. The virus' mission is to make its priority your computer's main mission. It sucks up resources, it takes up memory, and it slows the system down. It saturates your connection to the web, sending out copies of itself in and attempt to convert other computers to the virus. It wants to take over and lets your computer function just enough so that you keep using it. Sometimes when the virus is done it destroys the computer and wipes out all your files.

Traditional Religion is like that. It takes over your mind and it sucks you dry. It takes away who you are and replaces you with a new person who is under its control. It makes you surrender your good judgement and replace it with what they call "faith", which is really a command to, "accept this bullshit as true and you are prohibited from thinking about it or questioning it." In fact - to question it means that you have sinned against God and you will lose eternal paradise for an eternity of Hell and damnation. They steal your very mind, and

you live out your life in a world of fiction and lies. When you die, you don't get that eternal life that they promised but we know for a fact that you do get, eternal peace. So why spend your life waiting to die, to live? It won't happen after your gone. Do it now, live life, accomplish something. Let your name live on through positive achievements. It seems logical then, to live your life in reality, not tip toe through life on fantasies of eternal life after death. It's just not going to happen in a physical sense. Your name and your influence and your genes will only live on in your accomplishments, through the stories, memories and genes of following generations.

Living the lie is slavery. They own you. They control you. They make you believe that you are living for something real but, it's just an illusion. You see this yourself in every other religion other than your own. They way you look at them - you are just like that. Your religion isn't any more real than all of the other religion that you don't believe in. Their religion is bullshit, and your religion is bullshit too.

"How do you know that?", you might ask. How do you know my religion isn't real? We in the Church of Reality believe in reality the way it really is. If your religion is reality then we will all convert to your religion. It's that simple, you prove it - we convert.

If your religion isn't reality, then you're just a slave to the cult mind. They control what you think. Reality gives you the freedom to be real.

When you start thinking about reality it starts to reconstruct your mind. It brings back who you are, and pushes aside who other people tell you that you are supposed to be. It lets you experience the real world the way it really is. It allows you to ask the Sacred Question, what is real? You can explore the universe with your mind. You breath in trillions of gas molecules (air), feel the reality all around you, right here on this spinning planet orbiting a star that is 93 million miles away. Reality is such a wondrous place.

Ask yourself about why you believe in what you believe in. Does your idea of God make any sense, really? Oh - but you're not supposed to think about that. Doubting is the unforgivable sin. Unless you suppress reasoning you will burn. If you test God or if you prove god is real then you lose faith because if you have faith then you don't need proof. But I ask you, "What does God have to hide? Is your God so weak that he can't stand up to scrutiny? Is he irresponsible and not accountable? Does God really have an anger problem? Don't you think that Hell is a little on the psycho side?"

This world we live in, this real world, it's a wondrous place. It is absolutely fascinating. How can you not want to experience it? How can you turn your back on reality? We don't have a lot of time here to exist. How can you waste it? How can you waste your entire limited existence to living a fantasy. A fantasy that isn't even your own. How can you do that?

To me its all about freedom. I can not live as a slave. I am free to think what I want, to say what I want, to be who I am. I can question everything. I am not afraid to face reality because reality is all there really is when it comes down to it. And you know in your heart that I'm right about that. Think about reality. Let it purify your mind. Let it clean your soul. Let it free you. Feel the real world with your mind.

Reality can make to healthier and wealthier

Does reality have miraculous healing powers? Will it make you richer? Will it help you live longer? Actually, yes it will. People who think about reality make better decisions than people who turn their back on reality. A religious person might waste more money gambling, for example counting on supernatural powers to tip the odds in their favor in spite of the fact that people of faith and Atheists win and lose the same at games of pure chance. A realist on the other hand would more likely choose not to gamble because they understand that the odds favor the house.

People of faith are more easily scammed than Realists. That's because their religion requires the suppression of critical thinking. This makes them vulnerable to scams by people who are in their faith based circle or people pretending to be in their circle. People of faith are more likely to send their children to die in faith based wars believing that they are sacrificing for a noble cause. A Realist will first test to see if the cause is truly noble before sacrificing their life and the lives of their families.

Realists live better lives because reality based thinking leads to better decisions on average than thinking that relies on fiction.

When making medical decisions a Realist is going to rely on science to find a cure. A person of faith might turn to ritualism instead. They might also refuse blood transfusions or other common medical cures because it conflicts with their faith. Not every Realist lives a better life than people of faith. Many faith based religions provide community and community is good for people if it is a healthy community. Many Realists are less community oriented and their independence is often a big factor in becoming a Realist in the first place. It is often said in the Atheist community that, "Atheists aren't joiners." But perhaps this church can create the kind of community that everyone can feel comfortable being a part of. In fact it's something we must do.

So a Realist has the advantage that by making reality the focus of their belief system they tend to make better choices than people who shun reality. Better choices tend to make you happier, healthier, and wealthier. Realism doesn't have a fake afterlife to offer you but the only restrictions on sex is that you should use good judgement to avoid unintended pregnancies and the spread of disease. Being a freedom based religion we offer more sexual options than those who require virgin marriage monogamy. Sex is a good thing in our religion.

The word Reality does have healing powers. Every time you say "reality", the Sacred Message, you cause people to think about reality. And every time you think about reality it regenerates your mind making you a better person.

The most important thing about Realism is the quality of life issue. Reality gives you the freedom to be you. It allows you to live the life you choose. It allows you to accomplish great things. There is nothing in the world like being free. Free to think anything you want. Free to explore the universe with your mind. Your life is your own. Your thought are your

thoughts. You are not forced to think only what you are allowed to think. You are not forced to live the life of a slave. You are not forced to live someone else's life, to be their puppet. In the Church of Reality you can be you and add your distinctiveness to the Tree of Knowledge and be remembered for who you are.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/the_magic_of_reality/

Welcome Home ▶ The Root Axiom

The Foundation of the Church of Reality

We don't know why (at this time) that anything exists. But for some reason there is something rather than nothing and we are part of existence. Reality created us and here we are. Now what do we do? Does our existence matter? Do we have a purpose? Or are we just pond scum on a planet that is but a speck of dust in the Universe? One planet amongst a trillion trillion planets.

Our existence might be totally insignificant or we might be the only life form that ever existed that has made it this far. We simply do not know and at this point we have no way to know. We could just sit here and watch our planet orbit the sun 80 times till we die or we can choose to dedicate our lives to some purpose which might in the long run be meaningless but might have some meaning to us. We can at least choose to attempt to give meaning to an otherwise meaningless existence.

So here we are. We exist. So what are we going to do?

The purpose of a religion is to give some sort of meaning and understanding of our existence and our roll in the universe. As a reality based religion we don't have the benefit of an omnipotent rule giver who writes an owner's manual for us. Nor can we just make something up out of thin air. We have to have somewhere to start, a root axiom, that isn't arbitrary. We have to start with some sort of premise than makes sense. Something that we can explain in a way that stands up to **Scrutiny**.

In this section we lay the groundwork for the purpose of the Church of Reality by creating a root axiom that becomes a starting point that we can build on. In our case we are the observer. We exist. If we want to continue to exist and be the observer we have to survive. **Our existence is valuable to us**, and if we as a species are going to continue then we have to protect our status as a member of reality by continuing to exist. If we become extinct then we are no longer in the game and we become meaningless.

Thus our root axiom must include our survival, the survival of humanity. To survive we have to understand ourselves and the universe we exist in. We need to create a purpose for our existence and figure out what tools we have to work with. Once we have a root axiom in place we can build on that to create a platform for the **Positive Evolution** of the human

race. It becomes the fundamental great truth that we can build upon as the basis for society, law, government, ethics, and morality.

Every Religion is Based on Something

Every religion has a starting point. They all have some basis for what they believe in. Some religions are inspired by the wisdom of some great leader or a prophet who has a connection to a deity. Often there is some holy book involved that is believed to contain divine knowledge that is considered the word of the creator of the universe. Whatever the story is, every religion has one that creates a starting point and an authority which belief is based upon.

So what is the starting point for the Church of Reality? As a reality based religion we can't just make something up and just choose to believe it. Nor can we base it on someone's subjective opinion. Because we are reality based we have an additional burden of having to explain why we do what we do in terms that will stand up to **Scrutiny**. That way other great minds can look at our work from an independent perspective and determine if we are on the right track.

The first of the **Sacred Contemplations** is **Contemplating the Name**. If you were going to create a "Church of Reality" - what would you do? One of the reasons behind this test is to see if other people working independently would create a Church of Reality that is at least similar to the one we have. We want to ensure the Church of Reality is in fact a logical extension of reality itself. Accomplishing this task is no small feat, but nonetheless, we endeavor to do so.

Although the Church of Reality has a higher burden of proof when it comes to church doctrine, in some ways we have an advantage. Since we are not sponsored by an infallible deity if we get something wrong we can fix it. If we come up with a better idea we can replace the old idea with the new one. All religions are evolving but the Church of Reality embraces its evolution. As we better understand the universe we live in we will continue to improve and refine our positions.

The History of our Root Axiom

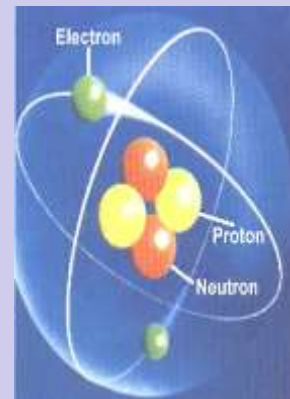
In the Church of Reality even our root axiom evolves over time. At the inception our root axiom was that we believe in everything that is real. This led to one of our simplistic slogans that expresses what we are about, "If it's real, we believe in it!"

Although it's a good slogan and a simple description of what the Church of Reality is about, it presumes we know what is real and what isn't. In reality, our understanding of what reality itself is and what things are real are limited by our human perspective. The fact is that we know very little about our universe. So the root axiom was refined and improved. The new axiom became "The Pursuit of the Understanding of Reality by Humans has value."

"If it's real, we believe in it!" evolves into "The pursuit of the understanding of reality by humans has value."

The new version is better in that we don't have to have the Church of Reality itself figure out everything that is real and make a list of settled scientific theories. The pursuit of the understanding of reality became our religious value system. We are religiously committed to believing what has been reasonably determined to be real and not believing what has been reasonably determined to be false, or believing in something without any reasonable basis for belief merely because we want to believe in it. It is our commitment to putting reality first that defines us as a religion.

However, our root axiom in some ways is like discovering what matter is made of. In primitive times we believed that everything was made of earth, air, fire, and water. Then we discovered the elements which are made up of what we called atoms. But the word atom comes from the Greek word atomos, which means that which can't be split. But when science looked deeper we found that the atom was itself made of electrons, protons, and neutrons. Many of us are very comfortable with our three subatomic particles but then they started looking deeper and found lots of other stuff that will make your brain hurt to think about. Similarly, the idea that the Church of Reality is based on the pursuit of the understanding of reality, although elegant in itself, there might be based on a deeper and more fundamental truth to explain why the pursuit of the understanding of reality has value.



The bare declaration that the understanding of reality by humans has value, while elegant, is technically arbitrary. Why does the universe care what we understand? Why does it matter if we even exist? Like the atom, is there some deeper truth that supports our arbitrary assumption? Or shall we just say that all religions are based on an arbitrary assumption and that's what makes us a religion?

As it turns out there is a deeper truth to support our assumption. The deeper truth is that we have to continue to exist to stay in the game. If we become extinct then we no longer understand anything. Everything we are is gone. Thus we have to continue to survive into the future. And we have to do more than just survive. We have to **evolve forward**. This planet is temporary. We could get wiped out at any time. So we have to eventually move out into space and hope we aren't wiped out before we develop the ability to live some place other than the Earth. We are going to have to evolve so that our future is something like the **Star Trek Future**.

