

How it all Began

The Church of Reality began with an idea I had in the evening of November 7th 1998. I was sitting at home Smoking a Joint, thinking about all the problems that religions cause in the world, and the idea just hit me - why not have a religion based on believing in everything that's real? What an idea! Can Reality be a Religion? Do you have to believe in something fictional to be a religion? The more I thought about it - the better I liked the idea.

The next day I went into the office and it still seemed like a good idea. I was only half serious about it at first, but it was at least a good way to tweak all those people who think they have God by the short hairs and need to impress me with their moral superiority. Personally - I hate religion. But it seems to be everywhere and constantly trying to intrude into my life. So - it's always been something you have to deal with - people who take their fiction seriously. So I registered the domain name - churchofreality.org - and started building a web page.

In the process of building the page I had to make some early decisions. Was I going to write some "holy book" to go by? How long would that last before it became obsolete - even if I did do a good job on it? It became apparent that telling people what reality is - as if I knew - was definitely a mistake. But - exploring reality and changing as the exploration continued - that made sense. So what we believe in is what's real - and what's real is really the best effort guess at the time. Obviously this opens us up to mistakes - but mistakes happen. It's about correcting your mistakes when you realize you are wrong. So the Church of Reality became more of a commitment to the pursuit of reality than the understanding of reality itself. It's about the hunt for reality.

As I was thinking about the pursuit of reality - I started wondering about how that is really done. What is understanding? How does new knowledge relate to existing knowledge? How much knowledge can be gained? Will we ever know everything? It became clear to me that the pursuit of knowledge - the exploration of reality - is something that we as a society all do together. It became clear how interconnected we are as a society - as the human race - what separates us from the animals - we have this vast amount of common knowledge that we all use on a daily basis. I realized that language itself - words - were all invented by other people and were handed down to us. As I type this I am aware that I am using words and concepts that came from other people - and that you are reading this using those same words and concepts. Stealing the term for other religions - I called this the