

The Strength of Intellectual Diversity

Intellectual diversity is to the evolution of ideas as genetic diversity is to physical evolution. Even if ideas are wrong, they get people thinking and sometimes lead to a deeper understanding of what we know. Sometimes the new idea is an insight that leads to something else, new. Or sometimes the new idea exposes that we had collectively made a mistake and that we can then correct the collective error. When you look at all the new wonderful inventions we have and look into the people who come up with those inventions, you quickly see that most of these people are weird people. And that isn't a coincidence because free thinkers think "outside the box" which is where new ideas come from.

An observation I also make is that some cultures produce more original and inventive thinking than other cultures. The San Francisco Bay area is a place where more new ideas come from than any other place on the planet. What is it about this area that produces so many inventions and original ideas? What is it that can be learned from the San Francisco Bay area culture?

The Bay Area is home to some of the most individualist people on the planet. Part of the reason for that is that weird people are welcome there. People are highly tolerant of differences between people and allow people to be themselves and freely express their individual weirdness. In many of the large cities in America you see rows of homes and all the homes look alike. In the Bay Area you see rows of homes and they all look different, even though the same builder built all the homes on the same street.

The average person rarely invents anything. All the cool stuff is invented by weird people.

This is an area that embraces the differences between people. People appreciate the fact that they are surrounded by people who do not agree with them. Even if some people don't like what other people are into, they understand that because the weird people have the freedom to be weird, they will be weird. We also know that when we look up the person who invented something really cool, we find that that person has blue hair and a bolt through her nose. Certainly the founder of the Church of Reality, Marc Perkel is a person who loves his individuality and if not for that, this religion wouldn't exist. So it makes sense that the freedom and individuality that went into the origins of this church would be the kind of freedom and individuality we would want to preserve.

Intellectual diversity is central to the Church of Reality because it generates new ideas and new ideas contribute to the Tree of Knowledge leading to {In:Positive Evolution} and fulfilling the goal of expanding our understanding of reality the way it really is. That is why we embrace the {In:Principle of Freedom} and the {In:Principle of Personal Privacy} as {In:Sacred Principles} because they are the cornerstone of cultural diversity and lead to a tolerant society where it is OK to be different. A society where it is OK to disagree. A society where people are encouraged to be different, to be their own person, and to think independently. One could even say that if you aren't fighting, you aren't evolving. (There's a statement ripe to be taken out of context.) But when everyone agrees and they all think alike it creates stagnation. Sometimes it takes some turmoil to lead to progress. Our goal as a society is to take diversity and turmoil and disagreement and use it to our advantage as a means of making progress.