

Our Unique Contribution to Religion

Disclaimer:

The ideas presented here on this website are mostly the work of Marc Perkel, founder of the Church of Reality. Unlike other religions the Church of Reality is not infallible. The concept presented here are an attempt to explore the meaning of meaning. Everything that you will read here is incomplete, and can be improved. Different people have different aesthetic preferences and some people will find ideas and concepts here objectionable, such as using the word Church. And a lot of the material here will be proven to be just plain wrong.

Having said that, this is a serious attempt to explore an area where scientists are often uncomfortable. There are those who think that there is no meaning or purpose to Reality, that nothing matters. These people think that any attempt to define value in scientific terms is fundamentally flawed that meaning has no meaning.

But if nothing has any meaning then why is getting the right answer better than getting the wrong answer? Why is $2+2=4$ a better answer than $2+2=3$? If the right answer is a better answer than the wrong answer then that can become the basis for a value system that comes from Reality itself. Right is better than wrong. The purpose of the Church of Reality is to try to discern this value system and see if we can understand who we are, what we are, and what we are supposed to do with our lives.

So - there are plenty of things to find wrong here, but there are plenty of things to find right. Think of it more as a work in progress and if there is something you don't agree with, think of how you would make it better. To that end I invite you in. Let us explore Reality together.

Introduction:

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 it's 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 {In: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 {In: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 {In: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.

- Upgraded Religion - The Church of Reality is more like a software upgrade for both Atheism and all other religions. It's more accurate to see us as an update rather than a conversion.

Atheism is focused on the Biblical deity and Atheism is ultimately about nothing. Realism, in contrast, is about everything. Atheism doesn't give any guidance as to the meaning of meaning or what we are supposed to do when we wake up in the morning.

All religions are about how to live in the world. Where does right and wrong come from? How did we come to be? What is our purpose? But the answers are usually based on old teachings that become more and more obsolete with each passing year.

The Church of Reality addresses these question deriving its answers through logic and science. Meaning actually does have meaning and there is right and wrong and there's formulas for determining what right and wrong are. (or at least a probability spectrum)

- 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 {In:Sacred Direction} is forward, making the Church of Reality a {In:Futuristic} religion. Most religions are {In: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 {In:Futurism}, not {In: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 {In: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 {In: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.

Lawrence Krauss

The difference between Science and Faith

- 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 can not be tested there is no way to distinguish what is true from what is not true.

- 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 {In:scrutiny}. Faith that is required without proof or where doubt is prohibited is considered to be {In:bullshit}. Most of what we know is based on trusting relationships with people and organizations who have developed a reputation for scientific discipline.

- Vectors 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 {In: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 {In:polyrealistic} religions that believe in 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.

- Artificial Intelligence Compatible - If humanity ever produces a super intelligent computer that is far smarter than we are, and that computer can rewrite its own code and goes through an existential crisis asking "What is the meaning of artificial life?", the goal of the Church of Reality is to have an answer that is so scientifically sound that the AI would conclude that we are on the right track. The Church of Reality is also a {In:Religion for Robots}.

- Free will and Agency - Our view is that we do have free will and agency and that we not only can make choices but that we actively own our story and are responsible for our choices.

- Intrinsic Value of Humanity - The Church of Reality accepts as one of our axioms that all people have intrinsic value and that we {In: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 {In: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 {In: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 {In: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 {In: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 {In: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 {In:Tree of Knowledge '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 {In: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 an aging holy book that becomes more outdated with each passing year. Our {In: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 {In: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 {In:Self Ownership '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 {In: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 is 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 {In: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 {In: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 {In:Life Story}, and it becomes part of the {In:Story of Humanity}. Our view is that once you do something it can not 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 {In: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 {In: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 {In: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 {In: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 {In: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 {In:Accept the Truth} and make a commitment to put {In: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 {In:Getting Started as a Realist} next.