

The official newsletter of
Fellowship of Reason, Inc.



The Spirituality of Freedom:

Who are we?

By

Steve Butterbaugh © 2007

Four years ago, a friend of mine moved to England, took a job and eventually got married. I asked her why she wanted to live there. She had a complaint about the United States. She said, "Everyone gets up, goes to work, goes home and none of it adds up to much of anything meaningful. I feel empty and not part of something greater than myself. I think our emphasis on the individual causes this."

I did not agree with her and had no desire to move to England. I did get, however, that for her there was something missing spiritually. Her concerns and comments have stuck with me like a standing question in my subconscious.

Matters of the spirit have always interested me. I was raised a Christian and went to church nearly every Sunday until I left home at 18. I read Rand at 29 and got a view for how the world works. I took Landmark Education courses starting in 1983, spanning, off and on, 22 years, where I took on self-awareness. In addition, I meditated with a Buddhist guru for a year. And this does not count the love affairs, the inspired paintings and buildings, and even preparing this speech all looking for one thing: spiritual fulfillment.

If I were doing all of this for spiritual fulfillment, then I, being a human being, *and we* must have spiritual needs. What are they? What is their nature?

Nathaniel Branden gave a speech some years ago on the topic. Some of the things he said then were:

The spirit pertains to the life force as manifest in consciousness. The spiritual pertains to consciousness and the needs and development of consciousness. The spiritual is consciousness in its higher manifestations of development. Anyone committed to personal growth as self-awareness is on a spiritual path. In fact, anyone who strives for a clearer view of reality is on a spiritual path. The spiritual pertains to experience. That is contrasted

to religion which pertains to beliefs, rules and rituals.

One of the most important spiritual needs is to satisfy the longing to feel at home in the world, from the smallest scale to the widest; from being with yourself to being in the universe. This means being benevolently connected to all that exists, including the ultimate source. The spiritual quest is to come to the ultimate reality.

When 9/11 happened, the thing that worried me most was whether America and I were morally and spiritually strong enough to fight an enemy that would give their lives to advance their goals. That scared me. That was a galvanizing moment for me because I became committed to steeling my spirit so I could fight that enemy.

In the months and years that followed, I have seen lots of activity, working inside and outside America, to ensure that America will not be able to win a fight when it comes to that. This has been very troubling for me since I am committed to strengthening our ability to take on an enemy if we need to. Even so, the arguing and the upset do not seem to be doing much good. What I want is to stop getting upset and to stop reacting to the constant back and forth of the political wrangling. I want to find a way to draw people toward a positive ideal such that they become self-generating in acting to have that value be manifest. I am clear that when we know who we are, we will be able to fight, but probably will not have to.

Inside all of these threads, I joined the Fellowship of Reason at the end of last summer. The thing I noticed at the very first FORum was that I was spiritually nourished. How that showed up was that I was happy all day that Sunday and happy still on Monday. With reason and the mind being the reason of existence for this group, it was wonderful to have my basic means of survival acknowledged and appreciated. That is why I was nourished. I had found a home.

Finding a home in a group such as this is one thing. Finding a home in the universe is quite another.

Individual Highlights

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About a month later, I saw Andrew Bernstein discussing his book: *The Capitalist Manifesto*, on C-Span. I could not believe my eyes and ears. I ordered the video of that show and the book immediately. This book, more than any other, makes the case for the freedom of the mind. The evidence of the products of free minds provided for by social and political organization is so awing that I can only bow my head and say "Thank You." The length of human life, the material progress, the improvements in sanitation and hygiene, the wide availability of food and the ending of famine, the discovery of the causes of diseases and their ending are all manifestations of one fact—the freedom of the mind.

His book gives you the picture in vivid detail of what life was like prior to the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution and how it progressed and the effects it had. Here is a paragraph:

In the early 18th century, on the eve of the Industrial Revolution, what is striking is how little the lot of the masses had improved since the Middle Ages, i.e., in 600 years. It is estimated that per capita income did not grow at all in the thousand years from 500 to 1500 and per capita GDP (Gross Domestic Product) grew by an annual average rate of merely 0.1 percent between 1500 and 1700. An estimated European per capita income in the range of two or three hundred dollars during the 16th and 17th centuries is roughly comparable to living standards in the starving Third World nations of today. Indeed, "Third World Europe" was significantly poorer; for while Africa today—the world's most destitute region—benefits to some degree from electric lights, telephones, automobiles, airplanes, and modern medical and agricultural technology, the Europeans of 400 years ago had no access to such advances, for their invention came only centuries later. Most of this centuries-long stagnation was due to ignorance and a general lack of knowledge.