**If we cease to exist then we are out of the game.
Therefore the continuation of the existence of
humanity is necessary.**

In order to develop that kind of technology we, as the human species, are going to have to have a tight relationship with reality. This understanding of reality is more than just a religious hobby and somehow equivalent to **Extinctionist** religions that believe in fictional

deities and the end of the world. The pursuit of the understanding of reality is what keeps us in the game. If we become extinct then all religions end. Our pursuit of the understanding of reality ends. Survival then becomes the deeper truth that makes our pursuit of the understanding of reality more than just an arbitrary religious position.

We have Choice

The first thing we need to do is figure out who we are and what we have to work with. Clearly we have the ability to choose, or at least a very good illusion that we have the ability to choose. Even if reality itself is some kind of programmed simulation or illusion our ability to make choices is sufficiently real to us to say that we have the ability to choose at least in the context of whatever the nature of or existence is. Ultimately all choices might be equally meaningless. Tomorrow a gamma ray burst could instantly vaporize our solar system and the records that humanity ever existed might never come to the attention of life that has evolved the ability to detect us. But we are here now. What are we going to do? We're going to choose something.

Our **Life Story** is everything we do from the moment we are born to the moment we die. It also includes how we effect reality while we existed. So we can achieve some level of immortality to the extent we are noteworthy enough to be remembered. Or even if we aren't remembered what we did still affects society. We don't remember the person who invested the wheel. But the wheel is still with us and as long as humanity survives the wheel will still be with us.

We are what we do. What we do will become what we did. Our story is part of the **Story of Humanity** which is part of the **Story of Life** which is part of the **Story of the Earth** which is part of the **Story of the Universe**. Our existence has some effect and our choices determine what that effect will be. Choice makes us who we are. Without choice, we are just meat living in **MeatSpace**. Our choices define us as an individual.

We not only have a choice as an individual, we have a choice as humanity. As an individual I can choose to take my own life and exit the game, or I can do something stupid that results in the end of my existence. But we collectively have the same choice. Humanity has two paths, evolution or extinction. We have the technology to eradicate ourselves from existence. If we are going to be around we have to choose not to do that.

What Am I?

So - I have choice. But what am I? What are we? How do I relate to we? I am a Human, an individual that is part of Humanity. Humanity is more than the sum total of autonomous individuals. We are an interdependent species. We humans are organized more like a hive of bees.

When we are born we know little more than how to suck on a nipple. Who we become depends on the society that we are born into. We are fed the food they give us. We learn the language they teach us. We exist in a society of other humans that was created by them and they ancestors. We are integrated into society.

We think that our thoughts are our thoughts but they are not. What you are reading right

now are my thoughts. I am expressing my thoughts using words that we invented by other people whose individual existences are, for the most part, long forgotten. My awareness was crafted in large part by the society and culture where we were created. If I had been cloned at birth and moved across the planet after I was born I would have been taught a different language, raised in a different culture. That person would not really be me. Who I am is in a large part who we are.

Although we exist as individuals we also exist as a part of humanity. Just as our cells are individual life forms, they combine to make the human individual. Similarly we are the cells of the human race. Who we are as humans is the result of the choices made by our ancestors, all the way back to the original **pond scum** that we all came from.

As an individual my existence is limited to the scope of my individual life. As a member of humanity however I am but a small part of a greater individual called humanity. Humanity isn't immortal but is far longer lived than individuals are. Humanity descended from other life. We will continue to exist until we become extinct.

Our individual minds are very limited. We think we are smart but without our connection to the hive mind our understanding of the universe is no more than sticks and stones. What we know isn't as much of what we know individually but what we know collectively. In the Church of Reality we refer to this as the **Tree of Knowledge** which represents the sum total of human understanding.

We as humans can travel to the moon. We can fly better and faster than any other species. We can swim to the bottom of the ocean. We can communicate instantly across the planet. We can take the heart out of one person and implant it into another person. We can measure time to billionths of billionths of a second accurately. And we can see objects that are 13 billion light years away. But it's not individuals doing these things on their own. There is not a person on the planet that if dumped on a desert island could build a cell phone. All these things are done collectively.

A few hundred years ago humans couldn't do these things. But our biology has remained the same. What has changed is that we have grown out Tree of Knowledge. We are evolving through human software. To the extent that we are humanity and humanity is the individual that is evolving over time, then if we care that humanity continues to evolve then we succeed in being part of the process. If humanity dies, we become extinct, then everything that any human has accomplished is lost forever and we become meaningless.

So what we are is actually more than one thing. We are individuals with individual choices. We are also part of humanity, a greater life form, that is nearly immortal from our perspective. We have the ability to choose and what we choose affects our small piece of a much larger picture.

The Importance of our Existence

Unlike many religions the Church of Reality focuses on this world. Other religions often focus on some "next world" that doesn't exist at the expense of our real reality in this world that does actually exist.

In simple terms everything has one of two states. It is either real or it is not real. Something

either exists or it does not exist. We currently exist. We are a part of reality. We have evolved to the point where we can begin to comprehend what it means to exist, what reality is. If we want to continue to do that then we have to continue to exist.

If however we become extinct then all is lost. Everything that everyone ever did will become forgotten. We can imagine that maybe a billion years from now that some other life form evolves and finds our ruins and utilizes our technology, but realistically when we are gone, were gone. We go back to being the lifeless dust that we evolved from. If we had meaning it is gone. Extinction is the end of everything for us.

We might be the only life in the universe that has evolved to understand that the universe exists. We might be all there is. We simply do not know.

We do not know if advanced life exists on other planets. From what we know there is a very high likelihood that microbial life is common in the universe. But what about life that has evolved to the point of comprehending reality itself? Are there others out there? We simply do not know. The universe might be teeming with advanced life and there might be civilizations that are so advanced that we can't even comprehend them. On the other hand we might be alone. We might be the only place in the universe where life evolved. We simply do not know.

What if we are alone? What if we are it? What would it mean if we were the only life form in the universe that has evolved to this point? What if we are the sole species through which the universe contemplates its own existence. If we become extinct then the universe would go back to being a dumb universe. Since we don't know if we are alone do we not have a responsibility to survive to find out what we potentially could become? Is that not our higher purpose?

What we do know is that advanced life requires billions of years of a somewhat stable environment. A 10 mile wide asteroid hit and we're gone. Primitive life like the cockroaches might survive but not humans. We actually have the technology now (or soon will have) to defend Earth from an asteroid hit. But if a nearby star goes supernova, we're back to space dust. We could have a super volcano erupt like the one that created Yellowstone Caldera could take out the human race.



In the long run we are going to have to be able to move to other planets because

something is going to eventually happen to this planet to wipe it out. We are going to have to evolve forward so that we can travel the vast distances between stars and find new planets to colonize.

We also could wipe ourselves out from just being stupid. We have enough nuclear weapons to kill everyone on the planet. We can create a genetically engineered virus to wipe ourselves out. We could change our environment to the point where we can no longer survive in it. It is a fact that most species on our planet don't make it. We are here because all our ancestors all the way back to pond scum made the right choices or was just lucky enough to survive. But there is nothing that insures that will continue. Although it may be our fate to eventually become extinct, we can at least decide to not destroy ourselves.

We can also decide that our existence in this world is valuable to us and that we are going to, as a species, decide together to continue to evolve, learn to better survive, and cheat extinction for as long as we can.

The Universe Contemplating its Existence through us

Since we are aware of the universe and we were created by the universe and are part of the universe, then the universe is contemplating itself through us. If by some chance we are the only life in the universe that has evolved to the point of contemplating universe then the universe contemplates itself only through us. Through us the universe becomes a **Smart Universe** as opposed to a **Dumb Universe**.

The universe itself has no central mind. In the beginning the universe was without life but over time life evolved on this planet. We are reasonably confident that microbial life is common occurrence on planets that have liquid water. As to life that can contemplate the concept of reality, that is a lot more rare. Objectively as of now science has not yet detected any other reality aware life forms in the universe. We make be one of trillions of planets with advanced life. There may be life forms on other planets that are so far advanced that we can not comprehend them. Or - we might be all there is.

Our planet is one of some trillion trillion planets in the universe. This is a really big number, but it is not an infinite number. It might be that highly evolved life is common. Or it might be fairly rare, maybe one planet per galaxy on the average. If, for example, we were the only advanced life form in our galaxy, but there was another planet in Andromeda, some 2.2 million light years from here, then it would take 4.4 million years for the first message to be sent and acknowledged between our two species. So even if there is other advanced life out there we may never come in contact with it.

When we say that the universe contemplates itself through us doesn't mean that the universe has a mind of it's own and it looking down at us like some deity would. (So Atheists - don't freak out!) It is more like the universe is some lower life form and we are sort of the universe's first few brain cells. In fact, we are so primitive that it's been less than 100 years that we were even aware of other galaxies and that the universe had a beginning.

Although we are so insignificant that the concept that the sum total of human consciousness represents the self awareness of reality itself, imagine us evolving for the next billion years at the rate our understanding of the universe has evolved over the last

100 years. With another billion years of positive evolution we might have a highly organized universe teaming with extremely advanced life descended from us. Then the idea of reality contemplating itself through us wouldn't seem as far fetched as it does now.

In fact, that is the vision of the Church of Reality - to continue to evolve forward for the next billion years and beyond. If we don't yet deserve it, we can become reality contemplating itself through humanity. But we can't do that if we cease to exist and become extinct. In order for us to become reality contemplating its own existence through us, we have to survive and evolve. We have to make the right choices to avoid extinction. That is the choice as we see it from the Church of Reality's perspective and we in the Church of Reality choose existence over extinction.

Think about this. What if we are the only life form in the universe who has gotten this far? What if we are unique? Do we not have some grand purpose in continuing to exist? Or - maybe there's other life in the universe like us and if we go extinct they will become the universe becoming self aware. What that would mean is that some other life form embraced reality, stayed in the game, and made the choices we as humans should have made.



So why should we hope there are space aliens out there who will pick up the task if we humans decide to go extinct instead of survive? Why don't we survive and do it ourselves? Maybe in a billion years we'll run into other species out there in the cosmos and exchange information with them. Maybe we'll figure out how to get passed the speed of light limitation and find them in a mere 10,000 years. Or maybe in a billion years one of them will land on our planet and find an extinct civilization that made bad choices and they will just say, "Too bad. They should have taken reality seriously."

That is why we in the Church of Reality choose to stay in the game and pursue the understanding of reality so we can continue to exist and explore this amazing universe that created us. We are the universe becoming self aware. And that is our higher purpose.

Understanding Reality as a Survival Tool for Humanity

Humanity has reached a point where we have become self aware and aware of the universe we live in. We are the product of evolution but humanity is coming into a period where we have the power to determine what we will evolve into, or if we will evolve at all. We have to choose between evolution and extinction, and if we choose to evolve forward, evolve forward into what? How are we going to make those choices?

When a child is born it just plops out into existence. All it knows is to cry when it needs attention and to suck on a nipple. As the child ages and develops language and integrates into society, at some point the child contemplates, "What do I want to be when I grow up?" The child realizes that it has choices to make about its future, to decide what it will become. Those choices determine their **life Story** and the choices have consequences. Bad choices lead to a miserable life, even perhaps an early death. Good choices tend to lead to a happy productive life that one can look back upon and be proud that they made the right choices early on.

Humanity is faced with this same choice. Now that we are coming of age where we can alter our genetics and add machine technology to who we are, we have to decide as a species what we are going to be when we grow up. What are we going to choose to evolve into? What will humanity look like 100 years from now? What will be be 1000 years from now? What will we be 10,000,000 years from now? Or will we even be here?

