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CONCORDIA SEMINARY
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

A VIRTUE ETHIC FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WARRIOR:
TEACHING NATURAL LAW THROUGH THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND
THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY STUDIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
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SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI
15 DECEMBER 2011

A VIRTUE ETHIC FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WARRIOR:
TEACHING NATURAL LAW THROUGH THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND
THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

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16 FEBRUARY 2012

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To Colonel Eric Mellinger (USMC), the finest leader of men I've ever known.
Semper Fi!

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INTRODUCTION

The Problem Identified

“The promulgation of the great doctrines of religion, the being, and attributes, and providence of one Almighty God; the responsibility to him for all our actions, founded upon moral freedom and accountability . . . the cultivation of all the personal, social, and benevolent virtues—these never can be a matter of indifference in any well ordered community.”¹ This was written by Joseph Story, a larger-than-life Supreme Court justice who wrote voluminously throughout the early nineteenth century. Not a Christian (Story was actually a Unitarian), he expressed the commonly held belief in early American society that people are accountable to their Creator for their actions and that they have obligations to God and their fellow man. In short, he was illustrating the idea of natural law—that all men have in their hearts an understanding that they are not a law unto themselves. Their consciences are God-given, and this cannot be changed by any sophistic pirouette; it simply is.

In the United States, our founding fathers believed that the community was bound by the universality of natural law and that a republic of free people must be able to use natural law to live a pious life which would keep the country stable. In other words, natural law would lead to a “virtue ethic” of free people. If men and women could restrain themselves through a shared belief in natural law, the founders believed that that the country would be able to survive and prosper. However, if that virtue ethic based on natural law ever receded or disappeared completely, the republic would not long survive. Samuel Adams, one of our founding fathers

¹Matthew Spaulding, *We Still Hold These Truths: Rediscovering Our Principles, Reclaiming Our Future* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2009), 155.

said this about natural law and the need for a virtue ethic in our republic, “The sum of all is, if we would most truly enjoy the gift of Heaven, let us become a virtuous people; then shall we both deserve and enjoy it. While, on the other hand, if we are universally vicious and debauched in our manners...we shall in reality be the most abject slaves.”² Here Adams is laying out the prescription for the republic; an understanding of natural law must lead to a virtue ethic of the population. If it does not, the republic will fail.

Two thousand years ago, the Roman writer Cicero laid out the case for the need for natural law governing the ethic of the population when he wrote:

True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions...It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times, and there will be one master and ruler, that is God, over us all, for he is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and envying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst punishment.³

Cicero, no Christian, illustrates the idea that natural law is universal; all mankind understands it and should obey the dictates in their consciences placed there by their Creator. It is this God given natural law that is to create the virtue ethic of each person so that society can live in peace and order. Cicero resonated with our founding fathers who believed, as he did, in a Creator who gave us natural law which forms the basis of our ethical life. As Samuel Adams stated above, our republic can only last as long as we

²W. Cleon Skousen, *The Five Thousand Year Leap* (Franklin, TN: American Documents Publishing, L.L.C., 2009), 46.

³*Ibid.*, 35.

understand what natural law is and how it is the force behind a virtue ethic that we all must have if we are to be free Americans.

More than two hundred years after our founding, there is great uncertainty in our country as to what truths, if any, are in fact universal. And, if there is not agreement by our community about what constitutes what Cicero and our founding fathers would call natural law could we still have some kind of virtue ethic that results from that common understanding? Many modern Americans reject that idea of natural law and believe there is no such thing as truth. Where does that leave us as a country? If we were founded on the idea that God-given natural law must lead to a virtue ethic and we don't believe that any longer, can we survive as a republic? Can a rootless people be taught a virtue ethic based on natural law in the hope of strengthening our community so that we can bequeath the blessings of liberty to our progeny? I believe a virtue ethic based on natural law can be taught. As ethicist Gregory Trianosky writes, "Perhaps the most persuasive argument in favor of studying the virtues is simply that they are the stuff of which much of the moralities of everyday life are made."⁴

What is a "virtue ethic" based on natural law? Quite simply, it is a piety of life that results from an individual's understanding that God has given him a conscience that demands a civic righteousness. In short, natural law should lead all men to live in a way that honors God and their neighbors. In all communities, murder, stealing, and adultery are frowned upon while marriage, charity, and love for neighbor are lifted up as good for all in society. From time immemorial, there has been little disagreement on these issues, and, while people may have not practiced them, they would generally agree that these

⁴Gregory Trianosky, "What Is Virtue Ethics All About?" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (October, 1990), 342.

truths existed and should be obeyed in public and private life. From the beginnings of our constitutional government of our country was based on the ideas of natural law that guided personal and private morality and was to be sustained by a continual understanding and practice of what our founders believed and taught. In the last few generations in America, however, the idea of natural law is hotly debated. As a result, the basis for a strong virtue ethic of family, charity and love for neighbor has deteriorated significantly.

In this Major Applied Project (MAP) I will examine the moral attitudes of members of the United States Coast Guard and determine what kind of (if any) virtue ethic they maintain in their personal and public life. I will use the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address in a military training environment to teach the idea of universal truth in natural law and then determine, through qualitative and quantitative measures, if that training has had an impact on the lives of the young men and women who participate in how they live lives of personal and professional virtue. In short, I want to examine if instruction in natural law can lead to a stronger virtue ethic of our military members.

Certainly most Americans would have agreed in 1944 that Hitler and his SS minions were evil and deserved righteous punishment from Allied forces. This belief provided the solid foundation for a just war against Nazi, Fascist and Japanese expansionism. Can we say the same about Al Qaeda today? Will we all agree that what they do is evil? While many (if not most) Americans who had flags flew them after 9/11 as an expression of their patriotism, there was a significant amount of debate, especially on the intellectual and political left, as to whether it was even proper to own a flag. Moreover, there were voices (quiet right after 9/11 but louder thereafter) who couldn't

decide if the United States was a just society that could pursue noble war aims. Would Franklin Roosevelt or Winston Churchill fail to remind their listeners that the Nazi menace was, at its very heart, an evil thrust upon the world? It is this kind of nebulous amoral state that I propose to reshape in the hearts of young soldiers, sailors and Marines.

But that still leaves us to ask several questions. What has changed so much in just two generations that now our country is struggling to define truth? Why is it so hard, and what does this mean for the republic itself? Can objective truth based on natural law be taught? Can public and private virtue be “repackaged” so that American citizens, through their virtuous living, can be a stabilizing influence for themselves, their families, their communities and their nation? Can they be taught that stealing and lying are wrong? Can they be taught that truth is not defined by ourselves but rather is a product of the conscience that our Lord gives to each of us? I say that instruction in what natural law is and how it affects our daily lives can be done. I propose to use two of the founding documents of the nation which will reveal to our citizens truths based on natural law.

The Purpose

In his First Inaugural Address, George Washington said:

The basis of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality . . . since there is no truth more thoroughly established than that there exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness; between duty and advantage; between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity.⁵

The founders well understood that for their infant republic to survive, citizens would have to wisely use their freedom in a virtuous way for the betterment of

⁵Harry V. Jaffa, *A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 11.

themselves and their society. If they did not—if they ended up abusing their newfound independence—then ultimately the American experiment would fail, because an individual’s moral life is the chief stabilizing influence for the nation itself.

For over 220 years we have endured countless hardships—wars, economic distress and political discord—but we have held the nation together. How different do we look now as opposed to in the early days of the republic? Is the average American citizen a virtuous one, and does he understand the need for virtue, for a morality that obligates him to act in a way that is in keeping with commonly held standards? Certainly the answer is a resounding “No!” Some accept public vice as a matter of course. For example, marriage, once held in high esteem, is under ceaseless attack, and for a significant portion of the population, is no longer a priority. The Christian church, a bulwark of early society, while in many ways still a strong force for good in society, is a shrinking voice in a secular, postmodern world. Few people in early America would have ever criticized a fellow citizen for quoting the Ten Commandments, the Scriptures, or homespun proverbs to make a point about morality and virtue. Yet this is not the case today. To cite one example, the great American pollster Michael Barone illustrates the shift in the American attitude to gay marriage when he states, “In 1996, Gallup found that Americans opposed it by a 68 percent to 27 percent margin. Last May, Gallup found Americans in favor by 53 percent to 45 percent. That’s a huge change in 15 years.”⁶ To warriors, a code of ethics is essential: that is, a set of truth that binds men to one another in a shared vision of what is right and what is wrong. An ethical code is essential for a soldier to see clearly the purpose of a mission which may entail the death of the soldier

⁶National Review, <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/275145/our-gay-marriage-experiment-michael-barone> (Accessed September 3, 2011).

himself. However, this kind of shared morality is also feeling the same stresses as the civilian world, and as a result is creating postmodern warriors for the first time in American history. Australian defense expert Michael Evans paints this modern picture when he states:

Over the last decade, Christopher Coker, perhaps the world's leading philosopher of contemporary war, has in a series of important studies further analyzed the implications for the military profession of the onset of postmodernity. For Coker, much of the contemporary West today is dominated by what he calls an "ethics without morality," in which the existential and metaphysical ideals that have traditionally underpinned a life dedicated to military professionalism seem increasingly obsolescent.⁷

We simply do not have many "truths" that we agree on anymore—and that's the great danger. As Duke University ethicist Stanley Hauerwas states, "no matter how sincerely what it is they believe about God, they in fact live lives of practical atheism."⁸ Our founders assumed God's role in the life of the world and that he granted rights to the people He created. Without God, the argument for any truth at all becomes tenuous at best and is no longer subject to a set of mutually agreed upon maxims. If the survival of our republic depends on a common understanding of what is true, then our citizens, especially our young citizens, need to be awakened out of their slumber to understand the depth of the problem and be trained as "virtue warriors."

Definitions

A few special terms will appear within the MAP. They are defined as follows:

⁷Michael Evans, "Stoic Philosophy and the Western Profession of Arms in the Twenty-First Century." *Naval War College Review*, volume 64, number 1 (winter, 2011), 32–33.

⁸Stanley Hauerwas, *A Better Hope: Resources for a Church Confronting Capitalism, Democracy and Postmodernity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2000), 140.

Postmodernism—“In western philosophy, a late twentieth century movement characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, or relativism, a general suspicion of reason, and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power.”⁹

Natural Law—“In philosophy, a system of right or justice held to be common to all humans and derived from nature rather than from the rules of society, or positive law.”¹⁰

Virtue Ethics—“Approach to ethics that takes the notion of virtue (often conceived of as excellence) as fundamental. Virtue ethics is primarily concerned with traits of character that are essential to human flourishing, not with the enumeration of duties.”¹¹

Conscience—“A personal sense of the moral sense of one’s own conduct, intentions, or character with regard to a feeling or obligation to do right or be good.”¹²

The Founders

A few American historical figures will appear within the MAP. They are listed below:

George Washington (1732–1799). Commanding General of the American forces during the Revolutionary War and the first President of the United States.

John Adams (1735–1826). American minister to France, member of the Continental Congress, author of the Declaration of Independence, author of the Constitution of the

⁹*Postmodernism*. <http://www.britannica.com/> Accessed August 22, 2011.

¹⁰*Natural law*. <http://www.britannica.com/> Accessed August 22, 2011.

¹¹*Virtue ethics*. <http://www.britannica.com/> Accessed August 22, 2011.

¹²*Conscience*. <http://www.britannica.com/> Accessed August 22, 2011.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, first Vice President of the United States, second President of the United States.

Samuel Adams (1722-1803). The second cousin of John Adams, Samuel was one of the first strong voices for American independence. Adams served in the Continental Congress and was elected governor of Massachusetts.

Alexander Hamilton (1755-1804). The first Secretary of the Treasury who served as military aide to George Washington during the Revolution, Hamilton was an integral participant in the struggle for independence as well as the establishment of our national government.

Joseph Story (1779–1845). Member of the United States Supreme Court (1811–1845).

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865). Not technically a founder but served as the sixteenth President of the United States during the largest crisis in United States history, the US Civil War (1861–1865).

The Way Forward

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Lutheran theologian and ethicist Gene Veith said, “We were going about our business pursuing what Francis Schaeffer considered the only values we had left: personal peace and affluence. Suddenly an airplane—and then another—flew into that great monument to American affluence, the World Trade Center. . . . Soon we were at war, and the peace Americans had taken for granted was gone.”¹³ Schaeffer has a point; if we had any values left, it was that as a nation we simply that we were fairly rich and people generally left us alone. However, these values are not

¹³Gene Veith, *Christianity in an Age of Terrorism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 11.

nearly what we need for our republic to survive. We need a stronger set based on objective truths that, for most of our history, most of the body politic accepted. Why do we need them? University of Texas ethicist J. Budziszewski makes the case clear when he states, “If you really suspended moral judgment, you couldn’t judge what to tolerate. You couldn’t even judge whether to tolerate. Tolerance requires practicing moral judgment, not suspending it.”¹⁴ Here we see the danger. Without any agreed upon framework of truth we can’t judge—whether it is in a formal sense (in a civil or criminal trial) or in an informal one (when something happens in your family or your neighborhood). If free citizens in a republic are disallowed from judging one another, the society itself becomes unstable, and, if not soon corrected, unworkable.

This demonstrates the need to reform and rebuild the conscience of the amoral citizen. He must be made aware that there are universal truths granted by our Creator that cannot be taken away. Moreover, when that realization becomes known to the citizen, he can be guided to the fact that he then has an obligation to live a conscientious, virtuous life as a member of society. If that can be achieved through training and counseling, his conscience can be rebuilt and reshaped into one of a virtue warrior. Through a narrative of General Military Training (GMT), the chaplain has to take on the great task of rebuilding the amoral conscience into a moral one for the well-being of the citizen and the republic. Again Harry Jaffa illustrates the danger when he states:

The answer is that in our time, truth has been disarmed by the opinion that reason is impotent to know what is just or unjust, right or wrong, true or false. If there is not truth, or if the truth is beyond the power of the human mind to know, then free argument and debate as means of arriving at the truth are meaningless. Truth is thereby disarmed of her natural weapons a priori.

¹⁴J. Budziszewski, *What They Can't Not Know* (Dallas: Spence Publishing Company, 2003), 129.

This challenge to the principle of a free society is one that neither Jefferson nor Lincoln anticipated.¹⁵

Certainly not all Americans who join the military are true postmodernists. Indeed, there are many Christians and others who do believe in universal truth. Many people join the military precisely because they feel that the uniformed service is one of the last bastions where truth exists and people abide by a simple set of core values. But there are many people in military service who are amoral, who do not believe in natural law and universal truth, and it is to them that I want to direct my efforts. I want to make them aware of natural law and their obligations as humans who have been given a conscience. But what is natural law? J. Budziszewski gives us a solid description of the universality of natural law when he states:

Once upon a time it was possible for a philosopher to write that the foundational moral principles are “the same for all, both as to rectitude and as to knowledge”—and expect everyone to agree. To say that these principles are the same for all “as to rectitude” means that they are right for everyone; in other words, deliberately taking innocent human life, sleeping with my neighbor’s wife, and mocking God are as wrong for me as they are for you, no matter what either of us believes. To say that they are the same for all “as to knowledge” means that at some level, everyone knows them; even the murderer knows the wrong of murder, the adulterer the wrong of adultery, the mocker the wrong of mockery. He may say he doesn’t but he does. . . . As I say, once upon a time a thinker who wrote such words could expect nearly everyone to agree. And nearly everyone did. The Christians agreed, the Jews agreed, and the Muslims agreed.¹⁶

It is to those who do not believe in natural law that this project was targeted. The goal of my training was to get into the hearts of amoral men and women and, through the use of two valuable historical documents, help them to begin to synthesize these truths

¹⁵Jaffa, 83.