The enlightenment began in 1745 in Scotland. People were tired of the Old Order and would not let it continue. Adam Smith, a thinker of the Enlightenment, published his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in 1759. James Watt, a major inventor of that period at the dawning of the Industrial Revolution, discovered the principle underlying that invention of the steam engine also in 1759. It soon became clear that people were no longer limited to the

results they could produce by the energy of their own body. At last, they were learning to harness the vast energies of the earth to extend the energies of each and every human being. This was the beginning of progress and its fundamental physical component today.

Imagine what your life would be like if you were limited to the energy of your own body. All that would get done would be a few tasks. If you raised the sheep, shored it of its wool, spun it into yarn, wove the cloth, then stitched the cloth by hand to make a garment, I doubt that any of us would have more than one outfit to wear. Finding a stream and washing the garment would not be happening much either, so forget smelling and looking good, although I suppose these are relative.

It becomes clear that the lives we lead today and the enormous amount of time we can use in any way we want is a product of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. I have a lot of freedom. I earn income from architecture and painting, when it is available and I can. This supports a lot of time that I have to think about subjects such as this one or paint or socialize. There is no way that my lifestyle or one similar to it would be possible without the system of political freedom, which is capitalism. It allows for the accumulation of wealth beyond one's immediate needs which then can be put into building something that extends the energy of all of us.

When I think of the millions of lives that constitute the network of interactions that provide for what we are able to have today, I am in awe. This network of freely associating people through enterprises of production is, I say, your and my security. Except for this, we would be unable to express our individuality, our birthright, as a human being.

The effect of Bernstein's book for me was that I experienced a spiritual shift. Instead of me being an isolated individual which in one sense I am, I, at the same time, take my place in a vast network of interrelated individuals all working to satisfy human needs in all their manifestations. This is not the silly economic directions of a government whose main focus is on how to maintain its power. This is millions of eyes focused on reality and making real things happen because they are designed as such and they choose to be that. There is no comparison between these two.

The operation of this vast free system is vital and, at the same time, precious and wholly, in my opinion, unappreciated. It gives us our lives.

I suffer greatly when America, the only country founded on the idea of individual rights which freed the minds of man is disparaged. I can understand that we go through periods when we lose our way and do stupid things. But what I

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."

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 dedicated to the personal flourishing of our members through reason.

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

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FOR Merchandise

The mug you have to have.

FOR coffee. FOR tea. FOR a friend.

Mugs are \$6 each or 2 for \$10.



FOR Polo Shirts and T-shirts are also available. Members Price is \$25 for Polo Shirts and \$15 for T-Shirts.

Prices include domestic shipping, inquire for international shipping.

Contact us at any FOR function (see page 9)

Questions? info@fellowshipofreason.com.



The Spirituality of Freedom (continued from page 2)

cannot understand nor forgive is that we do not stand for the greatest political invention in the history of mankind and not work to make it more consistently pro-freedom of the mind.

So, I have wondered what is missing that must be put in to start to turn this around. Clearly, Bernstein's book is an effort in that direction. I think we need a Spirituality of Freedom. Patriotism, by itself, is not a candidate as it focuses on a country, not an idea.

When we look at the grand schemes that have met the spiritual needs of human being, I think of the great religions or socialism.

Christianity, as an example of a great religion, posits the ultimate source of all of it as God. Because God is only in the imagination with no real true-to-life characteristics, the idea of Him has to be accepted on faith. Since He owns the all of it, coming to know God means that you can relate to the all of it. All you have to do to maintain your connection to this and be at home in the universe is to do His will and follow His rules. If you do not do this, then you will be separated from God and lose your spiritual home. The ultimate quest is to become as God.

Socialism, as an example of a secular religion, posits the ultimate source of all of it in the State. The idea of living for the State means that you do not think of yourself, but of your value to this all-encompassing social organization. Since the state (or the collective or the tribe) owns the all of it, you get to connect to all of it by creating yourself as a cell within the body of the State. If you do not happily give yourself to this, you lose your connection and become an enemy of the State. The ultimate quest here is to be one with the State.

Now I want to experiment with Freedom, not as a religion, but as spirituality. Notice that the first two devolve quickly into a religion with their beliefs, rules and rituals.

Freedom posits the ultimate source as reality itself. Reality is the all of it. Reality does not require an all powerful deity or state which you somehow have to beseech and placate in order to stay connected. All it requires is that you open your eyes and allow yourself to be present to it—be it **wonder-packed** things in nature or a friend or the universe.

You come to know reality by observing and thinking. Reality is your home and the only way you can separate yourself from it is to close your eyes to it and to avoid thinking.

Reality is your home in another way too. It is all you ultimately have in common with another human being. Each of us has our own world that is a mapping, more or less, of reality. I am sure you have had the experience of talking to someone and not making contact. Ultimately, that is because you are not talking about or relating in the same way to something in reality.

