

Fellowship of Reason, Inc.

September 2002 Newsletter "Advocating Heroic Engagement With Life"

Volume 4, Number 9

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. We study ethics.

Evolution

War, crime, betrayal, accidents, sickness, and transitions through the stages of life, including death, these are among the motives for philosophy and religion.

In general and for the most part, religion yields up to God the mystery of these phenomena. Religion does not call upon the believer to understand or transcend these events, but instead to trust that the Deity has a plan and that ultimately, perhaps after death, all will be well. Philosophy, specifically our philosophy of reason, on the other hand, calls upon the individual to rise above these events and attempt to understand them. Through understanding, the individual is better equipped to survive these events both physically and psychologically.

War

Americans are, generally, immune from the consequences of war. Todd Beamer is a recent victim-hero of the terrorists' war on the West. His death is unusual because of the admixture of tragedy and glory in his circumstances. But there are pure victims of war, like the people simply wiped out of existence by the fuel-laden jets that slammed into the World Trade Center. Most of the families and friends of the pure victims will find no glory in the circumstances of the death of their spouse, parent, child, or friend to counter the pain of their loss.

Religion's response to war is well known: "God has a plan. God will ease the pain of those who suffer. God will reward the righteous. God will punish the wicked."

Philosophy's response to war is more realistic: "War is hell. You may not survive physically or psychologically. All you can do is take the pain and live through it, knowing that in the end, if you

survive, you may have to live without a limb (or whatever) and you may have psychological wounds that will never heal. You may forever walk with a limp or 'emote with a limp.' But if you know you're damaged, you can adapt to that damage with a crutch—actual or metaphorical." Hopefully, the survivors of 9-11 will learn this lesson.

Philosophy is not nearly so soothing as religion.

War cannot easily be avoided. Like the terrorist attacks of 9-11, war just happens to individuals. It is a world event largely beyond the control of the individual.

Crime, Betrayal, Accidents, and Sickness

Unlike war, adults are not totally helpless in the face of crime, betrayal, accidents, and sickness. Certainly these events can and do happen with tragic frequency to innocent victims. But in some circumstances, these events can be mitigated or prevented by a certain type of action.

Religion's response to these events is like religion's response to war: "God has a plan, etc."

Philosophy's response to these events when they happen is similar to philosophy's response to war. "Deal with it, if possible, or die." But philosophy has some advice for adults on how to avoid, in some cases, crime, betrayal, accidents, and sickness: *act morally*.

Morality answers the question "How am I to live?"

Part of living is achieving one's destiny (as in knowing oneself and becoming who you are), but another very important part is avoiding crime, betrayal, accidents, and sickness, if possible.

Acting virtuously is precisely the means by which one *might* avoid becoming the victim of crime, betrayal, accidents, and sickness. For example, if one prudently chooses to live in a civilized neighborhood, the chances of being burglarized are reduced. If one acts to acquire and nurture friends of character, the chances of being betrayed are greatly diminished. If one is moderate and prudent in fulfilling one's appetites (food, drink, and sex), one

has a greater chance of avoiding death by obesity, alcoholism, or venereal disease.

Parents sometimes betray their children. When the children become adults, they can become aware of their victimhood and address it. Like the victims of war, they can become aware that they may have a psychological injury that can never be healed and they might learn that they may never emote normally. They can, nevertheless, take their psychological wounds into consideration in all their future actions.

Stages of Life, Including Death

Some of the stages of life, including death, are recognized by religions. Indeed, recognition rituals are a major feature of religious practice. The "knowledge" of some of the stages of life has become embedded in religious practice. The rituals, like baptism, confirmation, marriage, and funerals, assist individuals in the transitions through the stages of life.

Philosophy calls upon adult individuals to be aware of all of the stages of the life of man and to know how to behave as they move through the stages themselves and to know how to assist family members, especially children, move safely through the transitions. The stages include the birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, maturity, old age, and death.

Evolution

Mankind is evolving, not genetically, but culturally. People are becoming more educated. Science is illuminating every corner of existence. Trusting that everything will turn out all right in the end (the mantra of religion) no longer satisfies the educated individual. The educated individual would know how to affect good outcomes for himself and his offspring.

Only philosophy can effectively guide modern man.

Let us evolve!

What you should know:

- Individuals, generally, cannot avoid war, only endure it. Survivors must be aware of their physical and psychological injuries and adapt their lives to these *facts*.
- Moral action provides some tools that may assist one to avoid or mitigate crime, betrayal, accidents, and sickness.
- Awareness of one's injuries as a result of crime, betrayal, accidents, and sickness can assist one to adapt to those *facts*.
- Awareness of the stages of life can help one move through them with confidence and ultimate success.
- Mankind is evolving culturally. Philosophy and a heightened awareness of one's personal circumstances is replacing blind faith in a providential Deity.

