

# RELIGION

A man decides to invent his own religion on a bet that no matter how absurd, how outrageous or onerous the belief system, so long as the unattainable divine is promised, there will be a flock of followers. So he sets up a web site for the 'New Church of the Evolving Rose Urinal' ([www.roseurinal.org](http://www.roseurinal.org)). The home page has a beautifully rendered graphic of a red rose growing from inside a urinal, floating in mid air and surrounded by winged fruits, angels and vegetables of one sort or another. Barely a week goes by before a deluge of emails arrive from gullible souls who claim to have a personal knowledge of the very urinal featured at his web site.

"This is great," the man thinks until one day when he arrives home from his day job to find his house overrun by sheep. They seem harmless enough, just happy to mill around the house, grabbing snacks from the fridge, chewing up the lawn or nibbling on furniture. Some are clever enough to play backgammon so he decides to make the best of it. In the meantime, followers from his web site start sending him urinals and before long his house is full of them: urinals of every size, shape and description, each painted with a red rose. It seems that his whole life is become sheep and urinals. Within a few months, the local press gets a whiff of what's going on and soon a pack of reporters and TV cameras are lined up outside the man's house scaring the sheep and harassing the neighbors. This goes on for days until finally the sheep, apparently driven insane by the constant haranguing, go on a suicidal rampage, killing most of the press corps before doing away with themselves by running into traffic. The few humans that escape bring back a contingent of state police who surround the man's house, now littered with corpses of sheep and reporters.

The man barricades himself in his house and hides behind an oversized urinal, turned upside down like a pathetic ceramic shrine. Outside a belligerent voice insists that he give himself up as his house is surrounded. "Man, I can't believe this is happening," he moans quietly as he prepares to die, for surely surrender is no option. Just as he is about to make a valiant charge through the front door, he hears a girl's small voice behind him. He turns around to find the most strikingly beautiful woman he has ever seen in his life. "Follow me," she says and takes him by the hand. She leads him to the bathroom and flips open the toilet seat cover revealing a tunnel instead of the more conventional pool of chemical-blue water. "Hurry," the girl says and leads him through the toilet into a maze of dark tunnels. After hours of subterranean travel they finally emerge onto the rocky coastline of some ocean.

"Where are we," the man says incredulously.

"Look to the horizon and see," the girl says pointing into the distance.

The man walks to the shore line and squints through a haze into the distance. Silently behind him, a crowd of sheep gathers.