

Freedom and Morality

Some religions believe that personal freedom breeds immorality. They feel that if people can do whatever they want to, that they will choose a life of sin and debauchery. They believe that without strong rules and punishment that society will break down into anarchy. They believe that everyone will follow their selfish desires without a care as to how it affects the people around them. They believe that it is religion that holds society together and without God society will cease to exist. They believe that people need the reward of Heaven and the fear of Hell to keep them in line. But is this true? Does society come from religion? Does law come from holy books? Will there be anarchy without a belief in God?

We in the Church of Reality don't think so. The reality is that Atheists are as law abiding productive members of society as believers are. Atheists are every bit as honest and moral as religious people. Atheists are perhaps even more moral in real terms than people of faith. Although I'm sure there are people of faith who would disagree with that, they would have to admit that in general that the Atheists who are their friends and neighbors are normal law abiding people. So why is that? Why is it that Atheists aren't all criminals? Why are Atheists good citizens? Why are Atheists generous? Why is there not statistical advantage in being a believer when it comes to social behavior?

The reason that Atheists are law abiding productive members of society is because social structure is part of human evolution.

The reason is because good social behavior is a result of evolution. People are born to be good productive members of society. In the survival of the fittest game, humans rose to the top by their ability to create a mental network of information called the Tree of Knowledge and to organize into societies. We are programmed to speak a language and to listen to language. And language has but a single purpose, to communicate with other people. In order to work together, we have to get along with each other. In order to be safe and respected, we have to not be threatening and show respect to others. We are all here together and on an instinctive level we all understand that. So the reason that Atheists and secular societies don't degenerate into anarchy is because we have an evolved civilization. It is good for people in the real world, without the promises and threats from God, to be good moral people.

{In:Humanism} is the science of building a society around the natural laws of a good society. It is the exploration of secular social structure. It is society based on reality. We in the Church of Reality have adopted Secular Humanism as our model for social standards. We put a high importance on personal freedom as well because we are not a monolithic society and it is often our differences and diversity of beliefs that leads to the progress of social evolution. Although a free society might have some greater conflicts in some ways than a monolithic social structure, and it might have a complex social order, it has the advantages of diversity that leads to social evolution and innovation.

Social evolution is a major part of the evolution of the human race. In fact it is the part that is predominate. Physically we are evolving slowly, but socially we are evolving very quickly. We are evolving through the Tree of Knowledge and social technology is a big part of that. Society is made up of lots of individuals. A monolithic society is a society of individuals who are all very similar, often forced to be similar. Because of that, you don't get the diversity of thought that you get in a free culture. If people are punished for being innovative, then they stop being innovative. They just live year to year, century to century, and no significant progress is made. Some people think that is just fine. I suppose that if we already achieved a perfect society and wanted to preserve it, then I might agree, but that hasn't happened.

A free society is necessary for social progress. Social progress is necessary for positive evolution. Positive evolution is necessary for the exploration of reality.

The Church of Reality embraces {In:Positive Evolution}. We choose to move forward into a better future. In order to do that we need people to think "outside the box". And in order to get people to think outside the box, we have to allow for individual freedom. People have to be allowed to explore, to try new things, and to make mistakes. This cultural diversity does create some social conflicts, but it is the process of social conflicts and diversity of opinions that lead to social innovation and progress. Our moral truths are purified through {In:scrutiny} which allows us to correct mistakes. And new ideas that turn out to be good ideas help enrich the culture for everyone. The gains are worth the price.

Cultural diversity and individual freedom are to social evolution what genetic diversity is to biological evolution. In a restrictive culture, the society suffers from cultural inbreeding and becomes stagnant. They blindly keep making the same mistakes year after year and generation after generation. The Church of Reality is based on growth and our {In:Principle of Freedom} is based not only on a sense of fairness, but on our resolve to progress to a better tomorrow. Freedom is necessary to positive Evolution which is necessary for the exploration of reality the way it really is.

We in the Church of Reality challenge faith based religions to think through the issue of personal freedom and ask themselves if a diversity of opinion would help your culture. As a realist I can say for a fact that a huge amount of the doctrine of the Church of Reality is inspired by believers on issues that we both agree with and issues that we disagree with. The believer's perspective has greatly enriched our culture, and we hope to return the favor. We often learn more from people who we do not already agree with than people those we do agree with. Maybe we won't capture and enslave the Christians after all. Hmmmmm