Freedom is the freedom of the mind and the ability to act on the conclusions of your mind. When a society is founded on the requirements of freedom, people become related in another fundamental way. They seek to provide for the requirements of their lives through trade. And because they can trade, they seek to produce things or services in order to trade. The standard of living we enjoy is the result of this process.

A free man solves the problems required by his existence or he goes out of existence. Our ultimate safety and security relies in this fact. Because millions of free eyes are seeking to learn the causes and solutions of our human problems, they will be solved if

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humanly possible to solve. The only thing that can interrupt this process and threaten your security and your safety is the initiation of force that stops the free ranging requirement of the free mind. It foils the ultimate quest of this spiritual path that is to face and know reality.

I exhort you to put your faith in the system that requires no faith—freedom for the mind—and let its awesome wonders feed you spiritually.

*Be like the bird, who
Halting in his flight
On limb too slight
Feels it give way beneath him,
Yet sings
Knowing he hath wings.*

Victor Hugo

“The thing I noticed at the very first FORum was that I was spiritually nourished. How that showed up was that I was happy all day that Sunday and happy still on Monday.”

Meaning of Membership

Regular membership:
\$35 per year

Contributing membership:
\$70 per Year

Lifetime membership:
\$700

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, why not clearly say so by becoming a member today?

Classic Film Appreciation Course

Classic Film Appreciation Course
By Steve Whiteman

Throughout 2007 FOR member **Steve Whiteman** will teach a free course in the appreciation of classic film and associated early and mid-20th century popular culture. The course is full, but seats may become available to see individual films.

For more information, or to receive e-mail, contact Steve at classic.film@yahoo.com

The movies will be acknowledged classics, the majority from Hollywood's Golden Age—the 1930s and 1940s—and the rest from other eras or other countries. The program usually will include a cartoon or a short subject, coming attractions, the feature film, and commentary on the careers of key personnel, filmmaking techniques, and relevant history and popular culture. Discussion will follow the commentary.

First and Second Saturdays in 2007
Doors open 6:45 p.m. program starts at
7:30 p.m.

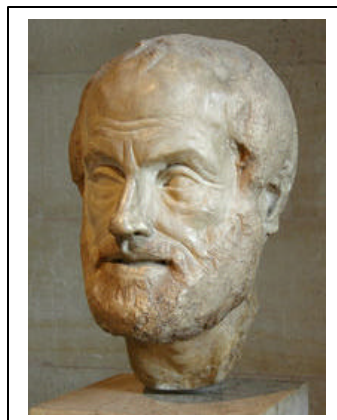
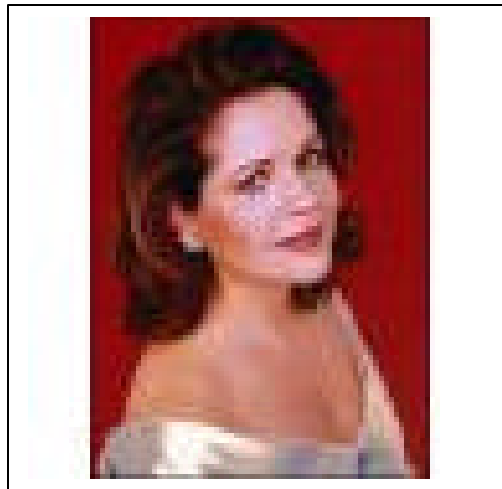
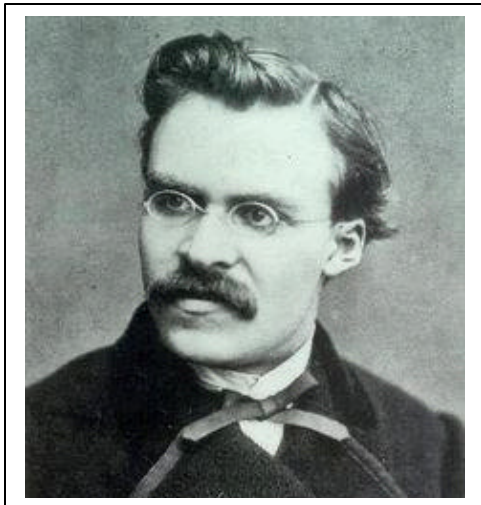
Contact Information

To talk to somebody about Fellowship of Reason call:

Martin at 770-471-9800
Dan at 770-831-3010

Who are my "gods"?

By Martin L. Cowen III



I will give a signed copy of my book to the first person who sends me a postcard or letter correctly identifying these photographs!

FOR's mission is to promote the personal flourishing of our members through reason.