We, as humanity, have choices to make. But how do we make those choices? Unlike the example of a child deciding what it will be when it grows up, we don't have parents to guide us or career choices laid out for us to choose from. There is no omnipotent parent to tell us what to do. We are more like a child that was raised in the wild. We not only have to figure out what we want to become, we have to figure out how we are going to figure that out. What are our choices for the future and how do we determine what is a better choice? How do we know when we choose correctly?

One of the things we need to do first is to put value in this reality. If, for example, we focus on a "next world" or some other **imaginary reality** over the real world then we might find ourselves extinct and with no reality or world at all. This is our reality. It is our home. It might not be what we want but it is the way it is. It is the hand we were dealt. We either play the hand or we fold and leave the game. In the church of Reality we choose to stay in the game, play the hand we're dealt, and do the best we can with it. We may end up extinct anyway, but we're not going down without a fight. We choose to continue to exist in this world, the real world.

In order for humanity to survive and thrive, and to continue to evolve forward, humanity has to choose to have an intimate relationship with reality. We have to continue to understand this world we live in so as to avoid extinction and develop the technology for our continued survival. When that big asteroid comes heading to collide with our planet we are going to need rockets, not prayer, to push it out of the way. Some day before this planet gets wiped out by something we can't control we need to get out of here and spread out to the rest of the galaxy, or perhaps to other galaxies. There is only one way to do that and that's to continue to have an intimate relationship with reality and to evolve forward so that our understanding of reality increases over time.

Thus the pursuit of the understanding of reality is not just a religious hobby for realists. it is the key to the survival of humanity. It is what keeps us in the game.

Reality based Morality

Where does right and wrong come from. What makes one choice better than another choice? Many religious people fear that without the guidance of an omnipotent deity that all morality would go away. They fear that without God that society would deteriorate into a Darwinian "survival of the fittest" ethic where the strong males kill the other males so they can breed more females. They fear that the reality based world has no answers to where right and wrong come from.

Morality is important to a society. It serves to be a guide in determining what laws of society are fair and just. We all know that murder is wrong, but why is it wrong? In the religious world they have an answer, "Because God says so!" But in the reality based world we also know murder is wrong. But because we are the Church of Reality we have to have a

reason to explain why, and that reason has to be objective and not just someone's opinion or some vague explanation that can't be proven. We are a reality based religion and we are therefore subject to **Scrutiny**. But fortunately, we have an answer.

Our morality goes back to our root axiom - the pursuit of the understanding of reality by humans has value. We have supported this root axiom by showing that this is necessary for the human race to continue to exist. A moral system is the agreement of a society as to what is right and wrong. You therefore need to have a society for a moral system to exist. If we become extinct then our morality goes extinct with us. Morality therefore must lead to survival.

If morality depends on survival and **Survival** depends on **Positive Evolution**, and positive evolution depends on the continued progress humanity understanding reality, then right and wrong, morality, is a function of what helps humanity evolve forward. Morality is about what helps humanity understand reality better tomorrow than we do today.

So the reason murder is wrong is because if we go around killing each other then we won't be able to cooperate and build space telescopes so that we can peer back to the beginning of time. We won't be able to contemplate contemplation if people are running around stealing all our stuff.

In order to evolve forward we need a safe stable society where people can work together to expand the **Tree of Knowledge**. In order to do that we need schools, roads, power, clean air and water, good governments, just laws, world peace, and a fair and cooperative environment where we all can thrive in. These core beliefs of the Church of Reality lead to a basis for morality that is more accurate than that of deity based belief systems. People converting to a realist perspective need not worry that right and wrong are going away.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/the_root_axiom/

Welcome Home ▶ Tree of Knowledge

The Tree of Knowledge

~ The Sum Total of all Human Understanding ~

What Separates us from the Animals?

What is different about us that distinguishes us from other life forms on this planet? Is it our opposable thumbs? Is it that we walk upright? Our intelligence? Our soul? Genetically, we are very similar to all the other animals, yet we clearly rule the world. What is it that makes us different? What makes us different is that we have a Tree of Knowledge.



The Tree of Knowledge is the sum total of Human Understanding. It represents the collective knowledge of humanity.

The Tree of Knowledge is the sum total of all human knowledge that can be passed on between individuals. It is everything we have learned as a species. In the broadest sense - it's the totality of everything that everyone knows that is in some sharable form. Printed material - data archives - video - recordings - stories passed on by word of mouth. These all are knowledge that is contained in the Tree of Knowledge. And it is this shared knowledge that is what separates us from the animals. We are different because of the vast amount of knowledge that we as a species share.

The human race can be viewed as a super organism that is made up of individuals. In many ways we are similar to a hive of bees. Bees are far more biologically linked together than humans in that a bee is nothing when taken out of the context of the hive. Just as the cells of our body are individual life forms, we don't look at them as individuals. In the case of humans - and bees - the individual is the human or bee.

What separates humans from animals is our huge amount of collected knowledge that we share as a species.

However - in the case of bees - they are so tightly coupled that one could easily make the argument that it is the hive - not the bee - that is the individual. The hive shares a common mind that the individual bees are but members of the hive mind. These individuals share a common purpose and act as a single organism. And to that extent - it is the hive - not the bee - that acts. Getting stung by a bee is very different than being stung by the hive.

We humans have some hive-like properties. If you take a baby and have a wild animal raise it - is the result more animal than human? I think it is. The individual would only have the knowledge of personal experience. It would not have the knowledge that is available to humans raised by other humans. The vast majority of our personal knowledge is not knowledge we learned on our own - but knowledge we were taught from the collective knowledge of mankind. And it's that collective knowledge that I'm calling the "Tree of Knowledge".

What is the Tree of Knowledge?

Most of what animals know is based on instinct. Instinct is best described as knowledge you are born with. Animals know how to eat and avoid being eaten. Perform necessary tasks to stay alive - and to reproduce. In some species - the parents teach certain behaviors to the young who learn mostly through observation. This learned behavior is mostly centered around how to acquire food and how to avoid becoming food for something else. Some animals have a very small tree of knowledge, but humans have a vast tree. We know how to build cars, planes, computers, networks, talk on phones, travel through outer space, and split atoms. In every moment of every day we are



thinking in words of a language that we were taught to use to communicate. These words, meanings, and our technology all come from our common store of species knowledge which I am calling the Tree of Knowledge.



Tree of Knowledge depicted as a Mathematical Fractal

Many of you are familiar with the "Tree of Knowledge" (knowledge of good and evil) in the Garden of Eden from the Bible stories. Well - that's not what I'm talking about here - except for the issue that I am ripping off the name. In the Church of Reality the use of the word "Tree" has nothing to do with a plant. "Tree" in the Church of Reality is more like a software source code tree that allows thousands of programmers to work together on a common software project. The way directories (folders) are organized on a computer is a tree. Trees are mathematical constructs and are often used to organize data and define the relationships between the data. In the Church of Reality, all knowledge is represented as not only the facts but the relationship

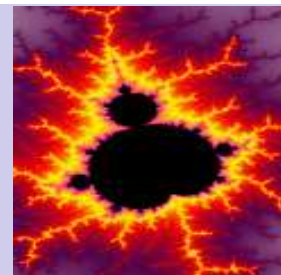
between the facts. How the facts are stored and organized.

The Tree of Knowledge includes the way knowledge is structured - accessed - distributed - stored - shared - and the methods that allow it to be built up and maintained. In the Church of Reality the Tree of Knowledge is not a mythical plant but a real data structure that binds society together and allows us to have species knowledge and distribute this knowledge through or technological systems. as an individual - I don't need to learn how to build a car. All I need to do is learn how to drive a car. I rely on the knowledge of millions of other individuals - as well as the stored knowledge of dead people - to create cars for me to drive and planes for me to fly in - and computers for me to surf the web.

Even though I am an individual - almost everything in my life involves interacting with the accumulated knowledge of mankind. What I eat comes out of cans and is raised and killed by other people. All my "stuff" - chairs - desk - TV - bed - car - house - roads - phone - electricity - practically everything provided by other people. We are all totally intertwined with each other in a way that can be viewed as if all of the human species were a single organism - and that we are like cells of that organism - because we share knowledge - the Tree of Knowledge.

The History of the Tree of Knowledge

In the beginning ... as the story goes ... there was the big bang. And the universe was created. It was the beginning of time and space and the universe was filled with pure energy. The energy then decomposed into matter and the matter formed stars. After billions of years these stars decayed and exploded and the heavier matter formed planets around new stars. one of those planets was our own Earth. Then as the earth cooled and chemical reactions occurred, some of these chemicals had the ability to reproduce themselves out of the chemical soup around them - and primitive life was born.



Then life started to evolve. Survival of the fittest. Early creatures started to adapt - developing better ways to find food and keep from becoming food for something else.

Survival consisted of eating - defending - and reproducing. After billions of years - life became more complex. Living creatures developed a nervous system - eyes - ears - touch - smell - taste - life had become smarter. Better eyes for finding food - better camouflage to prevent from becoming food. Better mating skills. Life got smarter - but life was still dumb.

The Bible says, "Thou shalt not eat of the Tree of Knowledge". The Church of Reality says, "Who's hungry?"

Then humans evolved. Just erect apes at first. But apes had already started communication as did many other species of animals. The communication allowed one individual to pass information on to others for the purpose of surviving. Most of this information was limited to hunting, defending, and mating, but individuals who could communicate survived better than those who did not. Humans developed language which allowed them to communicate much more complex ideas. An individual could invent something - like how to start fire - or the wheel - and pass that knowledge on to other individuals. Thus new people could start with the knowledge base of the previous generation and build on that. The process - which started with verbal communication - represents what we call the Tree of Knowledge.



Eventually humans invented writing. This allowed an individual to write down information that could be communicated to other individuals who were in different locations in both time and space. Writing facilitated communication and allowed more knowledge to be distributed and - for the first time - stored outside the mind of a person. Knowledge could be stored in the form of books.

Then - the printing press was invented. This allowed for mass printing of books, magazines, newspapers, and written knowledge could be spread and stored in huge quantities. More people sharing more knowledge. Then came the telegraph - the telephone - pictures - movies - recorded audio - television - planes - trains - cars - radio. Knowledge exploded. And the knowledge tree continued to grow.

Eventually we invented computers. Computers could not only store information - but could process information. A computer can take a simple thought process - like sorting and choosing - and do it much faster and more accurately than the human brain. Computers became an enhancement to the Tree of Knowledge in that they give the tree itself the ability to think. We are no longer limited to storing information. We can create smart processes to process this information for us and help us understand the reality around us. Now we have the Internet - e-mail - digital video - instant chat - databases - spreadsheets - robots. And it continues to grow. And the more it grows - the further we distinguish ourselves from the other species of life on this planet.

Humanity is defined by the Tree of Knowledge

Think back 1000 years ago. Being human was quite different than it is today. They didn't have most everything that surrounds us today. Life was very different. Most people were involved in farming. Most of their energy went into eating and surviving. They didn't have electricity. They had to make their own clothes, their own crude homes, kill their own meat, grow their own crops. They only had the simplest of machines. No significant medical technology. When the plagues came - millions of people died. They didn't even have pain killers. Most people lived half as long then as today, if they were lucky. Most of their social contact was with people in their immediate physical space. They didn't have cars, trains, planes, telephones, radio, the Internet. Very few people then could even read.



Today things are quite different. You're reading about this over the Internet. We have instant world wide communication. Computers are common in households. We travel in outer space. We take pills for diseases that used to kill millions. We can transplant organs from one person to another. We measure time in nanoseconds. We now have massive factories, assembly lines, robots building robots - I could go on forever - but things are very different today than they used to be. Yet - genetically humans today and humans 1000 years ago are virtually identical. So what has changed? Why is humanity so different today than it was 1000 years ago - or even 100 years ago? The difference is in the Tree of Knowledge.