October 6, 2002 Celebration:

Welcome—Master of Ceremonies: Steve Stokes
Celebration of Freedom—Vera
Celebration of Visitors—Steve
Celebration of Each Other—Steve
Celebratory Announcements—Steve
Celebration of Art—Sally
Celebration of Heroes—Ellen
Celebration of Literature—Randy
Celebration of Personal Mission—
Celebration of Performance Art (skit)—
Celebration of Talent—David van Mersbergen
Oratory—**Steve Stokes**
Non-celebratory announcements—Steve
Closing Quotation—Steve

Invisible College

Dr. Glenn Magee is lecturing on Modernity every Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. at Vera's Intellectual Salon. Price: \$60 per month. Call Vera at 404-577-7968 for more information..

First Annual Bozart Festival

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. enjoy a monthly potluck supper and games night on the 3rd Saturday of every month at the home of a volunteer. FOR's next Potluck is Saturday, September 21, 2002, at 7:00 p.m. at Chris' house. Bring something good to eat or drink and don't forget your personally created work of art for this special event!

FOR's Pub Night

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the 4th Wednesday of every month at Manuel's Tavern at 8 p.m. for adult beverages and adult conversation. FOR's next pub night is Wednesday, September 25, 2002, at 8 p.m.

Philosophy Tapes

Philosophy tapes are played to a small private audience in the living room of a volunteer on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. The next playing is at Sally's house on Tuesday, October 1, 2002, at 7:30 p.m. Free.

FOR's Film Night

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. enjoy a monthly movie night at John's studio using his extraordinary equipment. FOR's next movie night is Saturday, October 26, 2002. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. Doors will be locked for safety! Movie starts at 7:15 p.m. Free.

Philosophy Café

Attend Steve Stoke's Philosophy Café at Border's in Buckhead on the second Wednesday of every month at 8 p.m. and at the Barnes and Noble Bookstore in Duluth on the third Wednesday of every month at 8 p.m.

Celebration Schedule 2002

- Sunday, January 6, 2002
- Sunday, February 3, 2002
- Sunday, March 3, 2002
- Sunday, April 7, 2002
- Sunday, May 5, 2002
- Sunday, June 2, 2002
- Sunday, July 7, 2002
- Sunday, August 4, 2002
- Sunday, September 1, 2002
- **Sunday, October 6, 2002**
- Sunday, November 3, 2002
- Sunday, December 1, 2002

2002 Membership Information:

FOR, Inc. has 35 members. Four memberships are pending.

- Regular membership: \$35 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2002
- Contributing membership: \$70 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2002
- Lifetime membership: \$700 if paid prior to October 31, 2002

Contact information:

Visit us on the web at www.fellowshipofreason.com

To talk to somebody about FOR call Vera at 404-577-7968 or Martin at 770-471-9800 or Dan at 770-831-3010.

To receive e-mail notice of FOR's activities send your e-mail address to mlcowen@mindspring.com

To receive this newsletter free for 3 months in the U.S. mail send your U.S. Mail address to mlcowen@mindspring.com

To participate in unmoderated e-mail chat, please subscribe to our Yahoo! Group by sending an e-mail to reason-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

A subscription for 12 monthly issues of this newsletter is \$15 per year.

Fellowship of Reason, Inc. is a Georgia nonprofit corporation.

How can you help support the Fellowship of Reason, Inc., the world's first and only reason-based moral community?

If you would like to support our activities, including our building fund, please consider these opportunities:

1. Attend our activities
2. Bring donuts
3. Subscribe to our monthly newsletter
4. Perform at Celebration
5. Recruit a person of like-mind and values
6. Volunteer your home for a potluck or other activity
7. Become a regular member
8. Become a contributing member
9. Become a lifetime member
10. Donate cash, property, time, or expertise
11. Locate and help us apply for a public or private grant
12. Make a testamentary gift

Make checks payable to Fellowship of Reason, Inc. and mail them to 8188 Pembroke Terrace, Jonesboro, GA 30236-4179. Use PayPal on the web at www.fellowshipofreason.com

To make a Last Will and Testament with a gift to FOR, Inc. contact your attorney. If you live in Georgia, Martin L. Cowen III, Attorney at Law, without charge, will prepare and supervise the execution (inside the perimeter or within 10 miles outside of I-285) of a simple will with a minimum unrestricted testamentary gift to FOR, Inc. of \$1,000. Call 770-471-9800 for more information. This offer may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Mr. Cowen, a licensed Georgia attorney, and not FOR, Inc., is solely responsible for any legal services rendered by him with or without charge.
