

## Individualists working Collectively

Just because people might disagree doesn't mean they can't work together for a good common outcome. Again, taking San Francisco Bay area culture as an example, you have a culturally diverse population, but you also have the highest density of not for profit organizations than in any other area in the world. Why is it that there are so many organizations in this area? Is it a coincidence or is there a relationship? Are these groups just small clusters of like-minded people, or are there other factors at play here? What is there for us to learn?

Because the population is intellectually diverse, people learn to work with and appreciate people who are not like minded. When you learn how to work with people whom you don't agree with, there are a lot more people who are compatible with you than if you are intolerant. In contrast, a monoculture expects everyone to be the same and even small differences of opinion lead to people deciding that they can't work with other people who believe almost the same thing. That's one reason there are thousands of flavors of Christians, even though they all have the same book as their source. In fact that's one of the pitfalls of faith-based religion. Everyone has to agree on the fiction.

Diversity increases cooperation because it creates a culture of respect and acceptance for people who are different, allowing a greater number of people to function collectively..

So because you have intellectual diversity and you have acceptance of intellectual diversity, people can come together collectively to accomplish a common goal. Jews and Palestinians march together to end the violence. Christians and Satanists work together to feed the homeless. And because there is diversity, there is a broader base of resources and ideas to call upon to bring together to get the job done. There's probably going to be more strong opinions, shouting, name calling, and other behavior before a consensus is reached as compared to the Moonies, but once a decision is made, it's more likely going to be a better decision because it has been put to the test of scrutiny and doubt and has survived on the strength of it's own merits.

We in the Church of Reality aspire to be intellectually diverse. We don't agree among ourselves on a lot of things. In fact a high percentage of Realists think it's a mistake to degrade reality itself by calling it a religion. And - quite frankly - they have a point. But it is part of our religious identity and our religious culture to not agree with each other. We debate things out in order to attempt to come to agreement on some things, but there's always plenty of new stuff that we realists will always be arguing about. But that isn't a liability, it's an asset. It's what gives us our strength. We like disagreement. Sometimes we get our way and sometimes we don't. Like everyone, we make mistakes. But unlike everyone, we have a process of fixing our mistakes and a commitment to do so.

Disagreement can be a good thing. Being disagreeable - not so much.

We Realists take pride in being innovative. When someone tells us that something can't be done, we find a way to make it work. The word "impossible" means the same as "challenge" to us. When they say, "There are no easy solutions.", we respond, "Then you're just not trying hard enough!" We are united as one but we celebrate our differences and draw strength from our diversity. We don't want to be all alike. We do not strive to become a monoculture. We like being weird people. And we like working with other people who are not like us.

The Philosophy of the Open Hand includes learning how to work with people who you have differences with.

The Philosophy of the Open Hand includes being accepting of people who don't agree with you, even people who sometimes drive you nuts to deal with. Some of the best ideas and inspirations for the Church of Reality came from discussions with Christians. Some times they get it right. Sometimes they just inspire me to think things through. The Objectivists inspired this topic in claiming that Altruism and individualism are mutually exclusive. They are dead wrong, but it got me thinking about how collectivism might be construed as anti-individualism. So we can't go out and gas all the Christians because without believers who will set an example of what not to do?

We are one planet, we are all here together, and we not only have to figure out how to get along, but to make our differences an advantage rather than a liability. Our {In:Principle of Peace} isn't based on the idea that we have a forced

peace, that we all really hate each other, but agree not to do anything about it. Nor do we envision a peace that is achieved by a world wide uniculture. We see peace in terms of using our differences to our mutual advantage which preserves our individual freedom and privacy yet creates a culture where people of diverse backgrounds can come together collectively and accomplish great things and we all get what we want. Well - except for the {In:Extinctionists}. Sorry guys, we just can't let that happen.