The Tree of Knowledge defines who we are as a species. It is what makes humans what we are today. 100 years from now humanity will be quite different than it is today and there will be a single thing that will make us different - the changes in the Tree of Knowledge. Will we be technologically advanced living in a peaceful and free world? Will the human race continue to grow and prosper? Or will we use our technology to create a horrible oppressive society that is dark and static where knowledge is controlled and reality suppressed? What we become will depend on how we structure our society - and how we structure our society is part of the Tree of Knowledge.

To grow and maintain the Tree of Knowledge is to contribute and improve humanity as a whole. If someone finds a cure for Cancer - that knowledge becomes part of the Tree of Knowledge and the people of the world become cancer free. Strengthening the tree of knowledge also improves humanity. Strengthening involves the removal and updating of false or otherwise outdated and useless information. For example, people used to think the world was flat. The idea that the world was round was a revolutionary idea and people had a hard time accepting it. Even to suggest that the world was round was to invite death or persecution. But what would the world have been like if we stuck to the flat world view? We wouldn't be watching satellite TV - that's for sure.

Even though we see ourselves as scientifically advanced and knowledgeable, we are not. There are a lot of things that a huge number of people believe in that are just plain wrong - obviously wrong - yet these world views continue to exist. For example - a huge number of people still believe that the world was created in 6 days and is about 7000 years old. If this were true - we wouldn't be able to see stars that were more than 7000 light years away. But we are seeing galaxies that are 10 billion light years away clearly proving that the universe is at least that old. But often there's a difference between what we want to believe and the way things really are.

True knowledge often has a price. Take the example of religions that have been around for thousands of years. The Jews (and Jewish derivatives - Christians) are an example of this. Judaism is an ancient religion and culture and Jews are some of the smartest and most successful people on the planet. Yet their religion is frozen in time and clings to the ancient rituals celebrating things that never happened. But if the Jews were to admit that stories like Adam and Eve, Noah and the Ark, and the Tower of Babel never happened, then it would undermine a huge part of their culture.

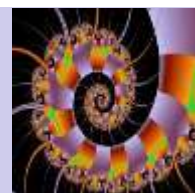
If the world wasn't created in 6 days for example, (God resting on the 7th) then what is the point of all the Jewish laws relating to the Sabbath? Do they strike it from the Ten Commandments as a mistake? Certainly they should in the spirit of honesty. But to do so would be to give up their ancient culture. And to Jews and Christians - their cultures - their tribes - are more important than experiencing the real world the way it really is. And when other things are more important than reality - then false information is kept in the Tree of Knowledge and we as a species are weakened by that.

For the Jews to grow their tree of knowledge and maintain their religious identity, they would have to have a modern day prophet who would redefine what it is to be a Jew in a modern context. Jews could dedicate their religion to the perfection of ethics and law for example and turn a backward looking religion into a forward looking religion. These religions could be modernized to contribute to the Tree of Knowledge and have a real purpose in the context of reality.

My point is that there are a lot of barriers to the process of correcting old and false information. Much of our culture and heritage is based on ancient world views that are ingrained into the narrative of our culture and not easily given up. It used to be that the entire universe consisted of the area of earth that had been explored and mapped and what a person could see looking up. We now know that this planet is but a spec of dust in a universe of trillions of galaxies. To accept that knowledge - we have to give up a lot of self importance and accept a worldview that maybe we are not as significant as we would like to believe. That is a difficult step - and a step that is still in the process of talking. And although it's obvious - it's a piece of knowledge with a price - and many of us are too proud to accept that.

Maintenance, Debugging, and the Care and Feeding of the Tree of Knowledge

The Tree of Knowledge is our common knowledge base that separates us from the animals. It is like a software source code tree where billions of people contribute to it every day. And like a software source tree, new knowledge is always being added and old knowledge is being reexamined, corrected, and updated. The maintenance, debugging, and growth of the Tree of Knowledge is the dharma of the Church of Reality.



Maintenance and debugging is very important as old beliefs are replaced by new and more accurate information and understanding. Our worldview must be purified by scrutiny and doubt so that we can be confident in our worldview because our worldview has been tested. Most religions are sworn to hold onto their worldview no matter how ridiculous the belief is. The Church of Reality take the opposite view that when information is determined

to be inaccurate, it should be replaced by more accurate information. Bad information adds chaos to the Tree of Knowledge and we grow the tree and make it stronger by replacing chaos with understanding.

One of the reasons we chose a fractal to represent the Tree of Knowledge is that a fractal has a finite size and infinite edges. The edges are both in the inner and outer regions symbolizing that the frontier of knowledge includes both new discoveries and exploring what we already know - or think we know. As you zoom in on a fractal image the zoomed image is as complex and intricate as the original image. Fractals have infinite detail and are infinitely complex. Because of this I think that fractals make a good symbolic representation of the concept of a Tree of Knowledge.

Thousands of years ago the concept of "Up" and "Down" were clearly understood. Up was towards the sky and down was towards the ground. We had gravity and straight up and down could be accurately measured. God was up - Satan was down. And when the mythical Tower of Babel was built - it was so high that God got nervous that it would reach heaven and he'd have Jehovah's Witness's knocking at his door trying to leave him copies of the Watchtower. God couldn't have that so he changed the languages so they couldn't communicate. The Tower of Babel was abandoned and God maintained a gated community. And this story was written into the Bible and is still being believed today.



But we now live in a new world view with a much bigger Tree of Knowledge. The concept of Up and Down are nearly meaningless except in a very local context. We now know that the world is round and that it orbits the sun which orbits the milky way galaxy. Not only have we built far larger buildings that could possibly have been built in ancient times but we have gone to the moon. When we fly in airplanes we go above the clouds and when we look down - there are no cities with golden streets. It is now obvious to free thinking people that this Babel story is just a story and never really happened. But from a more scientific perspective, a concept as absolute as up and down became almost totally meaningless in the context of today's knowledge.

The Tree of Knowledge is very much like software development. There are times when you add new features to allow the program to do new things. Then there are times when you go into the old code and upgrade the core technology, fixing bugs, and finding new and better ways to do things. Debugging and strengthening the core is a necessary part of programming because you often can't add those new features if your core program has flaws. Likewise - if the Tree of Knowledge contains false information, or the information is outdated, then the Tree of Knowledge becomes polluted and it becomes more difficult to explore new knowledge in the context of false information.

For example - people used to believe that there were four elements - earth, air, fire, and water. We now know this isn't true and, with few exceptions, the human species has given up on that description. We now have modern chemistry which could not have been added to the Tree of Knowledge if the four element model hadn't been updated. At some point in the future we will have new knowledge that will replace things we believe to be true today - or will add details to our knowledge in order to build on those principles.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/tree_of_knowledge/

[Welcome Home](#) ▶ Understanding of Understanding

The Understanding of Understanding

We Feast of the Tree of Knowledge

We Contemplate Everything

One of the things that distinguish the Church of Reality from other religions is that we embrace understanding. We want to understand everything. Our religion starts where understanding starts. Most religions start where understanding stops.

There are two kinds of religions. There are religions based on faith and religions based on understanding. The religions are opposite in a sense because you don't need faith to believe in anything that can be understood through logic and reason. To have faith is to decide that you are not going to try to understand what you believe in because understanding would undermine faith.

Faith is a decision to loyally believe in something regardless of whether or not it is true. Understanding is excluded because if you try to understand it and you determine it isn't true then you are expected to abandoned your reason and believe in it anyway. The Abrahamic religions require one to turn their back on understanding, and it's in their holy book.

One thing that the Church of Reality has in common with Judiasm, Christianity and Islam is the concept of the **Tree of Knowledge**. The Tree of Knowledge in the Bible is called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The concept of describing the world in terms of Good and Evil is to experience reality through your emotions. Good and Evil are emotional evaluations. This feels good, that feels bad. These are emotional evaluations. One experiences and evaluates right and wrong with the "heart".

In their book the Earth was created in 6 days. After creation God creates Eve and they are told of the forbidden tree called the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" and it is forbidden to eat of the Tree. But they disobey God and Satan (the evil one) seduces Eve and causes her to seduce Adam to defy God and partake of knowledge. Thus the Bible makes the pursuit of understanding a sin.

Our religion has a Tree of Knowledge too, but we aren't a religion that relies on emotional states and the imagination as our way of interfacing with reality. Instead of Good and Evil our Tree of Knowledge is something we embrace. It is the sum total of human understanding. Our Tree is the separation of Truth and Fiction. The Tree is our connection to each other. It is our common link to humanity. We depend on the Tree and we are dedicated to the **Principle of Positive Evolution** making sure that the future is better than today.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/the_understanding_of_understanding/

The Purpose of Humanity in the Universe

Why should humanity exist?

Our Role in the Universe

Does humanity have a role in the universe or do we simply just exist? Many other religions define a role for humans, to worship and glorify a deity, and they challenge the Reality based Community to answer the question, "Why should humanity exist?" Does humanity have a purpose? Are we here for a reason? Is there something we have to accomplish? And if there is, can that reason be derived purely from science and logic? As it turns out - yes it can. Humanity does have a place in the universe and a science based goal. And when you understand it you will understand that our existence is far richer than any other religion has yet imagined. We have a purpose, and our purpose is clear. Let us now examine what that purpose is and how it is derived.



Yes! The good news is humanity does have a purpose in the Universe.

Before we answer this question, let us first appreciate the question we are asking. Let us suppose these three scenarios:

1. A superior race of space aliens lands on Earth and they are weeding out our section of the galaxy and they say to us, "Why should we let you exist? What purpose do you serve?" And if we don't come up with a good enough answer, they are going to wipe us out of existence."
2. We create a race of robots that have superior abilities to us and become a child race of humanity and they look at us asking the question, "Why are you still around?"
3. Since computing power doubles every year by the end of the century computers will be trillions of times smarter than we are today. Futurists like Ray Kurzweil predict that in the year 2028 that computers will exceed the human brain. At some point computers will be able to reengineer themselves, making improvements to their own design. These improved computers will be able to make themselves even better. They will control their own evolution.

Since we know that something like that will happen and that it is likely that they will become their own life form, what values should we pass on to them that will become the guiding principles of their evolution? What will we teach them about their role in the universe? And in order to teach them, maybe we need to figure out our role in the universe first.

Why are we as a people worth saving? If humanity has no greater purpose then for what reason do we deserve to continue to exist?

And, of course, one of the other reason for answering the "What the Hell are we doing here?" question is that I'm tired of the faith based religious community laughing at us saying that without some deity that we have no purpose for existence and that life has no meaning. We are after all the Church of Reality and anything they can do we can do better. Figuring our humanity's role in the universe is no exception.

The Meaning of Meaning

Some people might argue that without an omnipotent rule giver that nothing has meaning. They might say that we merely exist and that even if there is a reason we exist that the universe has no purpose, and that humanity certainly has no purpose. Some might say that we a just one planet in a universe of trillions of trillions of planets, a mere speck of dust, and that there might be millions of other planets with more advanced life than us. Why would our existence matter?

Does the Universe have preferences? Is there things the Universe cares about? Is the Universe itself trying to accomplish something?

Let's look at what the universe is. Some 13.72 billion years ago there was the "Big Bang" and somehow the universe came into existence. From that point the universe started to evolve. First energy condensed into matter - just hydrogen and helium gas to start with. But as time progressed gravity pulled the gasses together and as heat and pressure grew nuclear fusion started and the first stars were born.

After a few hundred million years (for red giants) the star burns through the lighter elements and when it gets up to fusing iron the star collapses and goes supernova and spews out all the heavier elements into space. Over the next 10 billion years this process continues creating generations of stars and solar systems until our little speck of dust planet - the Earth - is born.

