

Mission Statement

The Fellowship of Reason® is an open, benevolent, and vital rational moral community in which we celebrate our lives, our freedoms, and our philosophy of reason.

Thank you

To Linda S.: Linda has undertaken to be responsible for hospitality during Celebration. Last Sunday she arrived early to set up the room and provided food and drink for us.

To Chris: Chris created a logo for the FOR brochure which appears on the most recent draft. Also, Chris taught me how to encode recorded audio for broadcast on the Internet. Now oratory can be heard from FOR's web site worldwide.

To Dan: Dan has hired a graphic artist and an editor to help us with our FOR logo and with the brochure. Dan also contributed his own work which appears on the most recent draft.

To Scott: Scott shared frank criticism with me about FOR. He says, speaking metaphorically, that we need to create "an experience of God" during Celebration.

To All: Thanks to everyone who participates (including by simply attending our functions) in our entrepreneurial effort to create the world's first reason-based moral community.

"An Experience of God"

What could Scott possibility have meant by his energetic suggestion that we need to create an "experience of God" during Celebration?

A clue to this puzzle was provided to me the Sunday following my Thursday luncheon with Scott. I traveled to Washington, D.C. to visit my brother who is religious. We attended Trinity Presbyterian Church in Arlington, Virginia with his family.

Whenever I go to a meeting of a faith-based moral community, I always ask this question: "What are these people doing and why are they having fun?" I attend with this attitude of respectful observation in order that I might learn something that can be used in our reason-based moral community. During the religious service everyone was called upon to turn to those people around him or her to say, "Peace be with you." I concluded, *duh*, that mental peace was a major goal of this religious service.

Then I remembered Jesus' famous "lilies" speech in the Gospel of Luke (12:22): "[D]o not worry about your life. . . Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin." An important message of Christianity is, "Don't worry, God will take care of you."

Then it hit me! The absence of anxiety is mental peace. Faith in God is an antidote to anxiety. Therefore, Christians have faith in order to achieve mental peace.

Now, since we are a fellowship of *reason* not a fellowship of *faith*, we will have to find a way other than faith to relieve anxiety, but this goal of peace is, I think, a great clue to what Scott meant by "an experience of God."

The other clue comes from Carl Jung (1875-1961) who wrote a book called *Psychology of Religion: East and West*. Jung says that religion is "a careful and scrupulous observation of . . . the *numinosum*, that is a dynamic agency or effect not caused by an arbitrary act of will."

Factually, many people have experienced spiritual bliss, an experience of the numinous. The experience is the goal of meditation. In my forthcoming book I have called the experience a "now moment."

A "now moment" is an experience beyond the mental peace sought by the Presbyterians during their service. Jung suggests that the religious experience is the meeting of the ego (the "I") and the self (all of your mental contents) in the psyche (the mental aspect of human beings). You experience the numinous where your consciousness, your personal

unconscious, and the collective unconscious* meet. This meeting can occur only when the ego is at peace. So peace is a necessary component of the ultimate religious experience.

At this meeting you (your "I") experience unity with your whole self (the rest of your psyche, including the collective unconscious).

Of course, the question for us, following Scott's rebuke, is how do we induce or cause this experience during Celebration?

At least three conditions are required:

- (1) You must be "at peace." You must have dealt with guilt and regret from the past and fear of the future by reason.
- (2) You must know yourself. You must have evaluated yourself, your personal and universal myths, and your place in the culture. You must have changed yourself, if appropriate, according to your self-evaluation.
- (3) Celebration must recall your state of inner peace and harmony during the event.

Then, and only then, is an "experience of God," an experience of your holy self, your *whole* self, possible.

Celebration Schedule 2001

- Sunday, March 4, 2001
- Sunday, April 1, 2001
- Sunday, May 6, 2001
- Sunday, June 3, 2001
- Sunday, July 1, 2001
- Sunday, August 5, 2001
- Sunday, September 2, 2001
- Sunday, October 7, 2001
- Sunday, November 4, 2001

* "Collective unconscious" is not a mystical term. It refers to those psychic elements that we have in common with other human beings by virtue of being human. Physically, a stomach is an organ that every human being has by virtue of being human. The elements of the collective unconscious are the mental organs of the mind. The expectation of mother is part of the collective unconscious. Your memory of your own mother is not an element of the collective unconscious, but of your personal conscious. A repressed memory of an abusive father is an element of your *personal* unconscious.

- Sunday, December 2, 2001

So far this is the lineup for March 2001 Celebration:

Welcome
Celebration of Freedom—
Celebration of Visitors
Celebration of Each Other
Celebratory Announcements
Celebration of Heroes
Celebration of Literature—**Alice**
Celebration of Poetry—**Gloria (her own)**
Celebration of Talent—**Linda S.**
Oratory—**Martin**
Celebration of Personal Mission—**Linda C.**
Closing Quotation

Party Night and FOR's Discussion Group

Third Saturday Night: Movie night is changed this month to games night. Come to Martin and Linda's house on Saturday, February 17, 2001, at 7 p.m. for a pot luck dinner and games. We will have an bridge expert present to teach everyone bridge.

Fourth Saturday Morning: Our discussion group happens at Après Diem, 931 Monroe Dr. NE., Atlanta, the Midtown Promenade, on Saturday, February 24, 2001, at 11 a.m. The theme is heroes. Please bring the name of your personal living or deceased (i.e. non-fictional) hero. Please be prepared to tell us something about him or her.

Contact information:

To receive e-mail from the Fellowship of Reason®, please subscribe to our Yahoo! Group by sending an e-mail to reason-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To receive this newsletter in the mail send your U.S. Mail address to mlcowen@mindspring.com

To talk to a human being call Vera at 404- or Martin at 770-471-9800 or 770-365-2181 (mobile).

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Our web address is <http://www.kindreason.com>