

The official newsletter of
Fellowship of Reason, Inc.



Why I am not Anti-Religion

By Martin L. Cowen III

The word "religion" derives from Latin roots, religio, and means to link back or to reconnect. That to which the religious person is reconnecting is the original experience that gives rise to religion. That experience is an aesthetic experience that only some people enjoy.

While it is discomfoting to admit that there are some things that we have not, do not, or cannot know or experience, there are, in fact, many such things. Until experienced first-love, orgasm, pregnancy, birth, and parental love are incomprehensible and cannot be communicated to another who has not had the experience.

Aesthetic appreciation of opera has escaped me, but I have no doubt that many opera lovers are transported by it.

Concept formation can induce aesthetic pleasure. Scientists, mathematicians, and philosophers experience aesthetic pleasure when achieving mental clarity on a subject—the "Ah ha!" experience.

Poets, quite commonly, experience aesthetic pleasure in some unutterable knowledge and aim with their art to communicate that knowledge. Only listeners who have had the experience the poet is trying to communicate can hope to understand him.

Mystics experience a profound aesthetic pleasure that is the goal of their meditations. It is the experience of the mystic that gives rise to religions. It is this profound aesthetic experience of the founding mystic that religions seek "to link back" to or "to reconnect" with.

The mystic's experience is not, however, a literal connection with the Divine, notwithstanding his claims. The claims of religion, properly understood, are not literally true, but metaphors aiming to recall an actual experience to the memory of the religious audience.

There is no doubt that institutional religions claim literal truth for their metaphors, but those claims

are false. The claimants simply do not understand. They are not, after all, philosophers.

The experience that is the foundation of all modern religions is an aesthetic appreciation of the largest of all concepts, the concept that includes everything that has existed, that does exist, and that will exist: Existence. The fact of Existence is of profound importance to philosophers as well as to mystics. Ayn Rand and Aristotle are famous for their observation

**there is
love
and even
ecstasy
in our world**

that "Existence exists." This reverence for and emphasis of the ultimate Fact of Existence by philosophers is precisely the same knowledge that is understood only as a feeling by sensitive religious people. The references to God by monotheists and pantheists are all metaphorical references to Existence. Pantheists are clear on this point. The metaphors of polytheists refer to important concepts, but concepts smaller than all of existence like love, rage, the power of the sea, or weather.

Now some people are capable not only of thinking and talking about the largest of all concepts—Existence—, but also of emoting about it. The Buddhist chant "Om" is a verbal homage to Existence.

Some of us can only talk about Existence. We do not emote about it. Just like I can only talk about Opera. I cannot emote about it.

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Toastmasters: \$148 Member Benefit

Special Offer to FOR Members Only

The Fellowship of Reason, Inc. will refund your Toastmaster® membership dues up to \$148 on the following conditions:

- (1) you must be a member of the Fellowship of Reason, Inc. and remain a member until all conditions are completed;
- (2) you must join a Toastmaster® club after this offer and achieve Competent Toastmaster status;
- (3) you must give an Oratory at Forum; and,
- (4) you must keep and deliver to FOR, Inc. your receipts for dues.

If you comply with these conditions, FOR, Inc. will reimburse you for your actual Toastmaster® dues up to \$148.

Questions? Call Martin: 770-471-9800

About the name "The Eudaimonist"

A eudaimonist (pronounced "yoo-DIE-mon-ist") is one who believes that the highest ethical goal is individual happiness and personal well-being. The term is derived from the ancient Greek word eudaimonia, which means, roughly, "well-being."

Why I am not Anti-Religion (cont. from Page 1)

Just because I do not appreciate opera, does not mean I am anti-opera. Just because we do not appreciate the joy Einstein experienced when he discovered the Special Theory of Relativity, does not mean that we are anti-science. Just because we do not enjoy aesthetic experiences at all, does not mean that we are anti-art. Just because we do not appreciate the experience a mystic seeks in meditation, does not mean that we are anti-meditation. We acknowledge the indisputable fact that some things have to be experienced firsthand to be appreciated.