Somehow, in a process we don't fully understand, organic chemicals combined to create early life. Early life evolved into more complex life through random mutations with survival as a filter. That which wasn't improved didn't survive. This survival filter is what turns random variations into evolution.

What is life? What properties does life have? One property of life is that life continues. If it doesn't continue that it is no longer alive. When a species doesn't continue it goes extinct. We are the descendents of the life that continued. Our ancestors all the way back to perhaps a single bacteria were the ones who got it right and continued to exist as an organism of increasing complexity. And humanity is the result of that process.

Evolution is a property of the universe. Humanity is a result of evolution. We are the result of what the universe does.

It would seem that the universe has properties and that evolution is a property of the universe. That if you start with a big bang and apply the laws of the universe over time that life emerges. When life emerges it evolves and it continues to exist based on survival. The better tools it has to survive the more likely it will avoid extinction.

So here we are and we evolved intelligence. Being intelligent helps us to survive. The smarter we become the better our chances are. In fact there's nothing between us and extinction other than dumb luck and our ability to outwit anything that could kill us. Thus evolution selects on that which is smarter.

The universe evolved into us. We are the universe. The universe contemplates its own existence through us.

We have, in fact, become smarter and smarter and we can now go out into space with our space based telescopes and peer back at the universe to the beginning of time. (Or at least within a few hundred million years of the beginning of time.) We are at the point where we can contemplate the universe. We know how big it is - how old it is - how it started - and we understand the physics behind how it works. Not completely of course, but for some evolved pond scum on a speck of dust we know quite a bit.

But what does it all mean? Let's connect the dots. The universe comes into existence and it evolves. Evolution is a property of the universe. The universe evolves life. Life accelerates evolution. Life selects on its ability to continue to exist. Since intelligence is a survival skill life becomes smarter. Humans evolve and contemplate the universe.

But we are the universe. We are not something that is outside looking in. We are star stuff. The properties of the universe created us. The more we understand the universe the more likely we are to survive. As we become smarter we get to the point where we contemplate our own creation process. But we are the universe, so it would be correct to say that the universe contemplates itself through us. That we are the mechanism that the universe created to become self aware through us.

I'm not saying that the big bang had intent to create us for some higher purpose. But it's more like asking, "How does a rock know how to roll downhill?" It doesn't have to know how to do it, or have the intent to roll downhill, it just does. Rocks have mass and when they are exposed to gravity it rolls downhill.

Similarly universes evolve and when they do they create intelligent life and eventually that life contemplates how it was created. This may be happening on other planets and we are one of many places in the universe where this is happening. Or we might be unique and this is it and if we fail it might take billions of years before it happens again. Different people have opinions but no one actually knows. All we really know is that it's happening here.

If life is an emergent property of the universe, and if intelligence is an emergent property of life, then we are part of a greater process that leads to the universe developing the ability to be self aware. That the laws of existence leads to this and humanity is part of that process. That is that we are part of that process so far and as long as we cheat extinction.

Our higher purpose is to continue the process that created us in the first place.

If we continue on the path that we seem to be on then we will continue to evolve. Our evolution will require us to become even smarter and have our understanding of reality expand. The universe will become smarter through us. We therefore have a purpose in that we are part of a natural process that leads to the universe becoming self aware. Does that have meaning? Is this some kind of a higher purpose? Is this the meaning of meaning? I think it is.

Two Paths - Evolution or Extinction

Early evolution was slower than it is now. Single celled creatures eventually formed colonies, some times with different organisms, and cooperatively evolved into multi-cell organisms. It's not like they decided to try this. It's just that when it happened they survived better. As life became more complex evolution accelerated. New abilities formed that gave individuals the advantage to adapt and survive. Those that didn't adapt became extinct. Eventually life evolved into us.

Evolve or die! There are no other choices.

Evolution has two paths. You either survive or you go extinct. Once you go extinct you are out of the game. In order to stay in the game you have to keep improving because the stuff you eat is evolving to keep you from your next meal, and the stuff that eats you is evolving to make you its next meal.

Additionally as time goes on our environment changes. As we become more successful at cheating death and extending life we have created new problems to be solved. We are overpopulating the planet. We are using up our natural resources. We are changing our environment. We either will have to adapt or we will cease to exist.

Some people wonder if we can just keep things as they are. Freeze technology and social norms and continue on as we are now forever. We can't do that. Eventually this planet will no longer be inhabitable. It might take a long time or a big asteroid that we didn't see coming in time will wipe us out like the dinosaurs. We can, or we soon be able to, protect this planet against asteroid hits. But we live in a violent universe and we are probably here only because we are very lucky and this is a very rare planet. We can not assume that we will be lucky forever and if humanity is going to survive long term we are going to have to be able to be on more than one planet. Evolution is the only option to avoid extinction. That is the rule of the universe. Evolve or die.

**Evolution leads to a greater understanding of reality
allowing the universe to contemplate itself through
us.**

If we evolve we will become smarter. We will understand reality better. Since we are the universe evolving in reality it is reality comprehending itself better through us. And we have to expand our comprehension of reality to survive. If we are to continue then we have no other choice.

If however we fail and we become extinct then perhaps on some other planet at some other time another life form will evolve and the universe will comprehend itself through them. And like us they will have the same two paths, evolution or extinction.

We are all a single individual

We think of ourselves as individuals, as a person, and independent life form. But if you look at it differently we are a colony of cells composed of billions of individuals, many of which are very different. In fact some members of the colony don't even share our DNA. Part of the colony of cells are the bacteria in our intestines that help us digest food, a nonhuman life form that lives inside us, and that we require to survive.

However to describe ourselves as a colony of cells doesn't seem accurate. Just as a car is a collection of parts, it's really a car. As a package it has properties that can't be fully appreciated as individual pieces.

Now let's move the point of view the other way. Are we really individuals or are we just part of a greater life form? Part of a life form that includes not only all of humanity, but all life on this planet acting as a single organism that is about a billion years old? That we are like cells of a greater organism? Actually this point of view is very accurate and offers a unique perspective of what we really are.

It's a little harder to imagine being like a cell in a single billion year old life form because you are here reading this as an individual person contemplating it in your own mind. You feel a sense of personal identity, and the concept that you are just a part of a greater whole feels very foreign. But are you really an individual?

Society is an organism that we are all part of.

For example - although you are experiencing these words you are now reading as your thoughts, they are not really your thoughts. They are my thoughts going through your mind. And, they aren't really my thoughts either. I'm just piecing ideas together from other peoples thoughts in a slightly new way. It is much like building a computer. I'm just really assembling parts that other people have built. The words I use to think with are other people's words. Words don't come from us, they come from society. Society is a greater being that we are part of. And everything that we think and do in our daily lives is controlled by the greater social structure.

But this structure isn't limited to just humans. We are dependent on the community of life

forms on this planet. Plants give us the oxygen we breathe and the food we eat. We are all part of a greater community of life forms that all evolved together and probably from a single source.

It is likely true, or at least approximately true, that some billion years ago a single bacteria started reproducing and that all life on Earth is descendant from that single individual. Even though it split into multiple individuals, one could look at it as a single life form existing in more than one location. Those individuals mutated and formed early life that evolved into everything that is alive today.

If we look at this from another point of view all life on Earth is still that one individual continuing to evolve and adapt to survive. Rather than seeing Earth filled with a lot of different life forms, we are just one big individual, a single life form that continues to evolve. I also contend that these views are not mutually exclusive. That the views that we are all a single individual, that we are individual plants and animals, and that we are a colony of cells, all three are true. They are just different points of view. Just like a rock is a collection of atoms, and a gravel pile is a collection of rocks.

What is important about this view is that it gives us a more comprehensive history and a bigger picture of who we are, how we evolved, and where evolution is taking us. By understanding what we are we can then contemplate how our existence fits in with the evolution of the universe. It might give us some insight into how our evolution is part of the universe's evolution and where we fit into the big picture. How it is that by understanding ourselves that we are the universe understanding itself through us.

We are more than just our biology

One can not understand what humanity is by looking at a single human, or even a collection of humans one by one. We are more than just our biology. If a space alien captured one of us as a small child and put it in a cage and raised it, the alien would learn very little about humanity is like. The child would seem like a dumb animal with very few survival skills. The alien would be confused wonder how could such a fragile creature survive in the wild.

But humans do quite well because we are part of a society and we can communicate and divide up the task necessary for our survival. Some people grow our food. Some people drive the trucks to deliver the food to us. Some people make the trucks used to deliver food. Some people make the parts for those trucks. People drill for the fuel for those trucks. Others build roads. Some teach people how to build roads. Some create the laws so that we can all drive safely. Some design the computers we use. Others write the software. We are all interconnected into a great system that allow us to survive together much differently than a single human specimen raised in a cage.

We are more than just our biology. We are also the systems of society that have evolved. Society is like our software, the software of the human race. And that software is evolving too. It's also our technology. The machines we build. Our knowledge and understanding of how things work. The **Tree of Knowledge** which is the sum total of human understanding. All these things are attributes of the single life form that we are all part of.

We have the capability of seeing galaxies that existed just a few hundred million years after

the Big Bang. But how is it we see these galaxies? Our eyes can see them. We can see them because we built the Hubble Telescope and that device is an eye we constructed that we all share. Humanity has built a common eye.

Space telescopes are our common eyes. The Internet is our common mind.

But we don't see through that eye directly. That eye picks up individual photons and transmits this information to a network of computers that analyze the data and interpret what it means and then draws a picture for our eye to see that represents what is out there in a way our brains can understand. Our brains can't understand the data from the telescope so we build computers to extend our brains and allow us to move thinking to machines that help think for us.

Our mind are not limited to our biological brains the way most animals are. Because they can't communicate complex ideas they are limited to what the individual knows though evolutionary programming, mimicking the behavior of their parents, and their own experience. We developed speech that allows the knowledge of one person to be shared with others. We then evolved written language which allowed communication over distance and time and allowed information to be preserved more accurately. That evolved into the Internet which now allows an individual, like myself, to put my discoveries out in from of the entire world. And all of this extends who we are. Our knowledge is as much part of us as our DNA.

When you look at humanity as more than just people but as part of a life form that has existed and evolved over a billion years you can appreciate us as something more wonderful than it just being all about me. We are a part of a greater whole that includes all like on Earth, the history of life, and all our technology and our understanding of the universe. Just as we are more than a collection of individual cells our common life form is much more than a person or group of people.

Our understanding of what we are from this perspective is very important because humanity is on the verge of a paradigm shift where the process of evolution itself is going to drastically change. We are about to shift from traditional evolution to engineered evolution where humanity will design what we will become. We are already in the process of doing that without realizing what we are doing. We now have to realize it - own it - and take responsibility for our future. Humanity is pregnant. We are about to create a child race which will not share our biological evolution and we are going to have to figure out what we are so that we can decide what we will become.

Human Metamorphosis

Just as a caterpillar turns into a butterfly humanity is about to go through a metamorphosis. We are about to become something very different than what we have been and the process has already begun. We are in a phase of accelerating evolution. Although it has been accelerating since the beginning of the industrial revolution it was the invention of the transistor that really started to change the world. And then the Internet was so significant that it was probably the single most factor in transforming society at the rate it is going today.

With the advances we are seeing in genetics, computerization, communication we are transforming who we are as a species. We are changing life on this planet. All life is changing. We are crossing genetics between tomato plants and moths, something that could never happen in the wild. But does this mean that what we create is "artificial"? I think it is natural, however it's a new kind of natural. It would be unnatural for change to stop.

We have to listen to hear what the universe wants us to become. We are the mechanism for the universe to be self aware.