¹⁶Budziszewski, 3.

and, as a result, be better citizens. All five services have at least three core values that they want each of their members to know. While the emphasis may be a bit different with each branch they all share one: ethical integrity. They may label it as simply “integrity” or “honor,” but its meaning to the service is the same; that service members act in an ethical manner, whether on duty or off. It is my hope that I can seize on that core value and weave it into the minds of my hearers through natural law training, so that they can begin to synthesize it and begin to live accordingly.

In Iraq I had a petty officer who simply couldn't accept that he had been found guilty at Captain's Mast (the Mast is a formal disciplinary proceeding). To any objective observer, he was clearly at fault (and there were many witnesses who testified that his offenses happened over a sustained period of time) but he said that according to his definitions of right and wrong, he was not guilty. He was a great example of an amoral conscience at work—a secular self-defined worldview that refuses objective truth and will not be judged according to it. When I told one of our master chiefs about his amoral outlook, things finally made sense to him. He, along with several other senior enlisted members of our battalion, had spent forty-five minutes the previous day trying to figure out why this young man wouldn't accept what they believed and expected from him as a person who was supposed to share the same Naval core values. I explained that the difference between a forty-year old master chief and a twenty-year old seaman was a generational chasm that couldn't be bridged by one afternoon of yelling—it had to be a gradual process to counteract the years of an entrenched conscience that had learned to self-define truth.

A republic will not survive more than a few generations if its people cannot understand their roles as virtuous citizens. To teach people to be “virtue warriors” is a gargantuan task to be sure, but one that must be attempted if our American experiment is to continue well into the twenty-first century and beyond. So the mission becomes the “reprogramming” of young men and women to help them understand what natural law is and the universal truths and the conscientious obligations that emanate from it. As E. W. A. Koehler stated in 1941, “Because conscience acts on man’s own conviction, it cannot do otherwise than approve what he believes to be right and disapprove what he believes to be wrong. Unless the conviction is first changed, conscience abides by its judgment.”¹⁷ Once people understand and accept what is right, the hope is that they would be virtuous citizens and encourage their friends and their families to be so as well. This in turn will stabilize society on a well-built foundation of truth based on natural law that will hopefully go on to frame many of the consciences of the citizenry. Indeed one could never “win” and rebuild all of the people in a command, but the goal would be to remake enough consciences to have a measurable effect upon society at large.

The founders knew and understood the need for virtuous living by the republic’s citizens. Without it, they believed, their country would not survive. Today, however, we deal with a culture and a society that emphasizes the individual’s self-definition at the expense of any collective idea of truth based on natural law. For example, when one points out the “evil” of abortion, that person may be called a bigot. Who wants to be called a bigot? Why fight that kind of battle when you cannot even begin the conversation? Why not just stay home and stay well out of the way of the public forum?

¹⁷E.W.A. Koehler, “Conscience,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* vol.13, no.5 (1942): 350–351.

Currently the debate over homosexual marriage is framed not so much in terms of why opponents think it should be not be the law of the land (while accepting that same-sex couples can do as they please in their own lives) but rather as why someone would disallow others a basic human right. Proponents frame the debate to be all about unjust discrimination against our fellow citizens. Very little is debated about the effects of marriage between a man and a woman and how much of a bedrock that supplies to society as a whole. If an opponent of gay marriage doesn't want to be called a bigot or a Nazi, why would he even engage in debate?

Where does one restart the building process? First, there is a natural advantage for chaplains because of the duration of our billet as well as our unique position in the command as a representative of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. While many billets are for only a year, most are for more than two and sometimes they last more than three years. Because of that, chaplains can build deep relationships with many of the members of the command—especially the commanding officer (CO) whose support is essential for the task at hand. Most COs (regardless of their own religiosity) understand how valuable a chaplain can be for his command, and believe that a good shepherd in uniform will greatly enhance the unit's ability to complete its mission. Especially in a time of war, many commanders actively use their chaplains for counsel and implicitly trust the chaplain to be the moral “voice” of the unit. Because of that trust, chaplains tend to have wide latitude to do things that nobody else in the unit can do. Moreover, most in the command have at least some understanding that the chaplain is an agent, not only of the church, but of the state, and has authority based in both realms. Chaplains routinely do all kinds of general military training, from suicide prevention to cultural and religious

understanding of the peoples encountered in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many times, the chaplain is as well-informed about the destination of a unit as anyone and can be a fountain of information for the command. Because of that, he can build a great deal of trust and be able to use that reservoir of good will to inculcate values based on natural law through the command.

The Navy chaplain has always been a teacher. In the nineteenth century it was common for chaplains to not only lead services at sea but act as schoolteacher for those who could not read and write. In the military of today, there is room in most commands for the chaplain to perform a similar function. Instead of teaching reading and writing, the chaplain can engage the general cultural illiteracy about natural law and begin to rebuild members of the command into the virtue warriors he envisions them becoming.

One advantage that postmodernism has given us is the ability to challenge any and all presuppositions. Most servicemen and women feel secure in asking chaplains any kind of question about anything. Titles and degrees (especially theological degrees) do not mean as much as they used to, as our postmodern country has produced a kind of radical egalitarianism that has allowed the youngest and most junior members of our armed service to fearlessly attack our beliefs and theology. Fortunately, we can use the same freedom—for the right reasons. Today it is incumbent upon our pastors to ask searching questions, because we can not be sure that even Lutherans (or Christians in general) have much of an understanding of their faith or the obligations entailed by the life of faith. If postmodernism gives a twenty-year old the right to ask chaplains anything, certainly we have the same right to ask them deep questions about faith, life and virtue. For example, if someone wants baptism, we can ask why. If they want to get married, we

should ask why. If they want to reenlist and swear to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States, we should certainly ask why. And just as important, ask them if they have ever read it and what it means. Do they understand their rights and obligations as citizens? The answer, especially for the young, amoral servicemen, is probably “no,” so it becomes our obligation to teach them these basic ideas. Using the trust of the CO and the egalitarianism of postmodernism to ask searching questions about citizenship and virtue, we can hopefully lead young servicemen to a reconstructed moral conscience based on universal truth.

The question is: How do you do it? I propose to use two tools: the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address. To start, a trusted chaplain can use his credibility to convince the command to conduct general military training and explain the reasons that he thinks it is necessary, not only for the unit, but for the republic at large. It is from that training that natural law can begin to make an impression on unit members who are barely aware of the founding documents and who need to understand their role in the republic and their obligations as free men. The plan is that this training will be an epiphany for many young men and women who formerly had only a very faint idea of their nation’s foundations and of the fact that they are based on natural law. Once this is realized, the young citizens can begin, through a continuing narrative of formal and informal training with the chaplain, to rebuild their consciences into ones based on universal truth, obligation and virtue.

The Project Developed

The Declaration of Independence

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”¹⁸

Here we see the ultimate expression of human freedom based on natural law in the words of Thomas Jefferson from July 1776. What the framers clearly believed was that each citizen had rights given by God and that these rights were beyond debate.

Surprisingly, our country is based on a very small but rock-solid foundation based on a relatively new idea (new in the history of our world)—that unquestionably each free person in America has, simply by being a member of the society, rights that no man or government can take away. Furthermore, if in fact the government does move to trample on those intrinsic rights, it is incumbent on the citizenry, because of the obligation of conscience, to rise up and rebel against tyranny.

If it is beyond debate that we hold these truths to be self-evident, then it is my contention that we have an obligation as citizens to not only guard our liberties but to use them virtuously to keep society stable. If we accept that our leaders do not and cannot tell us what to do and when to do it, then the obligation to rule over ourselves must lie with each of us. Simply put, we cannot act as unruly children but must be able to strengthen our society from the ground up with a common set of values. Here again Budziszewski makes an important point when he states, “They [his students] conceive an opinion as a kind of taste, like a partiality for one brand of soft drink over another. Many of my colleagues will tell them that they are right. The notion of the common good is yet more

¹⁸*The Declaration of Independence*. <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document> (Accessed July 22, 2010).

remote, a young woman in one of my classes needed it explained to her again and again.”¹⁹ There must then be some anchor, some measure of common understanding that we can all agree on. Without it, we begin to fall apart as a country.

The Gettysburg Address

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom— and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.²⁰

This short speech from our sixteenth president is a great example of the belief that our Creator gives us our rights and that we as citizens must do all we can to keep the fledgling republic together. Filled with Christian language, it brings the ideas of the Declaration of Independence into full view on a cold November day in Pennsylvania in 1863. Renowned Lincoln scholar Harry Jaffa says this about the effect of the address on history: “In all the literature of the world, perhaps only the Sermon on the Mount and the

¹⁹Budziszewski, 170.

²⁰*Georgia’s Blue and Gray Trail*, http://blueandgraytrail.com/event/Gettysburg_Address_%5BFull_Text%5D, (Accessed July 20, 2010).

Lord's Prayer have been repeated so often or have evoked such feelings of reverence and piety as has the Gettysburg Address."²¹

“Our fathers brought forth a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” Here we see Lincoln directly calling the citizens to use and utilize the ideas of the Declaration of Independence and the truth that our Lord has made us equal. He calls it a proposition because the equality of all men was not a widely shared view around the world, and was certainly not shared by most soldiers and sailors fighting for the Confederacy.

“That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom.” This phrase is wrapped in Christian redemptive language, as many in the crowd would recall not only Christ's death for all mankind, but His words saying that there is no greater love than that a man should give his life for his friends. Understanding that sacrifice, it becomes absolutely necessary that each man be ready to defend the proposition that all men are created equal a certainty. And, moreover, that the experiment in human freedom and responsibility based on natural law should become a reality for the generation listening at Gettysburg and also for the postmodern one that sits and listens to this lecture in general military training in the early twenty-first century. Moreover, citizens must understand that the government we have and the freedoms that we enjoy are not necessarily eternal, but demands vigilance—not only because of powers and threats from outside of our country but from within it as well. This, then, demands that we not be antinomians in our own lives and in society at large. Rotting from within because of an amoral outlook over a sustained

²¹Jaffa, 78.

period of time is just as, if not more dangerous, than a direct invasion from a foreign aggressor.

Lincoln talks about dedicating, honoring and hallowing sacred ground, and finishing the work that has begun. What wraps all that together? It is the absolute conviction that the soldiers were fighting for freedom based on the fact that our Lord gives us freedom. To Lincoln and to the stunned crowd, these were objective truths that are worth fighting for. Without objective truth—without patriotism based on the freedom God gives a man—there would be no reason to uphold his own honor and stabilize society. But if a citizen agrees that these things are true, he must also accept the idea that he has an innate responsibility to be a virtuous citizen for the well-being of the republic.

Hopefully this realization will awaken servicemen and women out of their postmodern, secular and self-centered slumber so that they can begin to rebuild their amoral “bucket” of conscience into a conscience that has, at its core, the self-evident truths that our country is based on—the truths within its founding documents. As chaplains, we can use worldly wisdom wherever we find it. Lutheran theologian William Wright makes this clear when he writes:

Luther discussed how God wrote His law, or “natural knowledge,” in the minds (*mentibus*) of all people. This explained why certain heathen writers were so great; that is, their source was this natural knowledge. The Reformer named Aesop, Aristotle, Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, and Cato as examples of such sensible heathen writers whose source was natural knowledge. Indeed, Luther recommended that their books be used to counteract the evil desires of the “uneducated and unruly individuals” of his own day.”²²

As a teacher and counselor of the unit, a chaplain can continually, even daily, teach objective truth to his people and help them to realize that many of the truths that Cicero,

²²William Wright, *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms. A Response to the Challenge of Skepticism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 101–102.

Confucius, Aristotle, Luther and George Washington believed in were held in common by all, and haven't changed through the centuries. As ethicist Josef Pieper makes clear, "We may well turn to 'the wisdom of the ancients' in our human quest to understand reality, for that wisdom contains a truly inexhaustible contemporaneity."²³

One great advantage that so many chaplains have over their civilian counterparts is that they often see the entire life of a member play out in front of them. While pastors may see their parishioners once a week and don't really know what they do or how they live when they return home, a chaplain, especially one on deployment, sees so much more of his people and is able to teach, mentor and preach to them in a way that civilian pastors can only dream of. Living in an eighty-man tent in the Iraqi desert for months made me intimately familiar with the members of my command. It was a great chance to not only mentor them, but to be able to preach very specific Law and Gospel to them, because of my unique position and the access I had to my people. Especially on long-term deployments, these people become closer to a chaplain than his own family in the day to day realities of life. It is within this situation that deep discussions between the chaplain and service members take place, spanning the length and breadth of human experience. Questions of salvation, history, philosophy, politics, sports, etc, can be tossed back and forth between the chaplain and the man with whom he shares his common experience. They have both given up so much that they have a bond that cannot be duplicated. To live far from home, to endure the hardships of combat, and to stoically bear the physical and psychological burdens of war give the chaplain a unique insight into the hearts and minds of those who have willingly given up many of their rights to

²³Joseph Piper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), xii.

fight for their country. And it is within that bond of trust that the chaplain as teacher can greatly affect the moral life and philosophical outlook of many members of the command.

Indeed it would seem that chaplains can begin to do what their nineteenth century counterparts did on board ships—namely, to teach and train the crew. In the early days of the United States Navy, the chaplain was one of if not the most educated member of the crew, and spent much of his time teaching the basics to a largely illiterate crew. Today the illiteracy is different but is still very dangerous: the young men and women who stand the watch and are taught the core values of their respective services are, in many cases, tough postmodernists who refuse to believe in objective truth. And, even if they are well trained in boot camp or officer candidate school on those core values, they may still jettison the truths that their unit is built on in exchange for those self-defined truths that they brought from civilian life. Without a solid foundation, a secular antinomianism can build up as young men and women decide for themselves what is true and what is not—with great consequences for themselves, their unit and the republic. That is why a chaplain diligently ties together the heritage of our founders and the truth that has been accepted through the ages, showing how the core values of the Armed Forces reflect it and are the glue that it is built on.