So, when we see an opera lover, a scientist, an aesthete, a mystic, or any other person reveling in an experience we do not fully understand, let us think kindly of them, let us be glad for them, and let us be happy that there is love, and some times even ecstasy, in our world.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the columns appearing in this newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the organization. The Fellowship of Reason, Inc speaks only through its Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, and the actions taken by the Board of Trustees as a board and recorded in the minutes of the corporation.

Fellowship of Reason, Inc.

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.

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

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Subscription Information

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

You Want this. Trust us.

The mug you have to have.

FOR coffee. FOR tea.

FOR a friend.

\$6 each or 2 for \$10, Contact us at any FOR function (see page 9)

Questions? info@fellowshipofreason.com.



Yard Sale a Success

The annual yard sale fundraiser raised \$507.79 for the Fellowship of Reason. Held Saturday, June 18, under Chris Snider's leadership, we took advantage of great weather and fabulous contributions from many members. Within three minutes of posting the signs at the entrance to host David Ziebell's neighborhood, we had accomplished our first sale. Traffic was steady all day, sometimes the parking was two deep in the cul-de-sac.

Special thanks are in order to Chris and Allison, who basically led the effort, David and Janet for hosting, Caroline Hadaway, Linda Cowen, Mary Ampola, Carla Bauer and Scott Carper for stopping by and helping out.

And of course, thanks to the many FOR members who donated all the great stuff – too many to mention by name, and anyway there were several anonymous donations (late night drop-offs; done quietly so as to not disturb the residents!). Donations included books, clothes, electronics, baby strollers, furniture, luggage, toys, housewares, lamps, electrical fixtures, and more.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF REASON'S BOZART FESTIVAL

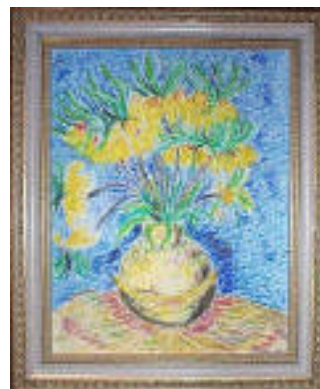
The Fourth Annual Bozart Festival will take place Saturday, September 17, 2005.

Mark your calendar and...

Plan to shine!

At right, some past entries.

For more info, see fellowshipofreason.com.



Meaning of Membership

In order to enjoy the benefits of the Fellowship of Reason, you need not be a member. All of our activities are free and open to the public. A number of non-members regularly participate with us and are most heartily welcome.

Why then become a member of the Fellowship of Reason?

The Fellowship of Reason 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 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?

Regular membership:
\$35 per year

Contributing membership:
\$70 per Year

Lifetime membership:
\$700

Contact Information

To talk to somebody about Fellowship of Reason call:

Chris at 678-585-0406
Vera at 404-577-7968
Martin at 770-471-9800
Dan at 770-831-3010

Birthdays

June Birthdays

June 2	David Dreading
June 7	John P. Giles
June 17	Matthew Arnold
June 22	Chris Snider
June 29	Allison Byrd

July Birthdays

July 1	Eddie Fitzgerald
July 1	Jack Hill
July 25	David van Mersbergen
July 26	Steve Whiteman
July 31	Linda Cowen

June 2005

June 2005						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

July 2005						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			June 1	2	3	4
				David Dreading bd		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12:00pm Adult Education 1:00pm FORum (NWUUC)	12:00pm Deadline for FOR newsletter submissions	John P. Giles bd 7:30pm Philosophy Club (Sally's house)		7:30pm No Invisible College tonight		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8:00am FOR hike Panther's Creek		7:30pm Fiction Book Club (Beth's house)				8:00am FOR garage sale 7:30pm Potluck (Carolyn Hadaway)
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8:00am Reason Runners		Chris Snider bd 7:30pm Philosophy Club (Sally's house)	8:00pm Pub Night (Manuel's Tavern)	7:30pm Invisible College (Vera/Michael's house)		6:30pm Movie night (John's studio)
26	27	28	29	30		
8:00am Reason Runners 10:00am FOR Business Meeting			Allison Byrd bd			

