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## 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.

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## The Abundance Personality

Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), steel magnate, "The Richest Man in the World," built more than 2,000 public libraries. We have a Carnegie Library in Atlanta, the main headquarters building of the Fulton County Public Library downtown. In our own time Bill Gates of Microsoft Corporation is spending part of his 46 billion dollars on philanthropic causes. Ted Turner reportedly gave 100 million dollars to the United Nations.

One should not generalize a personal trait into a moral system. Therefore, my theme is not that philanthropy is a moral duty. Carnegie did make this generalization. He said that the wealthy "ought" to give back to society. I will not be saying that in this essay!

A fundamental drive of all people is to manifest themselves in reality. To manifest yourself in reality simply means to effect the world, to produce things, to provide services, to make friends, to create families.

A person who builds great wealth in America has manifested himself in reality. He has "given to society." Whatever an honest millionaire has created to produce his millions (steel, software, TV programming) was sold to others—society—in voluntary transactions. We voluntarily buy from producing millionaires because they sell the better stuff ("better" in the judgment of the person making the purchase).

Honest productive millionaires are always benefactors of others. It is by benefiting others that an honest self-made, productive millionaire becomes a millionaire. (One can become a millionaire

honestly by means other than production, for example, by inheritance or by luck at the lottery.)

At the end of the life of an enormously wealthy person, she is unable to *avoid* "giving back to society." Her wealth cannot follow her in death. Some other person will receive that wealth. Even if a wealthy individual tried to consume her wealth before her death by extravagant purchases, those purchases will benefit the providers of whatever she buys.

But I don't want to talk just about millionaires. I want to talk about the abundance personality.

There are several stages in life. An infant is totally dependent upon his parents for survival. An adolescent is concerned with separating herself from her parents and relating with peers. A young adult is interested in exercising his newly acquired sexual and productive powers. Persons with damaged psyches are interested in managing their pain.

Because of the characteristics of these stages of life or psychological problems, the abundance personality is generally not found in infants, adolescents, young adults, or damaged people. I say, generally, because there are fine examples of the abundance personality in some adolescents, young adults, and hurting people.

The abundance personality most often occurs in people who are full: full of love, full of self-esteem, full of leisure and, yes, full of money. Needy people need to fulfill their own needs and they have a moral right to do so. The infant, the adolescent, the young adult, and the damaged person have urgent personal needs. Those needs must be fulfilled. They do not have the psychological or financial resources for abundance.

A trivial example of the abundance personality occurs every day. A driver in traffic at rush hour meets an another driver on the congested freeway who is aggressive, late-for-work, and rude. The abundant personality yields the right-of-way that is his, with a smile, to the needy driver.

A non-trivial example is a person who buys 15 copies of his favorite book and gives them to his

friends who he thinks will enjoy and benefit from the reading of it.

Another non-trivial example is the person who arrives early at a meeting to set up the room, make coffee, and provide snacks for 25 of her closest friends.

Another non-trivial example is the homeowners who open up their homes to me regularly, entertain me, and serve me food and wine.

The abundance personality is not a duty. It is a luxury. It is a will to magnificence. It is a moral option among many. Most people who have the satisfaction of their own needs well in hand have the time, money, and desire to shower their excesses of production and service—their abundance—on family, friends, and causes of their own choosing.

As a beneficiary of an abundance personality, I am thankful. I admire her capacity to satisfy her own needs and to share her abundant creative capacity with me.

It strikes me as ungrateful and disrespectful to suggest, because I enjoy being a beneficiary of abundance, that my benefactor has a moral duty to give me pleasure.

So I am not arguing that philanthropy, large or small, is a moral duty. I am simply saying that when I see it, I enjoy it. When I am a beneficiary of abundance, I am grateful to my benefactor.

By the way, only abundant people join the Fellowship of Reason®.

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### May Birthdays

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

### June Birthdays

June 22	Chris Snider
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## FORum Schedule

- **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
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## Adult Education, Sunday, June 6, 2004

### 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday

Begins at noon. Precedes FORum.

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## FORUM, June 6, 2004: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday

### Begins at 1 p.m.

Welcome—  
Celebration of Freedom—  
Celebration of Visitors—  
Celebration of Each Other—  
Celebratory Announcements—  
Celebration of Art—  
Celebration of Literature  
Celebration of Mythology—  
Celebration of Heroes—**John Grover**  
Celebration of Personal Mission—  
Celebration of Talent—  
Oratory—**David Ziebell**  
FORum—**Dan Barber** (moderated discussion)  
Announcements—  
Closing Quotation—

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## Invisible College: Every Thursday

The Invisible College meets every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at Vera's Intellectual Salon. Price: \$90 per 6 weeks payable to Professor Kipton Jensen. Call Vera at 404-577-7968 for more information. Next 6-week course begins.

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### **Philosophy Tapes: 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays**

Philosophy tapes are played to a small private audience in the living room of a volunteer on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of each month. Free.

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### **Book Club: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday**

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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### **Potluck: 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday**

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month for a potluck supper. Bring something good to eat or drink to share. Our next potluck is on Saturday, June 19, 2004, at 7:30 p.m. at Chris and Allison's house.

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### **Pub Night: Last Wednesday**

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the last 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, May 26, 2004, at 8 p.m.

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### **Film Night: 4<sup>th</sup> 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, June 26, 2004. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. Doors will be locked for safety! Movie starts at 7:15 p.m. Free.

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### **Steve Stokes' Philosophy Café**

### **2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

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### **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

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### **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
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### Contact information:

Visit us on the web at [www.fellowshipofreason.com](http://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.

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### 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 you know 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. Those volunteer services are, in fact, 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 generous contributors of money, property, and services. In fact, we all 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?

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### 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](http://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.

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