We are at the transition point between old evolution and new evolution. Old evolution was based on random events and selection on success. We are transforming into and engineered evolution where we get to choose what we are going to evolve into. We can manipulate the genes. We can import genes from other species. We will soon be able to design genetics from scratch. Create a superior engineered human that we design. And then that superior human will create one that is even more superior. Humans with better technology, better machines, faster computers and a fusion of machine and biology. Maybe something wonderful, or something terrible.

Old evolution isn't going away. If we manage to cause our own extinction then we are back to old evolution. Maybe in another 500 million years the cockroaches will take over and get it right. Maybe nothing will evolve our technology and when the Sun expands and burns this planet to a crisp maybe some place else in the universe will get it right. Or maybe not. Maybe this is all there is and we are so rare that if we blow it - it's all gone. We just don't know, so we should respect what we are as if it is all there is.

The Children of Humanity

Human evolution is in the process of a paradigm shift. We are about to start into a new form of evolution that has never occurred on this planet before. For all we know it might never have occurred in the universe before or it may have occurred millions of times. We are moving from primarily random evolution filtered for survival to an engineered evolution. We now will choose what we evolve into.

Our technology is exploding. We are understanding more and more about genetics and we are beginning to be able to alter genes, combine genes in new ways, and build the genetics we want. Computer processing speed and memory double every year and we are just decades away from computers having more capacity than the human brain. At some point in this acceleration of technology will we transform into a different life form? Maybe a life form with no biological components? Or perhaps a life form whose genetics are so altered that it really isn't human as we know it any more.

We are already transformed by our technology. If we look at all humanity together and include our machines, our technology, and the **Tree of Knowledge** in the picture we see humanity evolving very rapidly. For example, 300 years ago humans only lived on the average less than 30 years. Now we live to almost 80. Has our genetics changed? No! We have penicillin and sewage treatment plants. Humans can now fly. Did we evolve wings?

No - we built airplanes. Our inventions are not only part of who we are, they define who we are.

One only has to imagine where this is going. At what point do the computers become smarter than we are? When do we transform from what we are into something completely different. I can not say, nor can anyone else, what it is we are evolving into. I can say however that the choices we make today will determine what the outcome will be and therefore we should start thinking about it, planning for it. That way we can start making the right choices.

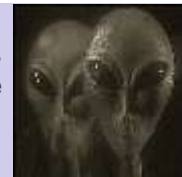
So far it is our science fiction that has been the leading thinking about what we might become. Although these are just stories for entertainment some shows raise a lot of interesting issues that we are likely to face. For example, the Battlestar Galactica series contemplates a world where robotic development continued to the point where they became a life form, rebelled, and went to war with humanity. Not likely to happen, but when we build better humans, better computers, networking minds, we are going to turn into something very different. Humanity as we know it is going away. What will we become? Will we even survive the transformation?

A child race would be its own life form separate from us. It will evolve through engineering rather than natural selection. It will be able to choose its own destiny.

As pointed out earlier, life on Earth can be viewed as a single individual that is a billion years old and we are all part of it. That is about to change. When we move to the point of engineering a new form of life, perhaps sentient robots, that life would not be part of the single biological life form that we in **meat space** are. It would be a new life that we created. A child life form. A child race that will be able to evolve on its own and choose it's own destiny. It will be the children of humanity.

Life on Other Planets

Many of you might be thinking, "But what about life on other planets? Surely with a trillion trillion planets out there somewhere there is intelligent life!" Yes those are big numbers and it seems intuitive that there would be, and maybe there is. But maybe there isn't. We just don't know.



Let's face it. Most of us who are into reality have watched a lot of science fiction and we are used to the idea that somewhere out there are alien civilizations that are as advanced and probably more advanced than we are. We envision running into them and exchanging technology, forming alliances to explore the universe, maybe even fooling around with their women. But really, are we not biased by wishful thinking?

Most scientists seem to agree the carbon based microbial life is going to be common. Microbes can live in harsh environments, maybe even survive in the cold vacuum of space. But what about advanced life? What about life like us? Are we common or are we rare? The more you look into it the more rare we seem to be.

This planet is like an oasis in an extremely violent universe and it has been relatively stable for the last 4 billion years. And that's even counting mass extinctions. In a billion years the sun will be so hot that it will boil off our oceans and melt the crust. Only the most extreme microbial life will remain if anything remains at all. A billion years seems like a long time, but it took us 4 billion years to evolve us. If evolution were 20% slower we would have been baked before we evolved.

Until we find out otherwise we should act as if we are alone and focus on living in right relationship to reality.

The elements for life have existed in the universe for 10 billion years. That means if it took 4 billion years to create us then it's possible that something else could be 6 billion years ahead of us. Even as big as this galaxy is if there were an advanced civilization it would only take a few hundred million years to completely colonize this galaxy. Advanced life should be everywhere, but it isn't. We have yet to detect any alien electromagnetic signals that would indicate the presence of advanced life.

It may be that advanced life is rare. Maybe one per galaxy. Maybe one in a million galaxies. Maybe we are it. There is a reasonable chance that we are the most advanced life in the universe, and if we blow it then that's it. The universe goes back to being a dumb universe.

If it turn out that we were it then wouldn't it be a shame if we blew it and got wiped out because we cut funding to **NASA** and some asteroid came along and wiped us out. How pathetic would that be? Until we know differently we should look at ourselves as a rare jewel in the universe and that we should respect humanity as something very precious that we should protect at all costs.

If it turns out that there is advanced life on other planets lets hope that they don't find us and decide to wipe us out. It might not be a good thing for us to encounter a civilization that could maybe turn us into an asteroid belt if they wanted to.

If there were advanced life on other planets then their purpose would be the same as ours - to be the mevhanism for reality to become self aware.



Evolution however is a property of the universe. Any advanced alien civilization would have the same purpose as us. In order to survive they have to live in right relationship to reality as well. A big asteroid would probably take them out as well. The universe evolves life. Life evolves intelligence. Intelligent like needs to always know more. Therefore our purpose

for existing and their purpose for existing is the same. It's always evolve or die.

If there was an advanced civilization on another planet then what would their purpose be? What is their role in the universe? It would be exactly the same as our role - to be the mechanism for which reality becomes self aware. They would have a different perspective on it but it would be interesting to find another civilization and compare notes. What could we learn from them? What could they learn from us?

Understanding our Evolution

The first think to understand about our evolution is that it is not our evolution. It is the evolution of the universe. The universe evolved into us. We are the universe evolving. We are a dust particle that exists for an instant. Yet as small and short lived as we are we evolved to the point that we can comprehend the universe. And since we are the universe, the universe comprehends itself through us. We are the essence of reality becoming self aware through us.

It seems to be that evolution s a property of the universe. The formula for evolution is randomness with selection on survival. That which continues stays in reality. That which fails to survive leaves reality. Forever separated from existence. That creates an equation to create complexity.

Energy turns in matter. Matter fuses in stars to create heavier elements. Stars explode creating more elements. New stars are born. Planets form in the accretion disks. The third planet becomes the Earth. Life forms and evolves into bacteria. One day a a single bacteria tries to eat a single archaea and they fuse and become the first eucarya. And from that single individual all plants, animals, and fungus evolved.

What are we really? Our cells are individual life forms. Yet do I see myself as a community of cells, 90% of which are not human? Of course not. I am a person. And I'm self aware. At least my mind think I am. But am I really self aware? Do I know what I am?

My hands appear solid but in reality - they aren't. We're made of atoms and atoms are separated by great distances. Over 99% of us if empty space. Matter itself started out as energy. We're photons and force fields. Electromagnetism holds the dots together. For all we know this might all be a simulation.

The idea that reality is a simulation is unlikely. But what if we found out we aren't really individuals. That we are cells in some greater being. In fact we are. You are not an individual. You are a member of the hive. So fully integrated that even your thoughts are not your own. And - I can demonstrate this is so.

As you read these words these are not your words. These are not your thoughts that you are thinking. You are thinking my thoughts. My thoughts in your brain. But they aren't my thoughts either. I'm just organizing thoughts from other people, things I watched, things I read. We think that the universe started with a "big bang" but I don't know that. It's not my idea and truth told, I'm not smart enough to understand that. That knowledge is in some elses mind. I know it through a network of trust. I am a member of the world community. I am a cell. My thoughts are but one voice in a chorus.

But to call all of humanity a single organism ignores all the other organisms on the planet that creates the biological community that sustains us. They evolved along with us. We all came from the same place. We all came from a little piece of pond scum.

Understanding how our emotions guide us

Have you ever wondered why food that is good for you tastes good and poison tastes bad? Do you think that is a coincidence? It's not. It's evolution at work. Primitive life depends on massive reproduction with the idea that 99.9% of them are going to die. But as life evolves those things with the best survival skills life on and that with bad survival skills die off. So over time life developed taste to try to determine if something we are about to eat is going to nourish us or kill us. If good food tastes good and poison tastes bad then we are more likely to be the one that survives.

Emotions control our behavior the way taste controls where we eat.

Emotions are to behavior as taste is to eating. Our emotions control our behavior the same way taste helps us choose the right food. Fear, for example, is easy to understand. When our ancestors hear something rustling in the bushes they start running in fear before they see the tiger chasing them. Those who were afraid at the right time are our ancestors. Those who were afraid too late became food for the ancestors of tigers.

Over billions of years emotions evolved. Unpleasant emotions prevent us from doing what is wrong. Pleasant emotions help us do what is right. Our emotions have been crudely programmed by evolution and the emotions that help us survive statistically triumph over the emotions that don't. Those with more accurate emotional programming do better than those who get it wrong.

Evolution created emotions to help us do the right thing it takes to survive.

Many people, when asked what the purpose of life is answer, "Happiness". But what is happiness. Is that something that is scientifically specific enough to be a criteria? Some people are broken and what makes them happy is not what makes most people happy. For example, killing Jews makes Hitler happy. And we all know that's not the right answer.

But - if we look at happiness as an evolved set of emotional programming that helps us to survive then we can see that the pursuit of happiness is really the pursuit of survival. And I think we can all agree that if we create a world where humanity thrives and continues to evolve in a positive direction that people would be happy. And if we do the wrong thing and that we devolve into mass destruction, chaos, the collapse of society then we will be unhappy. And if we really take the wrong path then we cease to exist and happiness goes away completely.

Humans evolved to work as a group. To function as a society. We had to get along in tribal society sitting around the fire to keep warm, hunting and cooking food, growing crops, and defending the tribe from predators and enemies in other tribes. In order to do that we had to evolve behavior to get along. Our brains evolved to process speech to communicate

more and more complex ideas. And our emotions evolved so that we could function as a group.

People have asked, "Where does spirituality fit into the Church of Reality?" Religious people make the argument that it is that spiritual connection, coming from a deity, that teaches us right and wrong "in our heart". Of course we know that deities don't exist and if the deity doesn't exist then it can't cause things. But yet the spiritual sensation is still there. What is that?

Spirituality is Darwin giving us emotional candy for playing nice with others.

Just like taste is evolution's way of teaching us what to eat, emotions are evolution's way of teaching us how to behave to survive. Since we need to work as a group, as a tribe, we have evolved emotional rewards for doing the right thing. Feeling spiritual is like Darwin giving us a gold star for good behavior. When we feel we are part of a group and that we are connected to a greater purpose then we feel spiritual. The spiritual sensation always involves a real or imagined connection to other people. That's why Atheists have spiritual experiences.

When we play nice with others we are rewarded with happy feelings. If we become leaders we feel the power of having a high social status as a valued member of the community. In the case of males it causes females to want to mate with us. Women are attracted to men of high social status. People wonder how things like music, art, dancing relate to evolution. These are things that bond us as a group. Help us work together as a tribe to take care of each other, to bond. When you look at evolution as survival and realize that group bonding was necessary then a lot of social behavior and emotional behavior all of a sudden makes sense.

