

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.

INDIVIDUALISM

Scott Orbach and I lunched together occasionally before his death. Sometimes we greeted one another, with our hands in front of our faces, fingers and thumbs touching, bowing slightly at the waist, saying to each other with a little smile: "Your Holiness."

The ritual was our little joke expressing the shared conviction that every individual is a sacred being. Scott understood this fundamental fact of Individualism.

This belief is not a mere sentimentality. This belief is a fundamental, philosophical fact.

The sacred, simply, is the most important thing. The most important thing—the standard by which all else is judged—is the individual human being. There is nothing more important than the individual, not the group (Socialism), not the greatest number (Utilitarianism), not the Environment (Environmentalism), not the Proletariat (Communism), not the Majority (the Press, Politicians, and Political Parties), not the Party (Soviet Communism), not the Race (Nazism), not the Utopian Plan (various dictators of the 20th century), and not God (Christianity, Islam, Judaism). Nothing is more important than the individual. The philosophy that declares the individual to be the most important thing is called Eudaimonism.

Every individual is a center and fountainhead of value. Around each individual is a cluster of people and things that bear relationships of value to that individual. He or she is a nexus of sacred being. He or she is surrounded in space and time by things of value to him or her and for his or her life.

When people invented religion, they abstracted the introspective experience of the sacred that each person enjoys when he or she considers him- or herself, his or her spouse, his or her children, his or her family and friends, and his or her great works. (All works of a sacred being are great.) This personal experience of the sacred was projected and abstracted onto a god. God is an idealization of the sacred Individual.

The ideal emotion a person can enjoy respecting another individual is reverence. Scott Orbach and I—jokingly, because we were a little embarrassed by the depth of the feeling—experienced and expressed reverence for one another in our little ritual.

My conclusion that another individual is a sacred being is an abstraction, a generalization from a particular. Factually, I *experience* myself, my family, my friends, and my great works as sacred. I *infer*—because the other is like me in all apparent respects—that the other, her person, her family, her friends, and her great works are sacred, too.

Consider the practical consequences of such a feeling (assuming that it is genuine).

1. Courtesy is automatic. "Yes, Ma'am." "No, Sir." "Thank you." "Please." "Excuse me."
2. Swear words are avoided.
3. A smile or a respectful nod of the head is usual.
4. Work performed for others is executed with excellence.
5. Freedom and responsibility are the rule.

Consider these last consequences of the experience of the other as sacred: freedom and responsibility.

My sacredness requires that my person, my family, and my friends, and my great works remain unmolested and that I be free to enjoy and relate with them as I choose. I insist on this. These are my terms for living. Likewise the sacredness of the other requires that she or he, his or her person, his or her family, his or her friends, and his or her great works remain unmolested, that he or she be free to enjoy and related with them as he or she chooses. The absence of molestation is freedom.

A corollary of freedom is responsibility. One does not exist without the other. Responsibility means "response able" or able to respond to the circumstances of freedom.

Great acts flow from experiencing ourselves and, by inference, the other as sacred.

The next time we meet the awesome reality that is a human being let us touch, if we dare, his sleeve or the hem of her garment. The next time we walk down a street filled with divine beings, let us hold out our arms and caress the space they occupy. We live on earth, the home of human beings. We live in a holy place. We walk on holy ground.

April Birthdays

April 3	Theresa Barber
April 5	Christopher Sulentic
April 20	Don Schiff
April 24	Toni Brookner
April 27	Debra Griffey
April 28	Lois Curry

May Birthdays

May 2	Frank Vickers
May 9	Stephen Burnett
May 17	David Griffey
May 21	Dan Barber
May 29	Carla Bauer

FORum Schedule

- **Sunday, May 2, 2004**
- Sunday, June 6, 2004
- Sunday, July 4, 2004
- Sunday, August 1, 2004
- Sunday, September 6, 2004
- Sunday, October 3, 2004
- Sunday, November 5, 2004
- Sunday, December 5, 2004
- Sunday, January 2, 2005
- Sunday, February 6, 2005
- Sunday, March 6, 2005

Adult Education, Sunday, April 4, 2004

1st Sunday

Begins at noon. Precedes FORum.

FORUM, May 2, 2004: 1st Sunday

Begins at 1 p.m. SHARP!

Please remember: Time limits will be vigorously enforced!