As a chaplain endorsed by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, I have a unique opportunity as an agent of the state with a foot in both the Realms of Right and Left to be able to mold the consciences of young men and women. As mentioned above, Martin Luther had no problem using authors who weren't even Christian to teach truths he knew were implanted by our Lord into the psychological DNA of all humans. To teach

virtue, then, is to reaffirm what is already known (at least to those not completely hard of heart) to most people. Philip Melanchthon in the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* wrote this about Aristotelian training, “Aristotle wrote so well about natural ethics that nothing further needs to be added.”²⁴ As Lutheran pastors and chaplains, we should be ready to use non-Lutheran and even non-Christian authors if they can make our points about what is objectively true, using our God-given reason and understanding. Again chaplains will use the wisdom of the founding fathers and Abraham Lincoln in teaching the truths found in the Declaration and the Gettysburg Address; but in our informal counseling sessions and in our opportunities in daily ministry, we will have plenty of opportunities to use countless examples from many different times and places to make our points and mold consciences.

The Parameters Set

The purpose of this project is to use two of our country’s founding documents as training tools for servicemen and women to become “virtue warriors.” I conducted general military training (GMT) for the members of Coast Guard Sector Lake Michigan on March 16, 2011 (the Declaration of Independence) and on April 13, 2011 (The Gettysburg Address). At each event, approximately fifty officers, enlistees and civilian employees attended the briefs. My plan had three goals: First, that young men and women would understand that there are universal truths that we all should hold as a society, and that we have an obligation based on those truths to live as virtuous citizens. Second, I wanted to discover if our founding documents could resonate in the minds of the hearers in a way that can affect lives more than 150 years after their publication.

²⁴Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1939), 109.

Three, I wanted to help other chaplains to make “virtue warriors.” If I determined that the project of virtue and ethics training based on our founding documents had merit, I would then produce a primer for other chaplains that would be easy to understand and use wherever they are serving.

After each training module, I selected eight individual members of my command to fill out questionnaires on their impressions of the training and what they learned from the process. Moreover, each person that filled out a questionnaire was interviewed to flesh out their new understanding. All members questioned were members of the US Coast Guard from Sector Headquarters, Lake Michigan in Milwaukee or else civilian members who work in the command. They each gave verbal consent that their written and oral statements could be used in this MAP. Four men and four women agreed to be questioned after the first training module, and six men and two women were questioned after the second.

Summary

When Union troops moved forward to the battle line in Gettysburg in early July 1863, they sang the words of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” They sang “His truth is marching on.” What truth was that? They believed in a God who was just and who compelled them to fight for the freedoms of their fellow man—they believed that they were obligated by the One who created them to do this work. As a result, they believed that the Lord was on their side as they battled an enemy that did not believe in the equality of man. If they, as a community of fighting men, did not believe in universally accepted truths, it is hard to imagine a president being able to rally them and the country around the banner of what he perceived as a righteous cause. Thankfully they did believe

in objective truth, and willingly fought to preserve the Union and the unshakeable belief in the ultimate equality of man expressed in the Declaration of Independence. A few months later, their president would establish the site of the battle as a monument to the sacrifice of many thousands of soldiers who perished in order that their Union could live on in peace and freedom.

In April, 1945 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor who had worked for the overthrow of Adolf Hitler, was executed by SS guards just days before his concentration camp was liberated. His Nazi judge could not ride the train all the way to the camp and instead rode the last few miles on a bicycle to ensure that he could pronounce sentence on Bonhoeffer. Why would he do that? He had to know the war was lost. Moreover, he and Bonhoeffer almost certainly received a similar classical education as children and one would expect that their consciences would have developed in a similar way. Why then, was one a Christian and one a Nazi? Adolf Hitler took power in early 1933 and by 1939 had led his nation into war that ultimately killed fifty million people and turned a sophisticated, cultured nation into a xenophobic, hate-filled place that killed countless innocents. How? The Nazis were able to fill the “buckets” of their people with hatred and a rabid nationalism and reshape enough of their consciences that many of them willingly committed crimes against humanity—all the while thinking they were doing a good thing. This happened in twelve short years. Harry Jaffa describes the change in the German conscience when he says this:

Leo Strauss, commenting after the Second World War on the fate of the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence, cites as authoritative a German scholar who said that by “abandoning the idea of natural right, and through abandoning it, German thought has ‘created the historical sense,’ and thus was led eventually to unqualified relativism.”²⁵

²⁵Jaffa, 83.

It took a little more in a decade for Adolf Hitler to seize power and change the consciences of enough of his countrymen to lead the rest of Germany into a World War that promulgated evil in ways that the world had not yet seen and could hardly believe. He did not come close to changing all the people in the society, but he and his minions were able to tear down the collective conscience of millions of Germans and rebuild it in his own twisted image, with disastrous results for himself, the nation and the world.

This is a stark warning to all of us, especially in a republic that demands its citizens believe in objective truth and live virtuously in their public and private lives. In this postmodern air we breathe each day, we must battle those who teach and preach that there is no objective truth and that virtue is self-defined. As Stanley Hauerwas sadly proclaims about our Godless society, “It is no longer hard to disbelieve.”²⁶ Our republic started as one that took it for granted that our Creator granted us rights and that also assumed its citizens would practice virtue. Again, Hauerwas frames the subject well when he states:

Once there was no Christian ethics simply because Christians could not distinguish between their beliefs and their behavior. They assumed that their lives exemplified (or at least should exemplify) their doctrines in a manner that made a division between life and doctrine impossible.²⁷

We have had to come to talk and teach virtue ethics at this late date in the life of our republic because old assumptions about what is right and what is wrong simply do not hold any longer. In the twenty-first century, it cannot be assumed that any twenty-year old

²⁶Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident Aliens: A Provocative Christian Assessment of Culture and Ministry for People Who Know That Something Is Wrong* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 50.

²⁷Stanley Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in Truth: Holiness Exemplified* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 20.

will believe in any objective truth. Therefore, it is incumbent, especially upon chaplains, to use their authority as trusted teachers and mentors to use the wisdom of the ages to rebuild the consciences of our young servicemen and women so that they can be virtuous warriors and citizens.

In the end, it is our goal to bring them to a point where, as E.W.A. Koehler states, “but as for conscience itself, man must be led to recognize his obligation under the Law and to realize his responsibility to God.”²⁸ In this chapter I have examined the need to train young men and women in the military who have an amoral attitude in natural law for the sake of the stability of the republic. In the next chapter I will examine the Biblical basis for my thesis.

²⁸Koehler, “*Conscience*,” 363.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

In the first chapter, this MAP examined the idea that when people are taught the precepts of natural law, their own moral outlook begins to change. In this chapter I will examine the Scriptural aspect to that change. John Adams wrote often about the relationship between religion and the safety and security of our republic. For him, liberty and religion were inexorably tied together and helped to stabilize the republic, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”²⁹ Alexander Hamilton said this about the Creator's role in giving natural law to His people and the ethic that must result, “The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.”³⁰ To those who may attack Adams or Hamilton as simply being evangelical Christians trying to impose their morality on the rest of society it is clear through their lives that they would have never considered themselves anything of the kind and did not, for much of their lives, even attend church regularly or profess any denominational preference. Quite simply, they were two men who understood the same God who had woven together the universe was the same one who gave all men a conscience and expected them to live in a virtuous

²⁹Clousen, 46.

³⁰Daniel Driesbach, *The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2009), 113.

way. Each would have used the stories contained in the Old and New Testaments as teaching tools in creating a societal virtue ethic based on natural law. In this chapter I will examine several examples from Scripture that will illustrate natural law and the expectation of a virtue ethic of all men.

After they had fallen into sin, Adam and Eve hid from the Lord when He came looking for them in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3).³¹ Why? They had disobeyed Him and they knew that they faced judgment. Trying desperately to push the blame (and the resulting judgment) away from himself, Adam points the finger at his own wife. Even though he is the head of the house and has been given the instructions by God himself and was certainly at fault, Adam tries his best to play the role of a little child and pin the blame on someone else. If there were no conscience, there would be no need for explanation; a person could simply do something and not feel a need to justify why he did it. He could simply say, “I wanted to, so I did it.” In Adam’s case, and, for most humans after him, when confronted with the power of the Law, there is at least some attempt at explaining away what has been done—an attestation to the existence of natural law.

Joseph’s brothers are frightened (Genesis 45) when he reveals himself to them after they had mistreated him so many years earlier. They feared that this righteous judge (Joseph) would throw them in jail or perhaps even execute them for what they had done so long ago.

In the Book of Exodus, the Egyptians trembled as they suffered for their Pharaoh’s refusal to let their Israelite slaves go. They had endured many great plagues that they

³¹Edward A. Engelbrecht, ed. *The Lutheran Study Bible, English Standard Edition* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 18, 20. All Biblical references in this MAP will come from this version.

knew came from the hand of the God of the Israelites, and they were finally eager to let them go so God's judgment would leave them.

Again, it is in the natural revelation that man can see his Creator and know that he is accountable to the One who made him. David writes (Psalm 14) that the fool (*nabal*) says there is no God. And because of this, the fool has a closed mind. In modern America, this is tough for atheists to accept. Would we say that the writer Ayn Rand, the philosopher Richard Rorty, the evolutionist Richard Dawkins or the great philosopher Bertrand Russell (all atheists) are fools? While it is clear that they all have intellects of the highest caliber, the Psalmist claims that because they deny something so self-evident, are, in a one very great sense, fools.

The Psalms contain a beautiful testimonies to the evidence of what God has made. The Psalmist writes (Psalm 19:1-3), "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky about proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard."³² The hiphil participle form of *nagad* (to make known) in verse 2 paints the picture of God causing His declaration to continue each day and night through creation as long as the earth exists.

Paul draws on this fact when he speaks to the Lystrans (Acts 14:17) and reminds them that God "did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with gladness."³³ As with America today, the Roman empire of the first century was filled with all kinds of beliefs,

³²Ibid., 861.

³³Ibid., 1864.

cults and practices. The crowd of Lystrans believed that the gods Hermes and Zeus had come before them in the persons of Paul and Barnabas. Paul tried desperately to use the imagery of creation to clarify that he and Barnabas were not gods, but men. Even though he did not succeed (that is, if you count stoning as unsuccessful), at the very least Paul's sermon places the Law squarely into the hearts of the men and women listening as they either reject it or believe.

Additionally, Paul's speech to the Athenians in the Areopagus (Acts 17:28) draws on his assumption that all men know God because of the evidence of creation that surrounds them. Speaking to the intellectual elite of the city, he uses their own pagan verse, "In him we live and move, and have our being,"³⁴ to try to penetrate their hearts and lead them into the theology of the resurrection of Jesus. Again, his words function as Law as non-Christians are faced with the idea that God has made them and has instilled in them this knowledge of creation through their consciences.

The key text in the whole of the Scriptures that speaks of natural law comes from the first two chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans. He declares that all of mankind knows that God exists and will judge them as Creator. Perhaps the key passage is found within the first chapter when Paul states: "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19–20).³⁵ The apostle Paul makes clear that all men know that God exists; they may deny it,

³⁴Ibid., 1873.

³⁵Ibid., 1909–1910.

but it is true. Moreover, because He exists, He must be obeyed. Paul goes on to speak of men and women who disobey our Lord—their hearts become hardened to the truth, and they go on living a defiantly sinful life. In his commentary on Romans, R. C. H. Lenski makes this clear when he states:

Paul says that this knowledge (*ta ginoko*) regarding God is (*phaneron en autois*), is “manifest,” clear “in them,” i.e., in their consciousness. It is by no means hazy, indistinct, and thus useless. For, he adds, God himself made it manifest, clear, distinct to them. Men cannot charge God with hiding himself from them and thus excuse their irreligion and their immorality. The aorist expresses the fact.³⁶

Lenski makes a strong case not only in the narrative as a whole but in the grammar specifically that natural law is in the hearts of all men. They can deny that fact and live contrary to nature, but the Law is always there and will judge them accordingly. In Romans Paul speaks of women abandoning the created order “contrary to nature” (Romans 1:26) (*physis*) (Romans 1;26), and he speaks of the Gentiles doing by “nature” (*physis*) what the law requires (Romans 2:14). In Greek, *physis* means “the natural form or constitution of a person or thing,”³⁷ In other words, a being doing what his body is made to do.

Is God revealed through nature? In his commentary on Romans, Thomas Schreiner says this about those to whom the natural knowledge of God is manifest: “The specific word (*ethne*, Gentiles) is not found, and instead Paul speaks of (*anthropon*, people, v. 18). . . . Moreover, the passage as a whole is redolent of the fall of Adam, suggesting a reference to all humanity.”³⁸ Several contemporary commentators have tried

³⁶R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1936), 96.

³⁷Robert Scott Liddle, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, England, Oxford Publishing, 1945), 1964.

³⁸Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 81.

to make the case that the text in Romans 1:18 refers ultimately to those God-fearing Israelites who are idolaters, but Schriener makes a case that the text clearly points to all humanity. He states:

People perceive his eternal “power and deity” (*dynamis kai theiotes*, v. 20) through observing the created world. . . . They come to a knowledge of God through the created world because “God made it manifest to them” (*ho theos gar autois ephanerosen*, v. 19). Of course, this knowledge is mediated through observation of the created world. . . . God has stitched into the fabric of the human mind his existence and power, so that they are instinctively recognized when one views the created world.³⁹

In his great *Popular Commentary on the Bible*, Lutheran theologian Paul Kretzmann writes about how men see God through nature, “Men have the truth, the revelation of God in nature. And this truth is intended to have a moral effect, to keep men in check, to guide them in the way of civic righteousness. . . . Human reason, when rightly used, cannot help but perceive the divine qualities as manifested in the work of creation and providence.”⁴⁰ The Jesuit theologian Joseph Fitzmeyer writes this about God being perceived in the book of Romans 1:20, “Although God cannot be seen with human senses, he is perceived in his works by the human mind.”⁴¹

Paul also speaks of the law (*nomos*) of marriage (Romans 7). Certainly here Paul is speaking to his Christian brothers, but he seems to make the case that most or all cultures would understand the ideal of the sanctity of marriage. Answering some objections to his defense of natural law, the Catholic ethicist J. Budziszewski says, “Show me a society

³⁹Ibid, 87.

⁴⁰Paul E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, New Testament, Vol. II* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1978), 13.

⁴¹Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *Romans* (New York: Anchor, 1992), 280.

that doesn't recognize the institution of marriage!"⁴² Consider the many groups of people who developed through hundreds, if not thousands of years, without being affected by different groups, and yet when found they too had the institution of marriage; there's simply no way that could have been a fluke or accident. Positive parts of society (like marriage) and things universally condemned (like murder) bear strong testimony to our Creator and natural law.

There is no doubt that in the world of first century Rome there were a great many educated people (as today) and they did debate these very issues. But, in the end, original sin claims us all. And, when our conscience becomes darkened through all sort of impiety, we lose our fear of God's righteous judgment and there is little or no check on our behavior.

Christian or not, all people have that built-in sense, a fear of God's wrath for sinful behavior, that keeps individuals and societies in check. Certainly among those who are not Christians, many will deny objective truth and be especially upset by the idea that God has given us a conscience and demands not only spiritual righteousness (John 3:16–18) but civic righteousness as well (Romans 13:1). Indeed that is hard for non-Christians to grasp (and even many Christians), but it is an ever-present truth and expectation of our Creator. A society which contains many people who deny objective truth (or any truth at all) is in danger. As the conscience of those people darkens through behavior and is combined with a philosophical system that denies truth, societal instability increases dramatically.

