

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.

The New World Myth Summarized

1. We all live by personal and universal myths, certain learned behavior patterns, or explicit or implicit philosophies. Choose your metaphor.
2. We can be aware of, evaluate, and change, if necessary and appropriate, those myths, patterns or philosophies.
3. We all live in a culture. We cannot get out of our culture. Culture is as determinative of our nature as genetics. Free will exists only to the extent that we are aware of the influences of culture and genetics upon us. A mighty influence of culture is the myths we live by.
4. We can be aware of, evaluate, and change our culture.
5. Culture resists change by enforcing its taboos.
6. Advocacy of the supreme value of the individual (rather than God, class, race, or other *other*), freedom (limited constitutional government), and life on earth (rather than Heaven) violates certain cultural taboos.
7. In order to insulate ourselves from the taboo enforcing mechanisms of society, we who are outside of mainstream culture by advocating the individual, freedom, and life on earth, must create subcultures, that is, reason-based moral communities. These moral communities will provide the heroes of the New World Myth with understanding, appreciation, validation, and approval.
8. The goal of science and technology (parts of culture) is a man-made earthly paradise. Paradise is a place without human suffering. Heaven is an idealized paradise.

9. The goal of morality and politics (parts of culture) is morally perfect human beings. The man-god founders of the various religions are idealized morally perfect human beings. God is an idealized morally perfect being.
10. Religions were created in response to human suffering. As science, technology, morality, and politics have greatly reduced human suffering, the role of religion has diminished. A new problem has arisen.
11. A result of the reduction of human suffering is the luxury of leisure. The modern problem, arising from the luxury of leisure, is the problem of meaning.
12. The most important role of reasoned-based moral communities is to provide a solution to the modern problem of meaning. The solution involves two ancient admonitions: "Know thyself" and "Become who you are." In order to have a meaningful life, everyone should actualize his or her authentic self. Self-actualization is the essence of heroism.

The Art of Friendship Rediscovered

Division of Labor—Most of us are ignorant of the significant body of moral knowledge present in our culture. I do not exclude myself. I am ignorant of it. During the last two years, though, I took some philosophy classes. I was introduced to some of the great moral philosophers of history. I have made some progress—I *now* know that I *am* ignorant!

This state of lamentable ignorance is one of the most important reasons to participate in a moral community. We all need morality in order to live. Ethics is the science that answers the question, "How should human beings live?" A moral community gives us regular access to moral knowledge.

A simple, commercial example will illustrate my point. We all need shoes, but we don't, individually, have time to figure out how to make shoes. Therefore, we rely upon the shoe industry to create

them for us. We rely upon the division of labor, economies of scale, and specialization.

A moral community is an institution that supplies a spiritual commodity—moral knowledge. Users of the institution rely upon the division of labor, economies of scale, and specialization exploited by the institution.

One area of moral knowledge is the art of friendship.

Friends—“Friends are necessary to happiness” is a moral principle. Friendship is an art and moral philosophers have thought and written about the subject.

There exist ancient moral essays with titles like *Talkativeness*, *Distinguishing a Friend from a Flatterer*, *On Anger*, *Curiosity*, and *Bashfulness*. Modern books give advice on how to win friends and influence people. For the next several months during Celebration in the Fellowship of Reason®, we will be learning some of this ancient and modern knowledge concerning the art of friendship.

Those of you who want to improve the quality of your existing relationships, who want more and better friendships, and who want to make personal moral progress for its own sake are invited to come to Celebration and to **rediscover the art of friendship**.

Special Program in June 2001

Bluegrass Storyteller & Appalachian Humorist Chuck Larkin will visit us during Celebration on Sunday, June 3, 2001. Mark your calendars now. Be sure to be there.

Celebration Schedule 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
 - Sunday, December 2, 2001
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So far this is the lineup for April 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—“The Art of Friendship, Part I: Listening” by **Martin**
Celebration of Personal Mission—
Closing Quotation

Remember to bring your Personal Mission Notebook to Celebration.

FOR's Discussion Group

Fourth Saturday Morning: Our discussion group happens at Après Diem, 931 Monroe Dr. NE, Atlanta, the Midtown Promenade, on Saturday, March 24, 2001, at 11 a.m. Our subject is the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

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@yahogroups.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>