Welcome—**Chris Snider**
Celebration of Freedom—**Carolyn Hadaway**
Celebration of Visitors—
Celebration of Each Other—
Celebratory Announcements—
Celebration of Art—
Celebration of Literature
Celebration of Heroes—**Beth Holley**
Celebration of Personal Mission—
Celebration of Talent—
Oratory—**Dan Barber**
FORum (moderated discussion)—**Steve Stokes**
Announcements—
Closing Quotation—

Invisible College: Every Thursday

The Invisible College meets every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at Vera's Intellectual Salon. Price: \$60 per 4 weeks payable to Professor Kipton Jensen. Call Vera at 404-577-7968 for more information.

Philosophy Tapes: 1st/3rd Tuesdays

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. Free.

Book Club: 2nd Tuesday

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at John and Beth's house to discuss a marvelous book. Beth Holley is the coordinator of book club. 404-754-7519.

Potluck: 3rd Saturday

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the 3rd Saturday of every month for a potluck supper. Bring something good to eat or drink to share. Our next potluck is on Saturday, April 17, 2004, at 7 p.m. at David and Janet Ziebell's house.

Pub Night: Last Wednesday

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, April 28, 2004, at 8 p.m.

Film Night: 4th Saturday

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, April 24, 2004. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. Doors will be locked for safety! Movie starts at 7:15 p.m. Free.

Reason Runners

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. enjoy a weekly run at 9 a.m. every Sunday, except the first Sunday of the month. We meet at the southwest corner of Piedmont Park.

Steve Stokes' The Philosophy Café: 2nd/3rd Wednesdays

Attend Steve Stokes'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.

Steve Lewis' A Philosophy Café: 1st Wednesday

Attend Steve Lewis' philosophy café at Border's in Duluth on the first Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m.

Dan Barber's Self-Esteem Course

“Self-esteem is easily lost, and it does not return on its own accord. We must first understand what it is and how it works in order to build it back up. The Pillars of Self-Esteem course is a very important opportunity to facilitate changes in the basic patterns of the behavior that whittles the important self-esteem down to nothing. If you understand the importance, or are just curious, you will find this interesting and relevant information. This is a free interactive course that only requires your participation and commitment.”

1st and 3rd Mondays at 7:30 in Borders bookstore cafe Buford. Across from the Mall of Georgia.

For more info contact Dan at 770-831-3010

FOR Toastmasters

Coming soon! In order to provide a continuous flow of excellent product for the elements of FORum, we are going to create a FOR Toastmasters Club. Remember the elements of FORum include celebrations of freedom, art, literature, heroes, personal mission, and talent, and a formal talk on ethics, Oratory. If you are interested in improving your speaking skills the Toastmaster way, contact Martin. 770-471-9800, mlcowen@yahoo.com

FOR Symphony

Those interested are going to subscribe to one of the 2004-2005 concert series. There are 6 concerts in a series. The cost is about \$100 for all 6 concerts. A week prior to the concert a member will deliver a lecture placing the composers and the music in the historical context. We will enjoy food and beverages together. On the day of the concert we will arrive early to hear the conductor's lecture on the evening's concert. We will then enjoy the concert together. If you are interested in this new FOR project, join our FOR-Symphony mailing list by calling or e-mailing Martin. 770-471-9800, mlcowen@yahoo.com

Membership Information:

- Regular membership: \$35 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2004
- Contributing membership: \$70 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2004
- Lifetime membership: \$700 if paid prior to October 31, 2004

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.

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

Fellowship of Reason, Inc. is a Georgia nonprofit corporation and a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) 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 Forum
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 (FOR, Inc. is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation and donations are tax deductible.)
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.

Visit www.paypal.com and make a payment to "pay@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.

The Meaning of Membership in FOR, Inc.

In order to enjoy the benefits of the Fellowship of Reason, Inc. you need not be a member. All of our activities are free and open to the public. (The only exception is Invisible College where each student pays an honorarium to the professor.) A number of non-members regularly participate with us and are most heartily welcome.

Why then become a member of the Fellowship of Reason, Inc.?

The Fellowship of Reason, Inc. exists by virtue of the generosity of its members and friends. People contribute money, property, services, and time in order that the value we all enjoy continues to exist. The services by performers at FORum, by executive committee members, by hosts and hostesses, and by planners of events are vital to the existence of FOR. In fact those volunteer services are FOR.

Membership is, simply, a clear statement that you wish the Fellowship of Reason, Inc. to continue to exist. (Membership is not the only way to make this statement. Some non-members are very generous contributors of money, property, and services. In fact, we benefit by the mere attendance of non-members at FOR events.)

If you want FOR to continue to exist, won't you clearly say so by becoming a member today?