⁴²Budziszewski, *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide* (Dallas, Texas: Spence Publishing Company, 2003), 117.

Wearing the cross on our uniforms, military chaplains are similar to our civilian brethren who wear clerical collars in the bank, store, or at the ballgame. Many people who see us may do so in a Law sense, (for example, feeling guilty about not going to church, or explaining to the pastor something that's bothering him). Others may see him in a Gospel sense (the forgiveness man). Either way, most people, Christian or not, will respond at least for a moment in one of those two paradigms. In the military, it really is no different. For example, people are always apologizing to me when they swear in my presence. Why? They know something is wrong, even if they are certain to do it again in five minutes. For that moment, however, I am the Law to them. They feel a need to explain, apologize, or excuse behaving in such a way. Why? For many (if not most) I would say that's the effect of natural law on their consciences; they know they have done something wrong and must explain it away or ask for forgiveness.

This leads to what I call the "Nazirite influence." When people saw John the Baptizer, many went to him and asked for help, for advice, and to be baptized. Seeing him in his garment made from camel's hair reminded the Israelites that he had been set aside for special work and also of their need for repentance and good works. Even many Israelites who were not Nazirites did proclaim the ethic of their Lord as they lived. The great piety of Daniel even in the face of an unjust law impressed the Persian king Darius whom he served. resolutely accepted his punishment of being thrown into the lions' den, and after Daniel survived, Darius ordered that Daniel's God be proclaimed around the kingdom.

As a military chaplain, I also have that kind of influence (although, of course, on a much smaller scale) on many people. They see the cross on my collar and they know,

even if they have very little understanding of the Scriptures or Christianity, that I am some type of representative of God and therefore someone to apologize to when they do things that are wrong (especially when I witness them). Many civilian pastors spend years getting to know their parishioners, while military chaplains have usually between one and three years before they are told to move on to a new assignment. However, many chaplains who deploy and live with their units get to know the men and women of their organizations much better than their civilian counterparts. Going on long hikes, living in hazardous field environments, sharing privations, and, in many cases, experiencing extreme danger, brings the military chaplain much closer to those in his spiritual care than he would otherwise be. It is that constant Nazirite-like presence that sings the conscience of so many. It is there that I can bring the ideas of natural law and conscience to the believer and unbeliever alike.

Martin Luther believed natural law was written on the hearts of all people. In his sermon “How Christians should regard Moses in 1525 Luther said, “We will regard Moses as a teacher, but we will not regard him as our lawgiver-unless he agrees with both the New Testament and natural law.”⁴³ In his book *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World*, Dr. James Voelz builds on the Lutheran approach to natural law when he states, “In what way is the Law, then, of value in the Christian life? According to Luther, the correspondence between OT moral ordinances and the natural law makes mosaic legislation valuable for pedagogical purposes, because it is a clear expression of natural law.”⁴⁴

⁴³E. Theodore Bachman, *Luther's Works, vol. 35, Word and Sacrament I*. (Philadelphia, Muhlenberg, 1960), 166.

⁴⁴James Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997), 339.

Indeed natural law is written on the heart. All societies and all cultures approve of certain institutions (like marriage) and disapprove and generally punish other things (like murder). Moreover, the individuals within the societies understand that society is acting in a way that they themselves know is correct. As J. Daryl Charles writes in the book *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal*:

Surely Luther would have commended C.S. Lewis' argument regarding the *Tao* in *Mere Christianity* and *The Abolition of Man*. Not only does the natural law not contravene the ethics of Christ, as Lewis insisted, but as an ethical standard it simply cannot be circumvented insofar as it is the source from which all moral judgments spring. Basic virtues such as reliability, faithfulness, justice, mercy and generosity form the backbone of all "civilized" societies and are intuited as true, independent of human or religious experience. There is, then, common moral ground on which *all* people stand and by which we may engage in moral persuasion with *all*.⁴⁵

Here Charles is making a strong claim that as Lutherans, we have every right to speak to anyone we choose, whether they be Christian or not, in terms of natural law, as we can expect them to understand the terms we are using. And, that they as human creatures understand through their own consciences (whether they admit it or not). In his books *Written on the Heart* and *What They Can't Not Know*, J. Budziszewski finds great fault with postmodern philosophers who strenuously deny what the ancients understood to be true and what societies not nearly as technologically advanced as ours accept without complaint. He states:

Moreover, natural law is especially pertinent to politics just because it is written on the heart, for that makes it a standard for believers and unbelievers alike; not only is it right for all, but at some level it is known to all. Even the pagans knew it. They caught hints of it in the plays of Euripides, they heard its name in the treatises of the Stoics, they saw it reflected in the commentaries of the Roman lawyers, and all these things made sense to them, because, like us, they felt it pressing upon their inwards: prior to art,

⁴⁵Robert C. Baker, ed., *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* (Saint Louis, Concordia Publishing, 2011), xvi.

prior to philosophy, prior to statecraft. Yet this law can be repressed. Philosophy itself can be a higher mode of ignorance.⁴⁶

In the public and private spheres, man's conscience cannot ultimately be denied. People may try their best to dance around the issue, but nature and their own consciences compel them each day to witness the mighty power of the Creator. It has been this way ever since the fall of Adam and Eve into sin, and it will be so until Christ comes with his angels to judge the living and the dead and makes a new creation. In this chapter I have examined the Biblical foundation for universal truth and natural law that can be found throughout the Old and New Testaments. In the next chapter I will unearth the theological implications of universal truth based on natural law.

⁴⁶J. Budziszewski, *Written on the Heart: The Case for Natural Law* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 11.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

In this MAP I have identified a problem in this generation of a lack of belief in natural law and an amoral attitude that can result from the rejection of universal truth. I have identified two documents, the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address, as training tools to teach young men and women in uniform of the existence of natural law and their obligations to be civically-minded people because of it. I have examined the Biblical foundation of natural law and in this chapter I will identify the theological foundation of my thesis.

While many deny the manifold evidence of the existence of natural law but I would suggest that most people on the planet will generally agree that there is some force holding, or attempting to hold, the society together. Look around the world and examine the thousands of communities and see what similarities there are. Certainly there are differences—language, religion and gender roles, just to name a few. But there will be things that look very close to our own: marriage, theft, murder, assault. From ancient times until now, views on these issues have not changed. As David Van Druenen states, “Nevertheless, though the natural law is human nature’s own law, it is not therefore a human creation. Paul makes it clear that the requirements of this natural law are essentially the same as those of the Law of Moses. Thus the natural law is the law of God, proclaimed by the human heart and conscience.”⁴⁷ A tribe in the Owen Stanley

⁴⁷David VanDruenen, *A Biblical Case for Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Action Institute, 2006), 19.

mountains of New Guinea will promote marriage and punish a person who steals, just as the citizens of the state of Tennessee would do. In both cases, the community, bound by natural law, will act to approve of marriage and punish murder. Why? The law is written on their hearts. God places it there. That is why a small child, after punching his brother in the face, will either run away from his parents because he's afraid of punishment or try to justify himself in the face of an angry parent. In the 1993 movie *True Romance*, mafia hitman James Gandolfini explains to a potential victim how he vomited the first time he murdered someone.⁴⁸ Why? The same reason the guilty child flees the parent and the tribe in New Guinea punishes killing. It is written on the heart—when the pangs of conscience come in waves, you know you've done something wrong. In the Large Catechism, Dr. Martin Luther speaks of the universality of natural law and the worship that results from it when he states, “There has never been a people so wicked that it did not establish and maintain some sort of worship. Everyone has set up a god of his own, to which he looked for blessings, help, and comfort.”⁴⁹

Moreover, it is that natural law that keeps individuals and societies from becoming unstable. Christian or not, they know what they should and should not do (in general terms) as members of the community. And that knowledge is intended to keep people in check, and it helps their societies from becoming lawless. Lutheran theologian Paul Kretzmann lays out the case for civic righteousness based on natural law when he says this about Romans chapter two:

There are many heathen, unbelievers, who, by following the prompting of their conscience, shun every form of extraordinary shame and vice, do the

⁴⁸The Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108399/> (Accessed September 3, 2011).

⁴⁹Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 367.

work of their calling with all diligence, give assistance to the poor, and otherwise perform deeds which seem in total conformity with the injunctions of the written Law. . . . And now the heathen prove the work of the Law as written in their hearts, their own conscience testifying therewith, their own consciousness acting as witness for or against them. The natural law of God, the impress of His holy will in the heart of man, which tells him in general what is right and what is wrong, is accompanied and supplemented by the voice of conscience, which judges the concrete individual acts of a person, tells him whether the specific thing which he has done or is about to do is right or wrong.⁵⁰

In 2011 there are those who simply do not believe that natural law exists. In the last two generations, there has been a profound shift in belief. Many simply do not accept that our Creator has instilled a conscience within us that obligates us to live in a certain way. Even if we know it to be true (see Chapters 1 and 2), many feel that they are not bound by what they would consider “traditional mores,” and reject the right of others to impose upon them any strictures. What’s happened? Why the change? Can a public case still be made for natural law when many citizens deny its existence? This chapter will attempt to answer those questions and provide solutions to find a way through with the hope that natural law, once almost universally understood and accepted when our republic began, can once again become the narrative of the community.

Upon first reading *The Origin of Species*, Darwin’s mentor from Cambridge, Adam Sedgwick, wrote a letter warning Darwin that he was “deep in the mire of folly” if he was trying to remove the idea of morality from nature. If such a separation between the physical and the moral were ever to occur, Sedgwick said, it would “sink the human race into a lower grade of degradation than any into which it has fallen since its written records tell us of history.”⁵¹

It is hard to underestimate the effect Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* and its promulgation of the theory of evolution after it had burst onto the world’s stage in the

⁵⁰Kretzmann, 12.

⁵¹Ann Coulter, *Godless: The Church of Liberalism* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2006), 268.

mid-nineteenth century. Today, evolutionary theory is the very basis for almost all science and is accepted by a large number of Americans. One of the most dangerous side effects of the theory is the amoral paradigm it presents that is used by many philosophers, politicians and ethicists. Certainly not all evolutionists believe in an amoral paradigm (and they will be mentioned below) but many do. If God is not the creator of mankind or any of the creatures, than there is no intrinsic moral code written into the hearts of humans. Quoting the atheist Thomas Nagel, University of Texas ethicist J. Budziszewski makes this point when he states:

One of the tendencies it supports is the ludicrous overuse of evolutionary biology to explain everything about life, including everything about the human mind. Darwin enabled modern secular culture to heave a great collective sigh of relief, by apparently providing a way to eliminate purpose, meaning, and design as fundamental features of the world.⁵²

Without an intrinsic moral code to hold people back a new, self-defined system of right and wrong developed over the next few decades, often with disastrous results.

Conservative contrarian columnist Ann Coulter illustrates the effects in her book *Godless*:

After reading Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, Marx dashed off a note to Engels, saying, "This is the book which contains the basis in natural history for our views." While Marx saw the "struggle" as among classes, Hitler conceived of the struggle as among the races. *Mein Kampf* means "My Struggle," which Hitler described in unmistakably Darwinian terms.⁵³

Note the agnostic political systems of communism and fascism can only exist with a foundational worldview that has as its core an amoral paradigm that cannot allow for natural law. Without the acknowledgment of a God-given conscience, mass murder can

⁵²J. Budziszewski, 64.

⁵³Coulter, 268–269.

become a reasonably philosophically consistent application in the search for an economic or political millenarian kingdom on earth.

These are sweeping generalizations about what happens to people and societies who do not subscribe to natural law. Indeed intellectuals, authors and scientists exist who do build a coherent case for morality and justice without mentioning God. In the last century there have been many agnostic or atheistic voices that have constructed their own paradigms of virtue without referencing a Higher Power. The great American philosopher William James (1842–1910) and the father of American education John Dewey (1859–1952) constructed a virtue ethic without reference to the Almighty. Ayn Rand, the atheistic American writer of the mid-twentieth century, constructed the idea of “objectivism,” where self-interest was the highest good and could be used to keep society functioning properly; she would almost certainly bristle at the idea that God would be needed to construct a natural law philosophy. Moreover, she, James and Dewey would not agree society would break down into an amoral morass of murder or injustice if God was essentially removed from the public sphere. In Rand’s case, she felt the human being, freed from a code imposed by a society, could achieve an infinite measure of personal success which, in the end, would strengthen society. Dewey’s socialism led him to believe that if society was properly organized under rational principles mankind would benefit economically and socially as peace and justice would result from centralized governmental planning.

In our own time, atheists like Richard Rorty (1921–2007) would vehemently disagree that one would need God to construct a just and rational society. In his lifetime he attacked those postmodernists who criticized modern society without giving possible

solutions. Coming from his point of view, he would generally agree with me that postmodernists end up with little to build from, but he would not say that God is needed to have morality or create a stable society.

With evolution, postmodernism has had a profound effect on all parts of our society. With roots in the late nineteenth century, it strengthened after World War I, which sent many of the Western world's intellectuals and common citizens on a search for meaning after a conflict that left nations and the philosophy of modernism in ruins. For decades, people had thought the continuing progress of learning, specifically in science and engineering, would lead the world to peace and prosperity. This is why intellectuals like John Dewey felt strongly that rational principles and governmental planning could bring an unending era of peace and justice. After Napoleon had been defeated in 1815, Western Europe enjoyed relative peace for almost one hundred years. This led many to believe that peace and prosperity could continue for decades to come. The nineteenth century had seen an explosion of technological advances (the telegraph, railroads, steamships, etc) that changed the very face of the planet. For the first time in history, the Western world did not fear hunger as the Great Plains of America and Canada opened up and huge surpluses of food became available. At the time many believed that enlightened individuals, benevolent governments and other trusted institutions could continue to make astounding advancements that would benefit the world. But after the industrial slaughter in World War I (1914–1918), on a scale never before seen in the history of man, many intellectuals and others began to espouse what we would call today “postmodernism.”