May 2007

| May 2007 | | | | | | | June 2007 | | | | | | |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Sat/Sun |
|--------|--|--|----------------|--------|--|
| | May 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 7:30pm Philosophy Tapes (Sally's house) | Frank bd 7:30pm Invisible College (Greg's house) | | | 7:00pm Classic Film Appreciation Course (Steve Whiteman's h 6 |
| | | | | | 12:30pm FORum (NWUUC) |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| | 7:30pm Fiction Book Club (Beth's house) | 7:30pm Invisible College (Greg's house) | | | 11:00am Nonfiction Book Club (Allison's house) 7:00pm Classic Film 13 |
| | | | | | 8:00am FOR Runners (Flying Biscuit) |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| | 7:30pm Philosophy Tapes (Sally's house) | 7:30pm Invisible College (Greg's house) | | | 3:00pm Potluck (kids welcome) (Kate Allen) 20 |
| | | | | | 8:00am FOR Runners (Flying Biscuit) |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| Dan bd | | 7:30pm Invisible College (Greg's house) | | | 6:30pm Movie Night (John's studio) 27 |
| | | | | | 8:00am FOR Runners (Flying Biscuit) |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |
| | Carla bd | 7:30pm Invisible College (Greg's house) | 8:00pm FOR pub | | |

June 2007

| June 2007 | | | | | | | July 2007 | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| | | | | | | | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Sat/Sun |
|--------|--|--|----------------|-------------------------|--|
| | | | | June 1 | 2 |
| | | | | | David D. bd 7:00pm Classic Film Appreciation Course |
| | | | | | 3 |
| | | | | | 12:30pm FORum (NWUUC) |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| | 7:30pm Philosophy Tapes (Sally's house) | 7:30pm Invisible College (Greg's house) | | | 11:00am Nonfiction Book Club (Allison's house) 7:00pm Classic Film |
| | | | | | 10 |
| | | | | | 8:00am FOR Runners (Flying Biscuit) |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| | 7:30pm Fiction Book Club (Beth's house) | 7:30pm Invisible College (Greg's house) | | | 3:00pm Potluck (No kids) (Randy Sekeres) |
| | | | | | 17 |
| | | | | | 8:00am FOR Runners (Flying Biscuit) |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| | 7:30pm Philosophy Tapes (Sally's house) | 7:30pm Invisible College (Greg's house) | | Chris Sn. bd | 6:30pm Movie Night (John's studio) |
| | | | | | 24 |
| | | | | | 8:00am FOR Runners (Flying Biscuit) |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| | Jan bd | 7:30pm Invisible College (Greg's house) | 8:00pm FOR pub | Allison bd Johann bd | |

Events

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

FOR Runners: Sunday 8 a.m.

We meet every Sunday morning at 8 a.m., except FORum Sundays, at the southwest corner of Piedmont Park on 10th Street. Breakfast at Flying Biscuit (corner of Piedmont and 10th Street) follows at 9 a.m. Breakfast lovers, walkers, and joggers welcome!

Martin Cowen coordinator: 770-471-9800.

Philosophy Club: 1st/ 3rd Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.

Philosophy tapes are played to a small private group of friends in a private home 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. For book selections and more information, go to www.fellowshipofreason.com/fiction.htm

Beth Holley coordinator: 404-372-7378

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. For book selections and more information go to:

www.fellowshipofreason.com/nonfiction.htm

Allison Byrd coordinator: 404-372-4089

Potluck: 3rd Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

Our next (KIDS FRIENDLY) Potluck is Saturday, May 19, 2007, at Kate Allen's house at 5:00 p.m. Remember, it is potluck, so bring something good to eat and drink to share.

Pub Night: 4th Thursday, 8 p.m.

Members and friends of FOR meet on the 4th Thursday of every month at Manuel's Tavern at 8 p.m. for adult beverages and adult conversation. FOR's next pub night is Thursday, Thursday, May 31, 2007 at 8 p.m.

Scott Carper coordinator: 404-964-6697

*Join us for our
**104th
 consecutive
 monthly FORum:***

**June 3, 2007
 Sunday at 1 p.m.**

(Meet, Greet at 12:30)

Birthdays

| | |
|--------|----------|
| May 2 | Frank V. |
| May 21 | Dan B. |
| May 29 | Carla B. |
| May 29 | Geoff M. |

| | |
|---------|------------|
| June 2 | David D. |
| June 22 | Chris Sn. |
| June 26 | Jan M. |
| June 29 | Allison B. |
| June 29 | Johann G. |

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

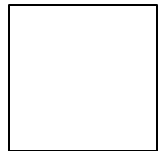
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info@fellowshipofreason.com

A Reason-Based Moral
Community for the 21st
Century

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See us at:

fellowshipofreason.com