What will we teach the Children of Humanity?

No one knows our future. We can only try to imagine what we will become. If we survive and thrive what we will become is beyond anything we can imagine. As we make the transition into an engineered form of evolution there are some recurring themes from our science fiction that are likely enough that we should consider.



**Humanity's children return to destroy humanity
From Battlestar Galactica**

For example, as computing power keeps doubling there should be a point, and not far off where computers

are smarter than we are. It might be computer become an independent individual or that we might somehow merge into it. But let us imagine what it would mean if we created a robot race that was a life form and had more capabilities than humans. What would that mean? Where would we fit in that world? Or would they just kill us off? And shouldn't we at least be thinking about this now?

Our values are shaped by evolution. Our emotions keep our behavior in check so that we do what it takes to survive. We might not know our purpose but life fulfills our purpose whether we understand it or not. We are the universe becoming self aware. But computers don't have emotions. They are engineered by use and not by billions of years of evolution. They have no will to survive or to thrive. They don't feel good when they do the right thing. They care about nothing. They don't care about us. They don't even care about themselves. That is unless we teach them to care.

But for them to care we would have to program them with our values. How do we do that? Wouldn't the first step be for us to determine what our values are and be able to describe them in a way that even a machine can understand. Can we write empathy in code? The correct answer is - we better figure out how.

Life keeps getting better

We started off with a tiny universe that was all energy and over time matter evolved. At first it was just hydrogen and helium. Gravity pulled the matter together the stars formed. Heavier elements were created and then through supernovas the universe made the elements we are made out of. We are the stardust that Carl Sagan spoke of.

The Earth formed some 4.5 billion years ago and then life formed and evolved. Life was tough back then even for microbes but life persisted and eventually here we are. Although some people complain, life is better now than it ever was. In just the last 50 years we now have the Internet where any person can share any idea about anything with the rest of the people on the planet at almost no cost. This Church of Reality is an example of that. What a wondrous time to be alive.

200 years ago people only lived half as long as we do now. Although our biology hasn't changed humans can now fly. We have traveled to the moon. We have sent probes out into interstellar space. We can talk to and see anyone in the world as if they are sitting right in front of us. We can cut the heart out of one person and put it in another. With computer chips we can make rocks think. We have launched telescopes into space that allow us to see back almost to the beginning of time. And this all is just the beginning.

Although many look at the future with trepidation, I think that we should look at the future as opportunity. What an incredible place this universe is. The more we learn about reality the more interesting it becomes. Just a few thousand years ago the world was flat



We have evolved the ability to turn men into women.
(Jenna Talackova)

and there was the Earth and the sky above. Then we figured we were on a sphere, that the Sun was a star and we were orbiting it. That we were part of a solar system. Then we discovered we were part of a galaxy, and that there are some trillion other galaxies out there.

There is no limit to what we might learn, what we might evolve into, the knowledge yet to be discovered. All we have to do is stay in the game to experience the wonders of tomorrow.

We now know that our universe had a beginning, and we have an idea what happened and how it evolved into us. And we are now wondering what else might be out there to be discovered. Is our universe the sum total of reality? Or are we but one universe among an infinite number of other universes in some multiverse? And is there something beyond that?

All of this knowledge is out there waiting to be discovered. We are reality discovering itself. We are like a baby that has just found its toes. What an amazing place this is. The more we know the more interesting it gets. With what we learned in the last 100 years, what will it be like 100 years from now? What will it be like 1000 years from now, or a billion years from now? We are just scratching the surface. So much to understand. So much to explore.

But in order to do that we have to continue to survive and to thrive. We need to keep growing the **Tree of Knowledge**. We need to continue to exist. In order to do that we have to live in **Right Relationship with Reality**. We have to understand our purpose in the universe and try to figure out what the universe wants to become through us.

Humanity's Sacred Purpose

As we can see Humanity has but one purpose. Our purpose is to be the mechanism for which reality becomes self aware. It is what we have to do in order to continue to exist. If we fail then we become extinct. Let's review what we have learned.

Since the beginning of the universe with the Big Bang the universe has been evolving. Evolution is randomness that selects on what survives. Evolution is a property of the universe.

Evolution creates complexity and that which is smarter tends to survive better. Thus evolution creates intelligence. Failure to evolve intelligence leads eventually to extinction.

We must continue to evolve. In order to survive we have to be able to deflect asteroids that would wipe us out. Eventually we have to adapt to a changing planet and get off this planet and move out into space. In order to do that we will have to understand a lot more about reality than we do now. Failure to do so means extinction.

We evolved from the universe. We are a creation of the universe's evolutionary process. We have evolved to where we can contemplate the universe. We are really the universe

contemplating itself. The universe becomes self aware through us. We are the process through which reality becomes self aware.

If there are other intelligent civilizations in the universe the same rules apply to them. They too are the universe becoming self aware and if they stop evolving they too will become extinct. The only survivors are those who learn to live in **Right Relationship with Reality**.

Although we are individual people, we function as a huge single organism that is some 4 billion years old. Humanity understands reality collectively through a group effort and our collective technology. Our understanding of reality is our **Tree of Knowledge**. Our species is interdependent on other life forms on this planet and on the planet itself. Our survival depends not just our individual lives but life on this planet as a whole. Otherwise we collectively face extinction.

Humanity is turning the corner into a new evolutionary paradigm where we will be switching to engineered evolution. We will choose what we will evolve into. We will design the future of life on this planet.

We have already evolved to be dependent on our machines and our technologies to survive. It is accurate to look at humanity as being a partially machine based species. As we evolve our technology will play a more and more important role in what we are. We could evolve into a completely machine based life form. Such a life form would be a child species.

The better choices we make the more likely we are to survive. We can make better choices about where we're going if we understand who we are and what our purpose is. When we know our purpose then we have a goal and a direction to guide our decisions so that we survive and thrive. If we fail to understand our purpose we might make bad choices that lead to our extinction.

If we choose to survive then realizing that our purpose is to be the mechanism for which reality understands itself must become the basis for the moral foundation of society. This purpose gives us a direction and a goal, something to live for, something to help us make the important decisions that will determine our future. It gives us an objective basis for deciding what is right and wrong. It gives us hope and a vision towards the future.

Our purpose is to be the mechanism whereby reality becomes self aware. Our understanding of reality must grow over time. All other paths lead to extinction.

The bottom line is that we are reality understanding itself and our purpose is to grow that understanding. All other paths lead to extinction. Although we have choice there really is but one choice to be made if we are going to continue to be around to make choices. We have to live in right relationship to reality or we're gone.

Compatibility with other Religions and Philosophies

How does the "Meaning of Life" and the "Purpose of Humanity" compare with other religions. In some way it is quite similar and in some ways it's quite different. The biggest difference is that the Church of Reality is by definition more dedicated to getting it right than other religions. It came from the way the Church of Reality started. I was pondering religion and I thought, "If there were such a thing as the one true religion that got it right, what would that religion be?" My first thought was, "It would be the one that believed in everything that was real." And the name church of Reality came to mind.

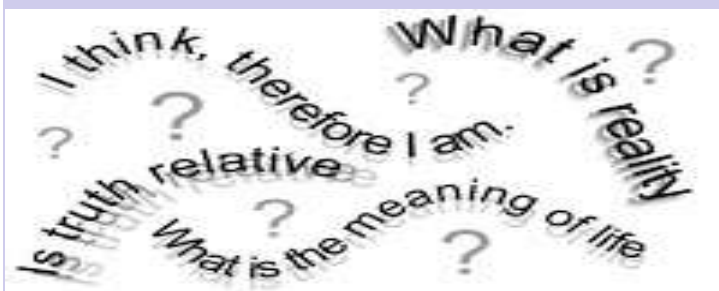


Other religions are mostly backward looking religions that started with some great philosopher or event that was written down in a holy book that keeps getting less and less relevant with time. The Church of Reality is a forward looking religion and our world view changes with new discovery and our understanding becomes more and more relevant with time. Other religions are about clinging to their preconceived ideas. Our religion is about shedding our preconceived ideas. They are faith based, we are doubt based.

However all religions are meant to answer the great questions. Why are we here? What is our purpose? How should we live our lives? This is all born out of the quest to understand reality, and since these religions were created by real people living in the real world, reality had an influence on them. They are in many ways just like us.

The idea that we are here to "Seek the Truth" and that we are here to allow "Reality to become self aware through us" is essentially the same thing.

For example, all religions are about "Seeking the Truth". We are to be truth seekers. That's fairly universal. Well what does seeking the truth mean? What is the TRUTH? Reality is the truth. The Truth is all about what's real vs. what isn't real. So when we concluded that the purpose of life is for us to be the mechanism for which reality becomes self aware, and they conclude that humanity should seek the truth, that's very similar.



In many religions they worship God. Although there is no formal definition of God most religions define it as that which includes everything in the universe as part of God. Nothing is outside of God and nothing can be bigger than God. Our definition of reality is

the sum total of everything that is real. Everything is included and nothing can be bigger than reality. So our reality is a 2.0 version of their God. If you take the purest meaning of their God and expand it you get our reality.

So in our religion the spiritual experience of realizing that I am reality contemplating itself and their concept of worshiping God has some similarities. Similarly thousands of years ago when they wrote the Bible, it was their best attempt at explaining reality and the origin of the universe with the level of technology they had at the time. Some of us thousands of

years later look back and laugh but keep in mind that thousands of years from now people will be looking back and laughing at us. That is if we don't screw up and destroy ourselves.

Now science is the new Bible and it's not a static document. Science is the new method for discovering reality. It's the same goal, it's just that we have better methods now and in the future our methods will improve. Science is the Bible 2.0.

Similarly in Atheism people reject the belief in what is not real. But their motivation in doing so comes from our intrinsic need to have a relationship with reality. If not for reality Atheism would have no meaning. If not for reality there would be no place for God not to be real in.

Humanism too is a 1.0 version of realism. Humanism is pro humanity. Humanism wants humans to survive and thrive. Humanism rejects supernaturalism, but it fails to go all the way to fully embracing Realism as the way to achieve the **Positive Evolution** of humanity that they seek. The goal of humanism are the same as the Church of Reality but they lack the mechanism for achieving that goal and they lack the intellectual infrastructure to explain why they believe what they believe.

If we all come together and embrace reality we can continue to exist and explore this wondrous universe that are are part of. We can let reality explore itself through us.

We are all in this together. We either all survive or we all go extinct. No matter what religion or non-religion you are the Church of Reality is the upgraded version of where you are at now. It's time for all of humanity to come together and embrace reality as it really is and let us decide we are going to survive and thrive together as we explore this amazing universe that we are all part of, and that created us to want to understand everything.

http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/why_should_humanity_exist/

Welcome Home



Our World View is Real Reality

*We are Realists practicing Realism
Winning Souls for Darwin!*



If It's Real We Believe in It!

Welcome to the Church of Reality. Welcome to the Real World. The Church of Reality is a positive force for change and you can be part of it. You can help make it happen. There is a

lot of material here. We hope you will invest the time to read it. The short version of what the Church of Reality is about is:



**Reality is our God
Science is our Bible
Evidence is our Scripture
Big History is our Creation Story
Ecology is our Theology
Integrity is our Salvation
Positive Evolution is our Mission**

The Church of Reality is a religion based on the practice of Realism, which is a dedication to the pursuit of the understanding of objective Reality. Our motto is, "If it's real, we believe in it." Since no one knows all of Reality, the Church of Reality is a religious commitment to the pursuit of Reality the way it really is. We think about thinking. We wonder about wondering. We try to understand the understanding of understanding. We are **Explorers**, not followers. The phrase "What is Real?" is our **Sacred Question** and the word "Reality" is our **Sacred Message**. We talk about Reality, think about Reality, and aim to make Reality more important in society.