As mentioned above, even atheists like Richard Rorty attacked postmodernists because of their inherent skepticism without providing answers to rectify society's ills. While this took many decades to come into full flower, American citizens of the twenty-first century are daily baptized by schools, mass media and their communities into the waters of postmodernism. As mentioned above, there certainly are philosophies and institutions, whether religious or otherwise, that battle against a societal critique of postmodernism, but this large postmodern societal paradigm finds its way into most segments of our culture. Predictably, it has led many to believe simply there is no truth; and that anything one believes is simply a matter of self-defined opinion. Again, J. Budziszewski sadly states:

When I ask my graduating college students to “formulate an argument,” I have to tell them what I mean. Many of them have never heard the expression; the idea of persuading someone by reasoning is new to them. They conceive an opinion as a kind of taste, like a partiality for one brand of soft drink over another. Many of my colleagues will tell them that they are right. The notion of the common good is yet more remote; a young woman in one of my classes needed it explained to her again and again.⁵⁴

In the twenty-first century, it is very common for people to not only reject natural law, but for many people it is a much more serious problem—they simply have never had it explained to them that there really is a difference between the subjective truths that they may espouse and the objective truths that God has given us that should bind us together. Certainly this is not an easy point to get across to someone who hasn't really thought about natural law, objective truth and subjective self-definition. Moreover, as Dewey, James, Rand and Rorty would point out, a construct of civic virtue can be made without reference to the Almighty. But for many young Americans, especially those in uniform, I

⁵⁴Budziszewski, 167–168.

would again argue that they need to confront the idea of what objective truth is, grapple with it, and, hopefully after some intellectual and spiritual debate, be able to identify and use natural law in their daily lives. Quoting noted philosopher of modern war Christopher Coker, Australian defense expert Michael Owens says this about the modern warrior:

Even the professional soldier who volunteers to fight sees war increasingly as a trade rather than as a vocation, a job like any other, even if it differs from every other in the fear and anxiety it generates. Even if that is not true of every soldier (and we produce a few warriors still), war in the early twenty-first century does indeed seem to the rest of us rather barren, bereft of that [existential] dimension that made the warrior a human type as Hegel understood the term, a man who through war perceives his own humanity.⁵⁵

As warriors are drawn out of the general population, it is very troubling that they have little understanding or acknowledgment that there is natural law and universal truth. Left on their own, they simply define truth on their own, leaving them with very little to embrace in their minds and their souls as they approach the battlefield. Adding to this point, Budziszewski states:

The worst that could be said of the pagans was they had not yet learned that man is made in the image of God. Although they naturally recognized the dignity of man and the justice that is due to him, their understanding of this intuition was deficient. By contrast, our thinkers have heard that man is made in the image of God, but deny it. . . . Refusing to learn, they finally distort even what they already know.⁵⁶

Natural law exists. All men, regardless of the age or place in which they were brought up, have a natural awareness of God and understand that there is good and evil. Joseph Fitzmeyer makes this clear when commenting on Romans 2:14, “Following the guidance of *physis*, Gentiles frame rules of conduct for themselves and know at least

⁵⁵Michael Evans, “Captains Of The Soul: Stoic Philosophy and the Western Profession of Arms in the Twenty-First Century.” *Naval College War Review* vol 64, no 1 (winter 2011), 33.

⁵⁶*Ibid*, 74.

some of the prescriptions of the Mosaic Torah. They have *physis* as a guide for their conduct, a guide that is ‘not only relative or psychological but absolute and objective.’”⁵⁷

Thomas Schriener adds to this point when speaking about Romans chapter two:

The reference to the conscience also points to the direction of natural law (v.15). The conscience in Gentiles proves that they are keenly aware of moral norms that accord with the Mosaic law. . . . The conscience is not the origin of moral norms but passes judgment on whether one has abided by those norms. . . . Here the purpose is to show that Gentiles who do not have the written law have a twofold witness to the moral norms of the law. First, the commands of the law are written in their hearts, and second, the conscience also testifies to the validity of those moral norms, in that it condemns or approves of the behavior practiced.⁵⁸

Institutions like marriage are upheld in most societies, and murder is condemned and punished throughout the world. The creation that surrounds us and the conscience that is within us bear constant witness that we have been made by God and will be held accountable for what we do. As David VanDrunen states, “Natural law is the only moral standard for which there is a common (though implied) indicative that grounds common imperatives: All people are created in God’s image and have his law written upon their hearts; therefore they should conduct themselves according to the pattern of that image and the demands of that law.”⁵⁹

Moreover, as Lutheran Christians, we have the right to engage with others, whether they be religious or not, within the paradigm of natural law as they know (whether they admit it or not) that God exists and He gives us this law which lives in our hearts and the heart of the world. The great Lutheran theologian Francis Pieper said this

⁵⁷Fitzmeyer, 309.

⁵⁸Schreiner, 123.

⁵⁹VanDrunen, 40.

about natural law: “In the realm of nature and in history God approaches man through things outside man. By writing His Law in the heart of man, however, God confronts man directly from within man’s nature. He manifests Himself as the holy and righteous God, who demands and rewards the good and condemns and punishes evil.”⁶⁰ In his book *What We Can’t Not Know*, J. Budziszewski says this about murder and how it is handled throughout the world:

By contrast, the rule against the deliberate taking of innocent human life is an immediate precept—a general precept that follows so quickly on the heels of the primary precepts that it can hardly be distinguished from them. I cannot blot it completely out of my heart. But I can rationalize, can’t I? . . . I can find a way to tell myself, “Yes, murder is evil, but this isn’t murder.”⁶¹

To further make his point, Budziszewski quotes the seventeenth century Englishman William Seldon who lived in during the tumultuous time of the English Civil War. He states:

I cannot fancy to myself what the law of nature means, but the law of God. How should I know I ought not steal, I ought not to commit adultery, unless somebody had told me, or why are these things against nature? Surely, ‘tis because I have been told so. . . . I cannot bind myself, for I may untie myself again; nor an equal cannot bind me: we may untie one another, even God Almighty.⁶²

For a society, especially a free society to continue to be stable, its citizens must understand the check upon their baser instincts that is based on natural law. Without it, republics don’t stand much of a chance of long-term survival. John Adams, writing about thirty years after the founding of the United States and worried that the atheism and mob

⁶⁰Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics, Volume I* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 372.

⁶¹Ibid, 74.

⁶²Budziszewski, *Written on the Heart*, 110–111.

rule of the French Revolution might one day overtake the country, wrote this to himself: “The doctrine of human equality is founded entirely in the Christian doctrine that we are all children of the same Father, all accountable to Him for our conduct to one another, all equally bound to respect each other’s self love.”⁶³ Adams, a Deist, was describing the rudiments of natural law, and understood that our Creator existed and gives us a conscience to love Him and one another. He rightly feared that if men didn’t believe it, they would live reprobate lives and the bonds of community would begin to fray—as they had in the mob scenes in Paris in the late 1790s when an atheistic cult of “reason” ended up destroying thousands of lives in the name of an invented form of social justice. David McCullough describes the anxiety of Adams over a “godless” French Revolution when he states, “He could not accept the idea of enshrining reason as a religion, as desired by the philosophies. ‘I know not what to make of a republic of thirty million atheists.’”⁶⁴ As Christian citizens bound by natural law, we must continue this narrative in the public square and in the private, informal conversations of our family, friends and neighbors. If we do not, two terrible things can happen: One, people within the community will sin boldly against God, their own bodies and their neighbors. Two, they can develop a secure system of thinking and doing that will rip the very fabric of the society into shreds—destroying liberty, lives and the peace of the community. Throughout the twentieth century, amoral, deterministic political systems, (communism, fascism, Nazism) worked hard to deconstruct the truths of the ancients and replace it with their own—often with disastrous results. Of course, many Darwinists would say that the political systems of

⁶³McCullough, David, *John Adams*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 110.

⁶⁴Ibid., 418.

communism, fascism and Nazism are perversions and should not be used to link all who do not believe in God to some kind of terrible system. Indeed, that is true. As we have seen with James, Dewey, Rand and Rorty, there are many agnostics and atheists who feel strongly that they can construct a godless society that has justice and equality. However, there are many other Darwinists like Karl Marx, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin who used atheism to deny natural law and rebuild their own truth, which led to much horror in the past century. C.S. Lewis warns us about this in his seminal work *The Abolition of Man*:

I am not here thinking solely, perhaps not even chiefly, of those who are our public enemies at the moment. The process which, if not checked, will abolish Man goes on apace among Communists and Democrats no less than among fascists. The methods may (at first) differ in brutality. But many a mild-eyed scientist in pince-nez, many a popular dramatist, many an amateur philosopher in our midst, means in the long run just the same as the Nazi rules of Germany. Traditional values are to be 'debunked' and mankind to be cut out into some fresh shape at the will of some few lucky people in one generation which has learned how to do it. . . . Once we killed bad men: now we liquidate unsocial elements.⁶⁵

Indeed, if we cast away the wisdom of God that is manifest around us, we will invent systems that may murder in the name of social justice. Indeed, the theme of the twentieth century may be the full flowering of political/economic systems that tried to do that. In the last on hundred years, many thinkers, freed from moral constraints of natural law, set out to remake the world in their own image. The result was carnage—millions of innocents killed in the name of new godless societies.

There are societies who do believe in natural law have still run roughshod over other societies that were not as strong as they were; indeed history is replete with examples of so-called Christian societies killing, destroying and stealing, not only from non-Christians but from other Christians as well. Francisco de Vitoria, a Spanish

⁶⁵Lewis, C. S., *The Abolition of Man* (Lits: London, 2010), 43.

theologian, harshly criticized his king for warring against the peoples of the New World. While most Europeans accepted the idea of colonization and exploitation, Vitoria did not think what was going on in the world was even close to a just war. J. Charles and Timothy Demy describe Vitoria's thinking this way: "Neither religious nor economic nor political reasons alone make coercion and warfare just. Therefore, war with the Indians to acquire their land is unjust. . . . The only cause for war that is just is a wrong that is intuited through natural moral law, a wrong that is discernable to all people everywhere through reason."⁶⁶ Speaking of the Spanish conquest of Central America, Roland Bainton said this, "The Spanish Christians so behaved that an aged chief in Nicaragua inquired, 'What is a Christian, what are Christians. . . . Christians will not work, they are liars, gamblers, perverse and they swear.'"⁶⁷

As Lutherans, we believe in original sin and understand that everyone, Christian and non-Christian alike, is dominated by their Old Adam which constantly lashes out at their family, their neighbor, and even those across the sea. This gives us a balanced and realistic view of human nature as we look around and see individuals and governments do things that harm many. We know why people hurt one another instead of helping each other. It does not surprise us because we see the theology of original sin playing out every day all around us. Moreover, two kingdom theory allows us to understand that a Christian can have one foot in the right side (the church, the forgiveness of sins through Christ) and one in the left (the government) and be a good citizen in keeping with Scripture and

⁶⁶J. Daryl Charles and Timothy Demy, *War Peace, and Christianity: Questions and Answers from a Just War Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossways, 2010), 131–132.

⁶⁷Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War And Peace: A Historical Study and Critical Re-evaluation* (New York, NY: Abington Press 1960), 167.

conscience.⁶⁸ It is my hope that for many in uniform—for those who may be Christians and for those who are conscientious people—that my appeal to natural law will resonate with them and ultimately make them better citizens, if not better Christians. Hopefully in the end, it will not only help the republic but the kingdom of Christ.

In this chapter I have examined the theological foundations of universal truth based on natural law and the need for all people, especially in a republic, to understand and abide by those truths so that their civic righteousness will stabilize their society. In the next chapter I will examine the current literature on the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, natural law, and virtue ethics.

⁶⁸ William Wright's book *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms* gives a thorough description of the Lutheran position.

CHAPTER FOUR

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter I examined the theological basis for the need to train young men and women in the United States military universal truth based on natural law by using principles gleaned from the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address. In this chapter I will examine the current literature surrounding these two documents as well as the latest work on natural law and virtue ethics.

In the twenty-first century, many of our young men and women who enter the service do so with an amoral outlook in life. This in itself is dangerous to our republic because we rely on our citizens to be virtuous and ethical—we rely on the people themselves to be the chief stabilizers of peace in the communities in which they live. In this project, I have endeavored to teach those in the military using the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address the importance of ethical living for those who live in a free country. Both documents assume that men and women understand the idea that God has given them a conscience and that they must not only know the difference between right and wrong, but are also obliged to act in uniform and out as good citizens. In short, I want to use two of our founding documents to drag people away from an amoral outlook to one that is moral and virtuous, based on the natural law concepts that are found in both documents. It is my assumption that most soldiers, sailors and Marines have very little idea of what is contained in these documents or of the concepts that bind all Americans together as a free people. This is a terrible and tragic irony, as every man

and woman who enters the U.S. military swears to protect and preserve the Constitution of the United States of America from all enemies foreign and domestic. How many have actually read it? How does it affect their behavior on the battlefield and their behavior when they become private citizens? In the last twenty years there have been a great number of books and articles written about virtue ethics in general, and, specifically about the modern American warrior's responsibilities as a free man (or woman) who fights against forces that are antithetical to our democratic way of life. Here it is my task to examine some of the literature of the last twenty years and examine the need for virtue in our warriors and the great moral tests of our men and women in uniform, especially after 9/11.

What has been written lately? We have been at war for a decade, and there have been multitudes of books written specifically about what it is like for men and women to be in combat. While the majority of the content of these books is about fighting in general, many of them hit upon themes that speak of the need for virtuous warriors—especially as war continues to drag on and the very humanity of the men and women fighting is put to the test in the crucible of combat. In this review I had the luxury of picking from many books, but I have limited myself to a few that focus on the moral state of members of the military. These will provide us with an idea of what they are thinking about and how they view the world.

Because of the emphasis on need for virtue ethics in the republic itself, I will also examine several books that deal with natural law, ethics, conscience, and morality. Moreover, I will bring other books into the discussion that deal with the need in our country for the moral citizen and the danger that immoral or amoral attitudes have in our

land in the twenty-first century. I will be dividing this chapter into six sections: the need for virtue in the republic, the need for a moral code in the military, the lessons from the catastrophe at Abu Ghraib, the idea of truth itself, the role of natural law and religion, and conclusions.

The Need for Virtue in a Republic

Many people today don't know the name Jim Stockdale. Of those that do, many may think of the character Phil Hartman played on the comedy show Saturday Night Live when he imitated Stockdale as he ran for vice-president on the Reform Party ticket in 1992. In the main debate against Al Gore and Dan Quayle, Stockdale at times looked confused and irritated. Moreover, he said things like "Who am I?" which made it seem to many as if he didn't even know who he was, let alone the fact that he was running as Ross Perot's potential vice-president. When Hartman portrayed him this way in the comedy skit, audiences roared. However, just about everyone missed the point. "Who am I?" was a serious question that Stockdale was posing to the American people. He was quoting the Greek stoic slave philosopher Epictetus who asked this question time and time again in his writings. Few knew that Stockdale had been a successful naval combat pilot, and had been awarded our nation's highest commendation, the Congressional Medal of Honor, for his heroic resistance to his North Vietnamese communist torturers in more than seven years of confinement during the Vietnam War. In short, Stockdale was a military hero who happened to be quite a philosopher of the human condition as well as a valuable voice for what it means to be an ethical citizen in uniform. In *Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot*, a man emerges that we almost never see who went through an experience that most Americans never will. We see a man who, when stripped of just

about everything he has, can show us what it takes to hold up under pressure. Part of his mental makeup included the ethics of a good citizen. Stockdale writes:

Probably no character trait was so universally identified by our founding fathers as essential to long-run success of the American experiment as selfless public virtue. In those days of decisions, almost all of them were quick with pleas for its encouragement and institutionalization. For instance, John Adams, in a letter to his friend Mercy Warren, author and sister of revolutionary leader James Otis, wrote: "Public Virtue cannot exist in a Nation without private, and Public Virtue is the only Foundation of Republics. There must be a positive Passion for the public good, the public Interest, Honor, Power and Glory, established in the Minds of the People, or there can be no Republican government, or any real liberty."⁶⁹

This is a devastating indictment of our republic by one of this nation's most important founders. Stockdale understands and sincerely believes that virtue was absolutely integral to the life of a free man. In short, he believes in truth and he understands good and evil. This was a radical departure from a culture that changed so quickly and completely in the 1960s and 1970s when relativism and postmodernism took so deep a hold on American society. It is interesting to note that Stockdale emerged from his cell right about this time the social transformation was complete. From his writings it is clear that if he hadn't believed in natural law and the obligation to resist as much as he possibly could the entreaties of his captors to betray his nation, Stockdale would either have become a traitor or simply have given up and died in his lonely cell. This book, written twenty years after his release and six years before the tragedy of 9/11, is an important building block for my own project.