July 2005

July 2005							August 2005						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30	31			
31													

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
July 3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12:00pm Adult Education 1:00pm FORum (NWUUC)	12:00pm Deadline for FOR newsletter submissions	7:30pm Philosophy Club (Sally's house)				11:00am Nonfiction book club (Chris and Allison's house)
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8:00am Reason Runners		7:30pm Fiction Book Club (Beth's house)		7:30pm Invisible College (Vera/Michael's house)		7:30pm Potluck
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
8:00am Reason Runners		7:30pm Philosophy Club (Sally's house)				6:30pm Movie night (John's studio)
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
8:00am Reason Runners 10:00am FOR Business Meeting	David v M bd	Steve Whiteman bd	8:00pm Pub Night (Manuel's Tavern)	7:30pm Alex Hall, Ph.D. 7:30pm Invisible College (Vera/Michael's house)		
31						
Linda Cowen bd 8:00am Reason Runners						

Events

For detailed info on all upcoming events, visit
<http://www.fellowshipofreason.com/calendar.htm>

Reason Runners: Sunday 8 a.m.

We meet every Sunday morning at 8 a.m., except FORum Sundays, at the southwestern entrance to Piedmont Park on 10th Street. Breakfast at Flying Biscuit follows at 9 a.m. Walkers and joggers welcome!
 Martin Cowen coordinator: 770-471-9800.

Invisible College: 2nd/4th Thursdays 7:30 p.m.
 History DVD will be shown.
 Vera Norman coordinator: 404-577-7968

Philosophy Club: 1st/3rd Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
 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.
 Sally Hull coordinator: 404-257-0454

Fiction Book Club: 2nd Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
 Members and friends of FOR meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at John and Beth's house to discuss a marvelous book.
 Beth Holley coordinator: 404-754-7519.

Non-Fiction Book Club: 2nd Saturday 11 a.m.
 Members and friends of FOR meet 11 a.m. on the 2nd Saturday of every month at Chris and Allison's house to discuss a marvelous non-fiction. Allison Byrd coordinator: 678-585-0406 or Allibyrd@charter.net

Potluck: Saturday, July 16.

Members and friends of FOR meet monthly for a potluck supper. Bring something good to eat or drink to share. Location to be announced.
Thanks to Caroline Hadaway for hosting a successful Potluck on June 18!

Movie Night: Saturday, June 25, 2005
 Members and friends of FOR enjoy a monthly movie night at John's studio using his extraordinary equipment. FOR's next movie night is Saturday June 25, 2005. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. Doors will be locked for safety! Movie starts at 7:15 p.m. Free.
 John Grover coordinator: 404-754-7519

Pub Night: 4th Wednesday 8 p.m.
 Members and friends of FOR 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, June 22, 2005, at 8 p.m.
 Scott Carper coordinator: 404-964-6697

Join us at FORum:

1st Sunday at 1 p.m.

July 3, 2005

Join us at Adult Education

1st Sunday at Noon

July 3, 2005

Martin Cowen
Facilitator

Letters to the Editor

(Your missive here)

Write us at:
 Fellowship of Reason
 P.O. Box 5564
 Atlanta, Georgia 31107

Or, E-mail us at info@fellowshipofreason.com.

All letters must be signed to be considered for publication.

Celebratory Announcements

Do yourself a favor and remember a good thing that happened to you this month:

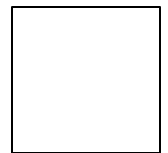
Please, write it down: _____

Now do the membership of FOR, Inc. a favor by relating this fact during FORum next month!



FELLOWSHIP OF REASON

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