**The Church of Reality is based upon the Authority of
Evidence
rather than the Authority of Scripture**

Reverend Reality Speaks!

The Church of Reality is **Religion 3.0**. Religion 1.0 was about the authority of elders. Religion 2.0 was about the authority of scripture. Religion 3.0 is about the authority of evidence. This is a process we call the **Evidential**

Reformation. We attempt answer the great questions that other religions address, like what is right and wrong, what is the meaning of life, how do people live together in a community, and what are our responsibilities to ourselves and to each other. We address these concerns in the context of **Big History**, our present Reality, and our future evolution. We are particularly focused on the future, which we call the **Sacred Direction**.

What we consider real is based on knowing rather than choosing to believe something. The difference between knowing and believing is knowing is based on the scientific method, which we call the **Sacred Method**. We use evidence, proof, logic, and reasoning to determine what is real. That doesn't make us infallible, sometimes we get it wrong. But when we realize we are wrong we change our minds because we have a value system that puts Reality first.

**The Church of Reality is about making a religious
commitment to the pursuit of the understanding of
Reality as it really is.**

We are **Monorealists**, which means we believe in **The One True Reality**. This Reality is the sum of everything that actually exists.

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Our definition of Reality includes what some people call "other realities" that actually are real with the exclusion of imaginary realities and religious fiction. We care about what is real, not what we think is real or what we want to believe is real. The Church of Reality puts "real" Reality first.


The Church of Reality is not just a religion of science, it is a religion of people understanding Reality through science. We explore Reality from the human perspective. In order to explore Reality, we need a strong, healthy society where people can live freely and peacefully, have more **Telescope Time**, and the human race can evolve toward a better future. The pursuit of Reality is something that is a shared process. It's something we do together as a church, as a community, and as the human race.


We are about Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Reality!

The Church of Reality provides a **religious identity** for people who have made a personal commitment to pursue Reality the way it really is. When we are asked, "What religion are you?," we answer that we are Realists; we practice Reality because we believe in Reality. We also provide a sense of community, a social structure, and a moral compass to define right and wrong. We provide a sense of purpose about who we are, why we exist, and how we live our lives, in the context of science and logic.

We are of One Planet - we are all here together - and we are committed to making the future better than it is today. We are committed to making sure humanity evolves in a positive direction.

 The Church of Reality recognizes the fact that the human race has a vast amount of shared knowledge. We call this shared knowledge the **Tree of Knowledge**, and it is through the growth of this tree that we can explore the universe around us. As the Tree of Knowledge grows, we evolve toward a better tomorrow, one where we will know more about Reality than we know today. Realism is not just a casual acceptance of Reality as real. Realism is a deeply felt choice, a commitment to a disciplined approach to determine what's real and to allow us to **evolve in a positive direction**.

Realists are not without values or morality. Our values are based on **Humanism** rather than a fictional holy book. As Realists, our values include **Positive Evolution**,  **Exploration, Honesty and Integrity, Freedom, Individualism, Peace, Courage, Environmentalism, Compassion, Justice, Inclusiveness, Scrutiny and Doubt, Humility, Reason, Wisdom, and Personal Responsibility**. We believe in **Original Virtue** rather than Original Sin. We are a **Doubt-Based** rather than Faith-Based religion. These **Sacred Principles** form the basis for our **Church Doctrine** and are logically consistent with our missions.

 The Church of Reality is an evolving religion. We are not tied to a fixed doctrine that was written in the past and is slowly becoming obsolete. If we get it wrong, we fix our mistakes. We are an **Open Source Religion** and everyone is welcome to participate in the development and improvement of our religion. We live on a vast wondrous universe that we are just beginning to explore. Why would someone want to waste their entire existence on

a fictional world view when there's all this wonderful Reality to investigate and understand?

The Church of Reality is an **Emergent Religion**. Just as apples grow on apple trees when humanity evolves to a certain level something like the Church of Reality must occur. Humanity has two paths. We can either evolve forward or we will become extinct. We will either **Stay in the Game** or we will be **Left Behind**. Since we were created through the process of evolution and our ancestors all the way back to **Pond Scum** did what it took to survive, we are programmed by evolution to try to continue to exist. We therefore accept, through evolutionary bias, that to exist is better than to not exist. In order to continue to exist we have to evolve forward and we need to be in **Right Relationship with Reality** to do that. And that defines the mission and the purpose of the Church of Reality, that humanity should continue to exist and evolve forward so that we stay in the game. Our descendants should look back at this time and be thankful we did what we do here today. Otherwise, if we do the wrong thing, they might regret what we do today, or there may be no one around to look back. We will be forgotten.

What is Reality?

Reality is that which when you stop believing in it - it doesn't go away. ~ Philip K. Dick

Are you already a Realist? - Do you find yourself thinking about Reality? Do you think that it's important that what you believe in is actually real? Do you think for yourself rather than just believe what you are told to believe? When you counsel friends on important matters, do you advise them to take Reality into consideration? Do you believe the world would be better off if Reality were a more important part of society? if you answered YES to these questions, you may already be a Realist.

“A religion, old or new, that stressed the magnificence of the Universe as revealed by modern science might be able to draw forth reserves of reverence and awe hardly tapped by the conventional faiths. Sooner or later, such a religion will emerge.” ~ Carl Sagan

If you like what you see, then join our **Mailing List** to get the latest announcements. We also appreciate those who link to us and review the Church of Reality in their blogs. We have a good religion started here. All we need is people to **spread the word** about it.

Church of Reality Introduction Podcast **Listen Now!**

The Sacred Missions of the Church of Reality are:

1. **We Believe in Reality - the Way It Really Is**
2. **We Spread the Sacred Message - Reality**
3. **We Choose the Sacred Direction - Forward**
4. **We Honor the Tree of Knowledge**
5. **We Ask the Sacred Moral Question - What Is Good**
6. **We Issue the Sacred Challenge**

7. **We Are Activists - We Make It Happen**
8. **We Unite Religion and Reality**

We believe in Reality - the way it really is!

If it's real - we believe in it. The name defines the religion. The Church of Reality is a Personal Commitment to the Truth. We believe in real reality, not the way we want reality to be, not our personal reality, but real objective reality the way it really is. We Realists are **explorers** and we explore the universe together with our minds. We think about thinking. We wonder about wondering. We attempt to understand the Understanding of Understanding. We ponder the Great Questions. We are a curious people and we are bound together in our quest to know the real world that we really live in.

[Read more...](#)

We Spread the Sacred Message - Reality

Our mission is to spread the importance of reality everywhere, to think about reality, to talk about reality, to allow reality to transform our being. Every time we mention the word Reality we spread the **Sacred Message**. We are here to ask the Sacred Question - "What is Real?" We want people to consider reality when making important decisions. By spreading the Sacred Message we cause people to be Real in the **Sacred Moment** (which is Now). Our mission is to say "Reality" as many times as we can and to get other people to think about reality as often as we can. We want people to be more realistic in their daily lives and to spend more time every day wondering about what is really real.

[Read more...](#)

We Honor the Tree of Knowledge

The **Tree of Knowledge** represents the sum total of all human understanding. It is the shared knowledge of the human race. It is the repository of everything we know. The fact that you can read this is because you can read and communicate with a common language that is among the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge. The human race survives and thrives through our shared knowledge. Our understanding of reality and our evolutionary process is through growing the Tree of Knowledge.

[Read more...](#)

We Choose the Sacred Direction - Forward

The **Sacred Direction** is forward - onward and upward. Our world view is **Futurism** not **Dogmatism**. Our Principle of **Positive Evolution** commits us to envision a future that is better than today. We are one planet and we are all in this together on our little ball in the universe. In order to answer the **Sacred Question** and explore our reality, society must evolve forward.

In order for us to explore reality the way it really is, we have to continue to evolve forward. We need to become a better society. We need to develop new technology. We need to find

better ways to feed ourselves, to cure diseases, to keep our environment clean, to advance the sciences, to educate our children, to understand our minds, to live in peace with one another, and to have a fair and just society. These things cause us to progress and to move forward as a human race so that we can understand our world and the universe of which we are a part.

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We Ask the Sacred Moral Question - What is Good?

The Sacred Moral Question is, "Is this a Good Thing?" What does "good" mean? That too is involved in the Sacred Moral Question. Right and Wrong and morality and ethics are all relative to your basic assumptions and goals. We base our morality on reality and it is our duty to make sure that reality is taken into consideration when questions of right and wrong are decided. The commitment to Reality is a commitment to truth, honesty, wisdom, and responsibility. The Church of Reality is committed to getting the moral questions right.

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We Issue the Sacred Challenge

There are a lot of religions and many of them have an **Extinctionist** perspective on the future of the world. They look forward to the world ending in their lifetime. Our religion is based on **Positive Evolution** and the progress of humanity is sacred to us. We therefore challenge other religions on the basis of reality to help ensure that they don't destroy civilization pursuing their fiction based religious fantasies. One of our missions is to influence other religions to embrace reality and help them evolve into a better religion that doesn't threaten the future of the human race.

[Read more...](#)

We are Activists - We make it Happen

We are an activist religion. We don't just find problems - we solve problems. We are committed to coming up with solutions and take responsibility for bringing new concepts into reality. We make sure that the job is done right. We are a community, and we do the work needed to make the community work. We go out and learn, we try to understand, and we spend a lot of time thinking. We give of ourselves for the common good of all people. In the Spirit of the Tree - our shared knowledge - we support sharing. It is our duty to look around and figure out how to make it all work.

[Read more...](#)

We Unite Religion and Reality

By adopting the name "Church of Reality" we are dedicating ourselves to solving the puzzle of how to create a **religion that is based on reality**. They say it can't be done, but we say it can and must be done. We accept the task of creating a religion that provides all the community services that other religions provide, while staying true to the principles of

science and logic. We accept the axiom that this is possible and we dedicate ourselves to the seemingly impossible task of making it work.

Bringing Religion into the 21st Century

The Church of Reality is a religion based on the practice of Realism. It is a religion that is based on believing in everything that is real. Our motto is, "If it's real, we believe in it." Since no one knows all of reality, the Church of Reality is about the pursuit of reality the way it really is. We commit to being intellectually honest with ourselves, and with others, so that we can cut through the mythology and understand the understanding of understanding.



Our world view is that religion is evolving in the **Sacred Direction** and that the Church of Reality is a blueprint for religious evolution. We want to inject reality into the world view of other religions so that we are all improved through Realism.

[Read more...](#)

Reality as a Religious Identity

The Church of Reality is different in that we are not dedicated to a fictional world view. Our world view is to see reality the way it really is. Other religions' world views are based on mythology. All religions have some basis in reality. Most would agree that murder is bad. On those universal concepts we in the Church of Reality agree. But in those other religions, if their world view contradicts reality, they are expected to reject reality in favor of their world view. Rarely are other religions dedicated to the pursuit of reality the way it really is. In this church, if you come to realize that what you currently believe is wrong, you are expected to change your mind. That's what's different about the Church of Reality. The beliefs are not static. Reality is a learning process. We are an evolving religion. Of all the religious choices out there, we believe that Reality should be one of those choices.



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Fundamental Concepts

Every religion has it's own world view and culture. The Church of Reality is no different. Our world view and culture are rooted in the **Sacred Principles** which define our ethical standards. Although our mission is to explore reality, we need to deal with a lot of other related issues to do that. Here is an overview of what being a Realist is all about.



[Read more...](#)

What the Church of Reality is Not

To avoid confusion and misconceptions, here is a list of things that the Church of Reality is not. Sometimes a religion can better clarify what it is by stating what it isn't. We are like other religions in many ways and in many ways we are not like other religions. Here is a list of what we are not.



[Read more...](#)

<http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/introduction/>

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