In his recent book *We Still Hold These Truths*, American scholar Matthew Spaulding lays out the hard task before us in retraining American consciences. Citing the

⁶⁹James Stockdale, *Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot* (Stanford, California: Hoover University Press, 1995), 75–76.

founding fathers, he echoes Stockdale on the need for both public and private morality in those who govern and the citizens themselves. Spaulding writes:

Without a virtuous people, all the best constitutional structures and provisions, no matter how well constructed, would be unable to perpetuate republican government. George Washington pointedly recognized this fact in the draft of his First Inaugural. . . . Washington ultimately saw the “surest pledges” of wise policy in the character of the individual lawmakers. . . . Only if our representatives can govern themselves—restraining individual wants and passions—can they be capable of devising and adopting good laws while avoiding the temptation of tyranny. . . . The institutions of civil society, as well as their activities and purposes, are rooted in family life and religious community, and are naturally suited and uniquely responsible for the formation and development of moral character. Civil society helps transform self-interested and solitary individuals into morally responsible citizens.⁷⁰

In a day when there is great confusion and debate about the nature and even existence of truth itself, and about the role of natural law in the consciences of American citizens, Spaulding helps us to see directly into the thinking of the founders. The above quotation could have been from any one of our nation’s chief architects. Washington and Adams have already been quoted, but these could have easily been the words of Jefferson, Hamilton, Marshall, Franklin, or Abraham Lincoln. Indeed, these men did have furious debates with one another on a host of constitutional issues, and at times viciously attacked one another publicly. However, they did not disagree on the role of virtue in a republic. Quite simply, they all knew and deeply believed that if the government and the citizenry were not virtuous people, the country would not long survive. In the postmodern world of twenty-first century America, this is a sober reminder of the task that is before us. If the founders believed that virtue ethics based on natural law were integral to the survival of the republic, then how then do we teach the idea of truth to a cohort of young men and women, many of whom are strictly amoral?

⁷⁰Spaulding, 151–153.

Spaulding not only gives us a clear picture of what our founders thought about virtue, but also shows us the magnitude of our task as people who *do* believe in civic righteousness based on natural law. We know that God-given conscience exists, and our founders believed it as well. Our task, then, is to convince enough of our young warriors of this as well, so that they can be not only virtuous servicemen and women, but citizens of a republic who understand the role ethics plays in the health of their country.

The Need For A Moral Code in the Military

Each of the five uniformed services has a set of core values that they teach to their members as they begin their training, and they refer to them often in the everyday life of a unit. For example, the Marine Corps have three: honor, courage and commitment.⁷¹ Each Marine is given a card with these three words and their meanings, and Marines are expected to carry them on their person at all times for the rest of their lives. While these values are important not only to the integrity and stability of the unit, it can be very hard for an amoral service member to synthesize these concepts; such people need more help to see the “big picture.” In short, they need to know how these core values have developed over time. They need to know: Where do they come from? How do they affect me when I go on deployment to a dangerous place? How do values affect my relationship to the other members of my team? In a post 9/11 world, a great deal has been written about the need for men and women to have an inner motivation to get their jobs done. In this segment, I will examine some snippets of what has recently been written to demonstrate the need for an ethics system based on natural law.

⁷¹Wikipedia, “Culture of the United States Marine Corps,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_the_United_States_Marine_Corps (Accessed September 3, 2011).

Quoting the historian Jacob Burckhardt, Jim Stockdale writes, “Honor, writes Burckhardt, ‘is often what remains after faith, hope and love is lost.’ From my experience I believe he is right. A sense of honor under pressure can outlast them all.”⁷² In a cell for seven and one half years, deprived of almost everything and completely unsure of when he would be released, Jim Stockdale had to have a deep reason to conduct himself honorably in prison (even if it meant his death) and to do his best to return to those who loved him. As I have mentioned above, his sense of truth as revealed in natural law held him accountable and demanded he maintain his integrity even in the most horrific of circumstances. A simple lecture on the core values will not provide the kind of grist that will keep a man going in a jail cell or on the battlefield in the face of hard circumstances. It takes years of contemplation as citizen soldiers synthesize what it means to do the right thing and bring justice and peace to unjust, war-torn places. Ten years after the tragedy of 9/11, every man and woman knows there is a distinct possibility that he or she will serve in a dangerous place. Will their ethical worldview be ready?

In his landmark book *A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War*, historian Harry Jaffa spends time examining the principles that lie behind the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address. A large part of his work tries to understand how President Lincoln could get his fellow Americans to understand and agree with him that the idea “all men are created equal” was worth fighting and even dying for. Similarly, looking back to the momentous events of 1776, Jaffa says this about what it means to be a citizen: “A community of citizens is a community of those willing to fight for each other. Someone who will not fight for you,

⁷²Stockdale, 27.

when you are willing to fight for him, cannot be your fellow citizen.”⁷³ Many of us have heard that combatants will, in the end, fight not so much for duty or country, but simply to protect the person that is their friend in the same fighting hole. Here Jaffa is making the claim that all citizens, to be citizens, must be willing to lay their lives down as proof of their citizenship. This is a deep and profound statement; after all, how many people even think of serving their country in the military, let alone actually signing up and putting themselves at risk for their neighbors? Jaffa makes clear that free men should be willing to fight and die for other free men. Why? It springs from the deep conviction that they have obligations to preserve the God-given natural rights of their fellow citizens. This is hinted at in the core values of all five uniformed services, but Jaffa’s is a much more profound synthesis of what it means to have values and fight for your fellow man because of shared belief. Without this, Lincoln would have never been able to motivate millions of people to fight against a confederation of states who were dedicated to the idea that “all men are not created equal.”

Navy Chaplain Carey Cash has written a book entitled *A Table in the Presence* which chronicles the battles of the First Battalion of the Fifth Marine Regiment during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. 1/5 (as they are called) battled their way from Kuwait to Baghdad, Iraq through harsh resistance. 1/5 was part of the First Marine Division led by General James Mattis, known throughout the Marines as a “warrior monk:” a lifelong bachelor who has devoted himself to his vocation and the study of the art of war for almost forty years since his commission in 1972. Marines are a tough bunch, especially those in combat arms who put their lives in the line in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

⁷³Jaffa, 5.

They are dedicated to one another and they take great pride in themselves, their units and the Corps. Still, they come from a postmodern America that has a hard time believing in truth, and much of that seeps into the mental and spiritual DNA of the average Marine. How does a leader ensure that his Marines will fight? How should he prepare? Cash writes:

During a 2002 meeting with all the battalion commanders in First Marine Division, Major General J. N. Mattis had remarked that in light of a potential war, it would be wise for commanders to encourage their men to prepare themselves not only mentally and physically, but spiritually. To paraphrase him, “Ensure that each one of your men has made peace with his God and is ready, if called upon, to face the dangers of battle, and his own mortality.”⁷⁴

This is a sobering reminder of the harsh nature of combat, especially in a culture that does not celebrate death or, for many civilians, experience it very much. If Mattis had been a high school principal in a public school, he might have been fired for directing people to search their inward thoughts and ask themselves deep questions of existence, personal faith and mortality. With combat Marines, however, these had to be asked before a man had to raise his rifle against the enemy and perhaps take a life while risking his own.

Jim Stockdale speaks of the need for pinpointing what virtue is, especially when one may be asked to give his life for another. He writes:

That brings up the subject of an action that epitomizes the highest virtue to some of us and the worst sin to others: the willful giving of one’s life for a cause, that is to say, human self-sacrifice. Philosopher Glenn Gray spent his youth as a soldier on the World War II battlefields of Europe and in his book *The Warriors* tells us that many humanists attack the impulse to self-sacrifice as the very core of moral evil. . . . Gray the philosopher concludes: “Nothing is clearer than that man can act contrary to the alleged basic instinct of self-preservation and against all motives of self-interest and egoism. Were this not

⁷⁴Carey H. Cash, *A Table in the Presence* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2004), 91.

so, the history of our civilization would be completely different from what it has been.”⁷⁵

In the twenty-first century, the impulse is not to love or sacrifice for neighbor but to love and sacrifice for oneself. In the military, especially in combat, this impulse must be pushed aside so that men will understand the need for the group to survive, not just one individual. That is hard to do since the postmodern soup of self-definition is so strong in the hearts and minds of our servicemen and women. As Stockdale makes clear, it is not just that the elite do not agree with the idea of virtue and self-sacrifice, but that they literally see it as evil and push back against any counterargument.

But it must be done—truth and virtue based on natural law must be given to our young men and women in uniform. What happens when it is not done or the lessons are not taken to heart? Instead of coming home from a successful deployment in which a young serviceman can take pride in what he has done and then either continue in uniform or become a civilian again and make a positive impact as a civilian, he may come back quite damaged, unable to contribute to the country in any meaningful way. Americans who self-define and don’t believe in truth are at risk of committing grievous sins on the battlefield and coming back damaged in body and soul. Examining the work among veterans that noted psychiatrist Jonathan Shay has done, Shannon French, a professor of philosophy at the United States Naval Academy and author of *The Code of the Warrior: Exploring Warrior Values Past and Present* says this about those who commit immorality on the battlefield:

Veterans who believe that they were directly or indirectly party to immoral or dishonorable behavior (perpetrated by themselves, their comrades, or their commanders) have the hardest time reclaiming their lives after the war is

⁷⁵Stockdale, 107–108.

over. Such men may be tortured by persistent nightmares; may have trouble discerning a safe environment from a threatening one . . . and may have problems with alcohol, drugs, child or spousal abuse, depression, or suicidal tendencies. As Shay sorrowfully concludes, “The painful paradox is that fighting for one’s country can render one unfit to be its citizen.”⁷⁶

If true, this would explain why there is such a difference between veterans who return from the same conflict with very similar experiences. The case is similar to a civilian who continues to cheat on tests in high school is much more paranoid and perhaps may feel guilty about what he has done. An honest student would have no such qualms and would most likely feel good about what he has accomplished. Especially after a conflict in which the person might leave the theater of war without a clearly successful conclusion, one will wonder whether or not his actions were noble, and he will need a system to help judge his civic righteousness. At the time of this writing, the American military response in Afghanistan is almost ten years old with no real end in sight. How does a young man or woman come home from a conflict that has not had a successful conclusion? How do service members reintegrate into a society in which the vast majority of Americans have never served and a great number do not have any friends or relatives who have served? Will their ethical worldview hold up in this kind of circumstance, especially if they have returned with great wounds to their body or their hearts?

The Failed Test—Abu Ghraib

In early 2004, news began to leak out in official military channels and the United States press about American guards abusing Iraqi prisoners at a detainee facility called

⁷⁶Shannon E. French, *The Code Of The Warrior, Exploring Warrior Values Past and Present* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 4.

Abu Ghraib in central Iraq. Occupied by the American Army shortly after Operation Iraqi Freedom in March, 2003, it held large numbers of Iraqi prisoners, several of whom were mistreated by their American guards in obvious contravention of American military law and the Geneva Convention's regulations concerning the treatment of enemy combatants. It was particularly shocking as the United States had a solid record in the twentieth century of benign treatment of prisoners of war and other detainees.

The scandal at Abu Ghraib was a black eye for the entire military effort in Iraq, and trials for those accused lasted over two years. Moreover, the United States Congress held numerous public hearings about what happened in the prison. Fed by constant negative reports from the media, many Americans (especially those who had no relationship with the military in any way) began to assume that what had happened at Abu Ghraib was common practice. General Antonio Taguba led the Army's investigation and concluded that "The report cites 'egregious' 'sadistic abuses' and 'grave breaches of international law.' The abuses were viewed neither as morally justified because expedient for interrogation, nor as morally wrong but a practically necessary 'lesser evil' in the war against terror. Rather, there was a sense of the categorical wrongness of the violations. . . ."⁷⁷ We see that this echoes natural law in two ways. One, the report gives those accused the chance to defend themselves on grounds that what they did was necessary for self-defense or preservation, i.e. "I had to do it for my nation's self defense." But in this case there was no need to injure the prisoners in this way. As the report states, there is a "categorical wrongness" in describing what happened. In other words, reasonable people examining the case from the outside could agree that what went

⁷⁷Nancy Sherman, *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy Behind the Military Mind* (New York: Oxford, 2005), 174.

on was simply wrong, that these acts were violations of the human rights of those being held in prison.

That “sense of categorical wrongness” does not come from the U.S. Code of Military Justice nor does it come from the Geneva Convention; it comes from the God-given conscience that we all have. We do not need a written code to know when something is wrong; a conscience based on natural law will be able to understand that. Even in war when tired men and women are in charge of prisoners who might very well have killed Americans on the battlefield, even when those servicemen and women hold very clear and angry feelings against the enemy, it will still be obvious to them that torturing prisoners is simply wrong. Nancy Sherman makes this clear when she states, “Taguba argues as a soldier taking orders not just from his superiors but ultimately from his conscience and from a commitment to constitutional values. ‘Bottom line,’ he instructed his investigative staff, ‘we will follow our conscience and do what is morally right.’”⁷⁸

This tension intrinsic in the consciences of servicemen and women is especially evident now when we are fighting an enemy that is so different than most of our past foes. The average Al-Qaeda or Taliban fighter does not operate by the normal rules of war. He does not follow the Geneva Convention, and many times will mutilate and torture Americans who fall into his hands. When a Marine realizes this terrible truth, he may want to wreak revenge on those who seem almost feral. But that is the real test; can a person still retain his humanity in the face of brutal war? Sherman shows the stakes when she writes:

⁷⁸Ibid., 176.

Yet if we are to fight wars with some sense of honor, courage, and commitment, then we must be committed to being morally scrupulous, from commander in chief down to foot soldier, about the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate forms of violence. And this is especially so in the climate of war against terror, where the terrorists' gambit is precisely to wreak havoc on our sense of shared humanity.⁷⁹

Shannon French builds on this point when she speaks of the “warrior code” for young men and women and what it means during battle and what it means when the uniform is traded for civilian attire:

What will getting the job done do to our warriors if they do not have a code? Accepting certain constraints as a moral duty, even when it is inconvenient or inefficient to do so, allows warriors to hold on to their humanity while experiencing the horror of war—and, when the war is over, to return home and reintegrate into the society they so ably defended. . . . Those who are concerned for the welfare of our warriors would never want to see them sent off to face the chaotic hell of combat without something to ground them and keep them from crossing over into an inescapable heart of darkness. A mother and father may be willing to give their beloved son or daughter's life for their country or cause, but I doubt they would be as willing to sacrifice their child's soul.⁸⁰

The War on Truth and the Postmodern Battle against Natural Law

It is self-evident that our society is much more tolerant of what were once called deviant behaviors. Public sin and all manner of vice are accepted and soak through the very fabric of our society. If you randomly pick a situation comedy, you will probably find that there is very little respect for the ideas of truth, natural law and institutions like the church and the family. Even a show like *The Simpsons*, which debuted in 1989 and does have moments that teach a solid moral lesson, routinely denigrates authority, the church and the family. How much more a show like *Two and a Half Men* which makes *The Simpsons* look tame? When many of our young people spend hours in front of the TV

⁷⁹Ibid., 178.

⁸⁰French, 10.

or on the internet, it is little wonder that we have raised an amoral generation unable to judge and with very little understanding that a natural law and universal truth exist. How does one reprogram that kind of postmodernism to prepare people not only for service in the military but for citizenship in a society that demands they are the active agents of morality for themselves, their families and their communities? The esteemed Lincoln historian Harry Jaffa shows us the challenge when he writes:

The answer is that in our time, truth has been disarmed by the opinion that reason is impotent to know what is just or unjust, right or wrong, true or false. If there is not truth, or if the truth is beyond the power of the human mind to know, then free argument and debate as means of arriving at the truth are meaningless. Truth is thereby disarmed of her natural weapons a priori. This challenge to the principle of a free society is one that neither Jefferson nor Lincoln anticipated.⁸¹

Herein lies the great generational challenge: the idea of universal truth was accepted by our founders and it was part of the political and social DNA of the country. Quite simply, it helped to hold the republic together as men and women who were intrinsically free politically were held to a high moral standard as they kept themselves civically pious. Today we have a problem that the founders never envisioned: how does a free society regulate itself if there is no agreement about what is true? How then do you make good citizens? Matthew Spaulding describes the crisis when he quotes John Adams, “We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. . . . Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”⁸² Having been tortured by his Communist jailers (who do not believe in God or natural law but their

⁸¹Jaffa, 83.

⁸²Spaulding, 151.

own version of truth based on scientific history), James Stockdale says this about some of those who kept him imprisoned:

Morality shadows war and the preparation for it. Its echoes were always quietly vibrating even in the corridors of the North Vietnamese prisons. In the ordinary sense, what was moral to our jailers was immoral to us, but the subject lurked, always. I am not saying they honored our moral positions; but even as they waved them aside, if they detected conviction, consistency, and a sense of personal honor in us, their eyes sometimes betrayed the fact that they were inwardly moved. They winced when you stood your ground and made them send you through the ropes one more time.⁸³

Quite simply, the more people deny that there is a universal truth (which then allows them to do whatever they want to their enemies), the more they are forced to give evidence that it is real once they see a fellow human being mistreated.

People may deny the existence of a common truth that does not bind societies together, but the argument simply doesn't hold up in the end for two reasons. One, all people and cultures have way to understand right and wrong, as J. Charles makes clear: "Basic virtues such as reliability, faithfulness, justice, mercy and generosity form the backbone of all 'civilized' societies and are intuited as true, independent of human or religious experience. There is, then, common moral ground on which all people stand and by which we may engage in moral persuasion with all."⁸⁴ The second problem that a society will encounter where there is no natural law and universal truth is that the society begins to crumble under the weight of people who have nothing to hold them back from their passions. In the end this can only lead to a debased society or one under mob rule by demagogues who falsely promise something better in the midst of the ruins.

⁸³Stockdale, 118.

⁸⁴Robert Baker, *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* (St Louis: Concordia Publishing, 2010), xvi.

Summary

In a post 9/11 America, our country relies on our young men and women in uniform more than ever, not only to protect us from our enemies but to be people of civic honor and righteousness in the face of an enemy that does not respect Western values of humanity, freedom and law. Fighting a long war with this type of foe always involves the risk that those in uniform will end up going into battle and behaving like savages. Many good citizens join one of the five services because they are seeking a place that still provides a moral code that can be the basis of an honorable life. Nathaniel Fick is a Dartmouth graduate who had an almost endless number of civilian opportunities but instead chose to join the Marine Corps in 1999 and ended up making combat deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq. He said quite simply: “The Marine Corps was a last bastion of honor in society, a place where young Americans learned to work as a team, to trust one another and themselves, and to sacrifice for a principle.”⁸⁵ These civic virtues are simply lacking not only in our schools but in many of our communities and homes. I have ministered to thousands of young soldiers, sailors, and Marines and I hear this refrain constantly—they just wanted to be part of something bigger than themselves that believed in a set of core values that were shared throughout their service. This is an attestation to natural law; in an amoral society, many people want to bind themselves to a system that believes in truth and establishes a system of justice that reflects that fact. Our republic simply can have it no other way. Without truth based on natural law there can be no justice and no kind of shared community. In a time of war this becomes even more dangerous, as a country with a weak sense of shared values fights an enemy that does

⁸⁵Nathaniel Fick, *One Bullet Away, The Making of a Marine Officer* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 5.

believe it is right to kill to establish themselves and their power. Without civic warriors, we will lose our ability to defend ourselves and risk losing our nation. One of the most important books to emerge in the last few years is the book *War*, in which noted writer Sebastian Junger chronicles his exploits following combat soldiers through Afghanistan for several months. He says this about the average infantryman:

When men say they miss combat, it's not that they actually miss getting shot at—you'd have to be deranged—it's that they miss being in a world where everything is important and nothing is taken for granted. They miss being in a world where human relations are entirely governed by whether you can trust the other person with your life. It's such a pure, clean standard that men can completely remake themselves in war. You could be anything back home—shy, ugly, rich, poor, unpopular—and it won't matter because it's of no consequence in a firefight, and therefore of no consequence, period. The only thing that matters is your level of dedication to the rest of the group, and that is almost impossible to fake.⁸⁶

This kind of war cannot be fought by postmodernists who do not believe in truth. It must be fought by people that can bind themselves to one another based on a high personal code to save one another and protect their country. This is the challenge we face in this generation—to take men and women from an amoral, postmodern worldview and remake them into civic minded people who believe in truth based on natural law. In the end this will stabilize and save the republic that we have inherited from those before us. In his groundbreaking book *Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine*, Robert Coram talks about General Krulak's reasons for incorporating history into their recruits' training regimen:

The Mayflower Compact, the anniversary of the fall of the Alamo, and John Adam's unwavering commitment to freeing his country from Britain may seem to have little relevance to Marine officers at a recruit training depot, but these things reminded them that the Marine Corps had a heritage to maintain and reinforced the responsibility of citizenship in a republic. Finally, such

⁸⁶Sebastian Junger, *War* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2010), 233–234.

knowledge reminded them that there is often a threat somewhere in the world that is contrary to ideals set forth in America's founding documents.⁸⁷

General Krulak changed the curriculum in large part because he had discovered that many of the young men who joined the Marine Corps in the late 1950s and 1960s had little or no knowledge of history or civics. He believed this contributed to American prisoners of war during the Korean War giving away secrets and dishonoring themselves publicly. He reasoned that if they had known their history and had the "big picture" of what they were fighting for, they would have been less likely to talk to their communist captors, which would have kept the Marxists from scoring a significant propaganda scoop. Krulak was right; men and women in uniform need to know what they are fighting for—that the oath they take to preserve the Constitution is a serious one, and the documents and ideas that founded this country should still resonate in the hearts and minds of those who live under the American ensign. As we face the future, it is incumbent upon the military's leaders to teach these ideas and prepare our service members not only for combat, but for the time when they will be private citizens on whose shoulders the republic will entrust itself.

In this chapter I have examined the latest literature concerning the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, natural law and virtue ethics. In the next chapter I will describe the actual development of the project from its inception to the instruction, and finally, to the written and verbal interviews of the volunteers.

⁸⁷Robert Coram, *Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 2010), 256.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

Background

In the last chapter I examined the current literature concerning the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, natural law and virtue ethics. It is my contention that many Americans serving in the twenty-first century have an amoral attitude and do not believe in universal truth based on natural law. As a result, many have a small or non-existent idea of personal virtue ethics. This project was designed to examine whether or not a stronger virtue ethic could be developed in servicemen and women who would be taught natural law concepts through the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address. Through the teaching of natural law, I will attempt to measure any change in the moral outlook of the Coast Guardsmen who have taken part in the training. The findings of my investigation would help to form a teaching “primer” for chaplains of the five services to use to build ethics in the men and women of their respective units. In this chapter I will describe the development of the project, how it was presented to the command, the actual presentation, and the interviews that took place after the training was completed.

As I had been the chaplain of Coast Guard Sector Lake Michigan for two years when this project was under consideration, I thought it would be a good laboratory for what I wanted to try to accomplish. I had an excellent and trusted relationship with the commanding officer and the crew, and so I was certain I could convince my CO to let me

try the project. My CO (Capt Luann Barndt, USCG), had assigned me to do several other training modules before I tried this project. Serendipitously, I had, in September 2009 and 2010 lectured on the Constitution of the United States, its meaning and the deep natural law ideals contained within. In Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard units, the commanding officer has a power virtually unknown in civilian circles. The CO has the authority to make men and women complete a myriad of tasks, he has the ability to reward members for good deeds, and can punish those who disobey orders by taking away the rank they have achieved, the money they have earned, and even recommending their termination from the military. In this sense CAPT Barndt was a very typical CO. Having all that power she was able to decide whether or not I could conduct the training. Once she decided that she approved of my plan, I was given authority to carry it out. Moreover, the positive reactions I received from the crew of Sector Lake Michigan both times I conducted training on the words and the meaning of the Constitution of the United States, and the many questions that were posed to me by the members of the Command, only helped to confirm that a new and distinct training module about natural law and virtue ethics could in fact be attempted.

I was particularly anxious to attempt the project, especially after being deployed in Iraq for nine months in 2007 and 2008 and seeing the great battle between those who believed and lived by a code and those who were postmodernists and generally had an amoral outlook. Consequently, there were many problems with personal behavior (see chapter one), as servicemen and women simply did not believe they were doing anything wrong according to their own nebulous definitions of right and wrong.

I knew Coast Guard Sector Lake Michigan would be a particularly good testing ground, as most of the command knew and trusted me and generally looked forward to most of the training modules I had given. Military members are constantly made to sit through mind-numbing sessions that are often conducted by people who barely know more than those they are instructed. Consequently, many who endure the training turn off their minds, stare straight ahead, sign the document that says they were there, and then file out quietly after the module is done. My style, enthusiasm and knowledge of the subjects I taught were generally well received and, when I was put on the schedule, several commented on how much they were looking forward to my training. Armed with this information, and having many deep and lasting relationships with Guardians at all levels of the command, I was sure the groundwork was there for a potentially successful experiment.

After meeting with several professors at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in the summer of 2010, I decided that teaching virtue ethics through the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address might in fact be possible for my MAP. As I embarked on a large corpus of reading, it seemed like an interesting challenge and one that should be attempted. If anything, my reading confirmed the idea that our founders (Washington, Adams, Story) and President Lincoln (a generation later) believed in universal truth and a virtue ethic that emanated from natural law. Moreover, they all believed that a robust citizenry must know, understand this, and be able to abide by it so that the young republic could survive. Quite simply, without some common understanding of truth, there would be little restraint upon the citizenry, and mob rule would ensue, bringing down the government and plunging the nation into anarchy.

As I worked through dozens of books, articles, and dissertations about the virtue ethics, natural law, and the documents of the founding of our republic, I found a lot of work has been done (and continues to be done) on these subjects. While there were many intellectual items that spoke of virtue ethics, natural law and our republic, I could not find anything that had done what I was going to attempt to do, and I began to believe that my task was actually quite unique. Certainly there were all kinds of briefings and training modules on how to teach morals and ethics (especially in the military), but none of them fused them into the fiber of the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address, and the obligations that all American citizens have because of the common truths we believe, joined together by self-evident natural law. If the experiment proved at all successful, I felt strongly that I could construct some kind of “primer” for other chaplains to use anywhere with any group, in the hope that this kind of virtue ethic training could be understood and become rooted in the minds and hearts of at least some of those listening.

The Design of the Study

To become familiar with the aspects of the study, I researched many contemporary and ancient philosophers, theologians, warriors and historians. I ranged from Aristotle, Epictetus and Cicero in the Classical Period all the way through our theological forbearers Martin Luther and Melancthon to the American founders and then to Abraham Lincoln. In the twentieth century there was a treasure trove written on virtue ethics, morality, and responsibility that I could seize upon. In the twenty-first century, there is even more that has been written because of our decade-long struggles in Afghanistan and our seven-year sojourn in Iraq. Many men and women have written

books and scholarly articles on war itself, the morality of the conflict, and a citizen's duty to serve his country.

By far, the two most important writers that would make the most impact on the experiment were Harry Jaffa (*A New Birth of Freedom*) and Jim Stockdale (*Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot*). Now in his nineties, Jaffa is considered the foremost Lincoln scholar of our age. His research has led him to connect the natural law principles that Lincoln saw through the Declaration of Independence and how the document led him to the profound truths of the Gettysburg Address. Jaffa's discovery helped me see that both documents were reflections of natural law and convinced me to attempt to bring those truths out in training. Jim Stockdale, arguably one of the most unusual Americans ever, was revered in military circles for his stoic philosophy in the face of seven years internment in a North Vietnamese internment camp. Moreover, Stockdale was a credible amateur philosopher who put his beliefs to the test while he was tortured by his amoral communist jailers. He felt strongly that anyone joining the military must have a sound understanding of what his role as a virtuous person must be as a member of the republic. This common theme that is found throughout his writings helped to crystallize the idea of a solid virtue ethic training module.

The insights that I obtained helped me to build the training slides and the questionnaires that I would use. Once this project was approved by my advisor and my commanding officer, I arranged for two training sessions to be held. Both modules were conducted in the boat bay of Coast Guard Sector Lake Michigan and were attended by roughly fifty Coast Guardsmen and other support personnel. Each session was presented to the crew as general military training (GMT), and it was explained to them that this was

part of a project I was putting together for my doctor of ministry degree. General military training is a commonly used tool by military units to keep the members of the command up to date on a host of issues ranging from drinking and driving to suicide prevention and important historical commemorations that directly affect the service.

I informed those attending the training that I would be looking for volunteers afterward to meet with me in my office to fill out questionnaires concerning the training as well as doing an interview with me after they finished writing. The training on the Declaration of Independence took place on Wednesday, March 16, 2011 for approximately twenty-five minutes. The second module concerning the Gettysburg Address was done on Wednesday, April 6, 2011, again for approximately twenty-five minutes.

Methodology

After each of the two training segments I asked for volunteers to fill out the questionnaires I had prepared and to submit to a verbal interview after they had finished with their written answers. My hope was to have mostly younger men and women (who were military members) be interviewed, but I was willing to have older service members be interviewed as well. At Sector Lake Michigan there are civilians who serve in support roles, and I planned to have one or two sit for an interview. As there are significantly more men than women in the Coast Guard, I planned to interview more males than females.

One potential problem is the question of confidentiality. In the Navy Chaplain Corps, a service member can expect complete confidentiality with his chaplain with absolutely no exceptions. There is no mandatory reporting of any kind in which a Navy

chaplain is required to speak about what he has heard. The only time he can speak about what he has heard is if the service member releases the chaplain from confidentiality. In this case, I asked each person before the interview began if they would release what they wrote and said so the information could be entered into my MAP. With no exceptions, each of the sixteen people that were interviewed waived confidentiality and eagerly began the interview.

Each questionnaire and interview was conducted in my office in the Sector Headquarters. For two days after each training module, men and women who had been part of the training came in to fill out the form and submit to an interview with me. Approximately fifty people were present at each training session, and I had exactly eight volunteers for each questionnaire and interview segment. No person who volunteered after the first segment was allowed to be interviewed for the second segment so a total of sixteen Guardians and civilians filled out questionnaires and were interviewed.

Implementation

Questionnaire and interview number one, completed on March 16–17, 2011.

For the first slideshow I used a PowerPoint presentation of ten slides. One particular problem that I had to address was the evident paucity of historical knowledge of those attending the briefing. Indeed several of the officers and enlistees understood when and why the Declaration had been made, but I was certain that most listening that day had little or no understanding of what they were being briefed upon. In the two briefings I conducted concerning the Constitution of the United States, I found that many were simply astounded at what it contained; as they had never read it and had no familiarity with the document (this is very ironic considering all uniformed members swear to

uphold the Constitution at their induction). Suspecting this, I had informally sampled several people from the command in the days before the Declaration briefing about their general knowledge of Revolutionary history, and knew that I would have to start with a very general briefing on the history of the United States before I could get into the more specific ideas of individual rights and obligations under natural law. With only twenty-five minutes, I did not allow any questions from the group during the lecture and moved as quickly as I could through each slide.

After the lecture was over, I invited any volunteers to come to my office after lunch to fill out the questionnaire and submit to a brief oral interview afterwards. Over two days, eight men and women consented to the questionnaire and the interview. In the questionnaire itself, I asked several questions about the Declaration and its relevance to their everyday lives in the military. I also wanted to examine if they were able to identify whether or not the Declaration had anything to do with the Coast Guard's core values.⁸⁸ Lastly, I wanted to see through a practical question whether they could incorporate the idea of individual responsibility when conducting their duties.

Immediately after each questionnaire was completed, I sat down with the individual to ask a few basic questions based on the information that they had written on their sheets. I wanted to clarify some of their answers and try to engage them in a discussion about the Declaration, especially as it related to natural law and individual obligations. Each interview took between ten and twenty-five minutes, and I encouraged each person to speak candidly about what they thought and felt, and to question me if they were confused about the training or wanted additional clarification.

⁸⁸Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Coast_Guard (Accessed September, 3, 2011).

My first question was fairly open-ended in that I simply asked them about their experiences (if any) with the Declaration and what they felt about it. It was clear from at least half of those interviewed that they simply did not know much about the document at all, and had, until the training, very little idea of what it was about or how it affected their daily lives. After that I followed up with a question about its applicability to their lives whether they were in uniform or not. Here I was looking to see if they had internalized the information at least a little to understand the idea of freedoms given by God and personal responsibility.

The third question went to the heart of the idea of the founders that our freedoms were given to us by God. In the training itself I asked the question, “Does the government give you your natural rights or are they granted by your Creator?” I could see in the reactions on the people’s faces that many hadn’t ever thought of the question and did not have the first clue on how to answer it. As a result, I wanted to talk about the idea of natural rights and the responsibilities that have to follow for a society to stay stable. Here is where I thought the heart of the experiment really was: if I could get young men and women see that these two documents expected them to be responsible because God gave them liberty, I hypothesized that they would be affected to some degree and change their outlook from an amoral one to a more moral one.

In the final question, I wanted to see if they understood the relationship between the core values they were taught in boot camp and what the Declaration expects from each of its citizens. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, all men and women in the military services are constantly bombarded by countless training modules and routinely ignore the information. I was hoping through the training and the questions afterward that

I could get them to see the live connection of a two hundred-year-old document and the core values that they had espoused.

Questionnaire and interview two, completed on April 6–7 2011. I believe expectations were high for this training module on the Gettysburg Address. Although one mid-level officer had a “meltdown” and derided the entire training as meaningless (he used several curse words that I cannot repeat) even before it started, I was anxious to begin. I noticed at least one petty officer that I had interviewed after the first training module had brought a recorder to make a copy of what I was to say. I was very encouraged that perhaps what I was doing was beginning to make a difference in the lives of these young men and women.

I was worried that this subject would be even less known and understood than the Declaration of Independence, as I once again informally asked several people in the command questions about the Civil War, when it took place and what the outcome was. Again I had a short PowerPoint presentation of eleven slides, and I had approximately twenty-five minutes to finish my briefing. Moving quickly through it, I tried very hard to link the concepts of the Gettysburg Address to those of the Declaration of Independence and to get people to understand how President Lincoln understood individual rights and responsibilities.

The response was fantastic. Once again the assembled crowd burst into heavy and heartfelt applause after I was finished, and several people peppered me with questions immediately after the presentation was completed. As I had done during the first training module, I asked for volunteers to come and visit my office after lunch to fill out a questionnaire and answer a few oral questions that I had for them. In the next two days,

eight men and women out of about fifty who were present in the training came to my office. Waiving confidentiality for the questionnaire and for the verbal interview afterward, they agreed to be part of the study.

Like the first questionnaire, the second contained five questions with the last two being virtually identical to those in the first survey. The first three questions dove into the Gettysburg Address and the ideas of an individual's God-given liberty and the responsibility of a citizen living in a republic. In the first survey the written answers were very trite, but in many of the questionnaires on the Gettysburg Address, many of the written answers given were much more complex and complete.

In the verbal interviews, I once again tried to hit on the questions of individual liberty and responsibility and see if they had taken what Lincoln was talking about into their own lives. In short, could a man who lived over one hundred fifty years ago affect a Coast Guardsman in Milwaukee? Could he affect his core values? Does Lincoln's emphasis on personal liberty and responsibility affect people in their daily life, especially when Lincoln makes it clear in the Address that if citizens are not willing and able to defend their liberty and be active in their society, their republic may fail?

In this chapter I have described the development of the project from its inception through the presentation, ending with the interviews of the servicemen and women who volunteered to write down their impressions and then were asked follow-up questions. In the next chapter I will evaluate the data collected and construct the teaching "primer" to be used by chaplains throughout the United States military.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PROJECT EVALUATED

Field Research Data

The field research for this project involved two distinct phases: the questions based on the training and the interviews. The data from each phase will therefore be presented in a descriptive format and then analyzed in the light of the purpose of this project and the information obtained from the theoretical research already presented.

Training Questionnaire Results

Two different questionnaires testing two different training evolutions were administered over a period of one month, the administration of each questionnaire being separated by approximately four weeks time. Eight respondents completed the questionnaire presented on March 16–17, 2011, and eight respondents completed the questionnaire presented on April 6–7, 2011. A total of sixteen questionnaires were completed.

Questionnaire Number One, March 16–17, 2011, Eight Respondents

The First Question

When asked whether they had ever read the Declaration of Independence before, four (50%) answered “yes” and four (50%) answered “no” or were “unsure.” When asked in the follow-on interview to rate their understanding on a scale from 1–10 (1 being no knowledge and 10 being a full understanding of the Declaration) how much their understanding had increased after the training was completed, one respondent answered

that his knowledge had increased from “3” to “8.” Another respondent answered that her knowledge increased from a “5” to a “7.” A third respondent answered that her knowledge increased from a “4” to a “9.” Five respondents (78%) did not answer the question. Two interesting comments from the verbal interviews included the following:

- One respondent who had never read the Declaration of Independence before the training stayed up the evening following the training doing research on the internet about the Declaration, natural rights, slavery and personal obligation.
- One respondent wrote in the questionnaire that she had always heard it read before the Super Bowl. Questioned about her answer, she said she always sat with her family as a child and listened to the reading with her family and that was her only exposure to the document.

Analysis of the First Question in Questionnaire Number One

The results from the first question strongly suggest that before the training segment there was very little familiarity with the Declaration of Independence. Of those who had some familiarity with it, they hadn’t seen it in several years, and several had never read it. This suggests that any training they received on the Declaration of Independence would be seen as “new” and would vastly increase their understanding of the document. This corresponds with the project’s theoretical research.

The Second Question

When asked if the Declaration of Independence had any relevance to their current job or their conduct in the personal and/or private life, all eight respondents (100%) said “yes.” Notable comments in the questionnaire include:

- One respondent wrote that the Declaration “sets the tone” for America’s freedoms.

- One respondent, a part-time archaeologist, said that the Declaration “paved the way” for him to follow his scientific pursuits.
- One respondent noted that when serving in the military, one sometimes forgets how much freedom she really does have.

When asked follow-up questions in the verbal interview, some of the interesting comments included:

- One respondent had simply never thought about the difference between natural and positive rights.
- One respondent said that “as a man of science” he believes in objective truth.
- One respondent asked me if I thought criminals should be granted natural rights.

Analysis of the Second Question in Questionnaire Number One

The results strongly suggest that instruction in the meaning of the Declaration of Independence does resonate in the consciences of those who participated. I suspect that most (if not all of the trainees) were surprised by the depth of meaning they found in the document during the training, and it began to open their eyes to its importance in their lives. All this agrees with my hypothesis.

The Third Question

When asked if they believed (before their training) whether their Creator or the government granted them inalienable rights, 3 respondents (38%) thought that their Creator did, 3 respondents (38%) believed their government did, one respondent (13%) simply said “yes” and one respondent (13%) said that “we should have rights.” I suspect strongly that the archaeologist in the group is an agnostic or an atheist, and, therefore

could not have answered that our Creator granted us rights. One notable response in the verbal interviews was shared by another respondent in Question #2:

- She thought the discussion between natural and positive rights was very interesting and thought provoking.

Analysis of the Third Question in the First Questionnaire

The results suggest a divided understanding about where our rights come from. I suspect strongly that most respondents simply have not thought about it until they sat through the training exercise. Moreover, the respondents didn't have much to say about this question in the verbal interviews, and I suspect that was because of their inability to quickly think through the information. Moreover, I think that the question was written in a confusing way and needed to be more clearly written to get better answers. The results provide lukewarm support to this project's theoretical hypothesis.

The Fourth Question

When asked what relationship the Declaration has to the Coast Guard's values of honor, respect and devotion to duty, six respondents (75%) responded that there was at least some kind of positive relationship that existed between the two creeds, one (13%) said there was absolutely no relationship, and one (13%) did not answer the question in an understandable way. When interviewed, the six respondents who answered in the affirmative clearly saw a deep relationship between the values they had been given and the values found in the Declaration. One written answer was the following paraphrase:

- If you believe in honor and respect you should want to be free. You should only have devotion to duty if you believe in what you are doing.

It was the possibly agnostic archeologist who felt that there was no relationship. He wrote the following:

- Honor, respect and devotion to duty on a personal standpoint is a choice I make to have in my life. But with the Coast Guard's relationship they both are positive in the effect they have on society.

Analysis of the Fourth Question in the First Questionnaire

The results suggest that the Coast Guardsmen interviewed did see some kind of relationship at least between the values of the Declaration of Independence and the core values that they must espouse as citizens who have volunteered to wear the uniform of their country. As with the third question, I suspect strongly that most (if not all) of the members interviewed had never considered the question before, and only gave it consideration after it was posed to them. This does correspond with the project's hypothesis.

The Fifth Question

When asked to apply what they had learned to a real world example of turning in someone who is obviously doing something wrong, all eight respondents (100%) felt strongly that they were obligated to act if they saw someone disobeying rules or laws. When interviewed, all knew that they must act and do what is right, even if it meant turning in a friend. It was quite obvious in the interviews that several of the respondents had already been faced with this kind of dilemma and were forced to make a hard decision, especially if the rule breaker was a friend or acquaintance. One respondent wrote the following:

- It is a moral imperative. Not always easy to do.

Three of the more interesting verbal responses were the following:

- You will falter if you have no virtue.
- Integrity is doing the right thing in uniform or out of uniform.
- We have to depend on one another for society to hold together.

Analysis of the Fifth Question in the First Questionnaire

This is a question that has come up in every core values training class that all Guardians are required to attend regularly. It is clear from the research that all understand that there are things that must be done and obligations that each person has, simply because they are right. I was very encouraged that at least one respondent synthesized the idea that society cannot hold together without citizens acting in accordance to what is right and what is wrong. These findings do not correlate with my hypothesis, as it is clear from this set of answers that most Guardians interviewed understand (at least in a very basic, skeletal form) that right and wrong do exist and that actions must be taken according to the dictates of conscience.

Questionnaire Number Two, April 6–7, Eight Respondents

The First Question

When asked what President Abraham Lincoln meant when he said he was dedicated to the “proposition” that all men are created equal, two respondents (26%) wrote that he was connecting the values of the Declaration of Independence to the Gettysburg Address. One respondent (13%) made the mental connection that God granted natural rights, and the other five respondents (61%) responded in varying ways that all have some claim on equality. It was clear in the interviews that at least six of the respondents (75%) had never read the Gettysburg Address or considered what it might

mean. All eight (100%) responded very positively to the training and considered it very illuminating and interesting. This enthusiasm for the training was reflected in the written questionnaires; the eight respondents wrote much more in explanation than their counterparts in the first questionnaire. Some of the paraphrased verbal comments include:

- The training was “cool.” The history is very important for Coast Guardsmen as I lack the background and didn’t know what this document was about so it was important for me to understand this and link it to the core values.
- I am not sure history is even being taught in school anymore. When I was a kid I was taught the Gettysburg Address.

Analysis of the First Question in the Second Questionnaire

The results suggest that there exists within the training cohort that a general ignorance exists of history in general and the Gettysburg Address in particular. Nevertheless, they were very eager to share their feelings and opinions about the instruction they received and were already beginning to see the importance of the document in their lives and the life of the republic. All this corresponds with the project’s hypothesis.

The Second Question

When asked if Lincoln envisioned a day when the nation would not exist if good people didn’t stand up for its defense, seven respondents (87%) responded in the affirmative and one respondent (13%) was “not sure.” Some of the written answers include the following:

- Yes because that is the truth in most of the world.
- I am not sure if he envisioned its fall.

- His speech at Gettysburg indicated that our country as a political entity, was an experiment that had (and still does have) the potential to succeed or fail.

Some of the paraphrased verbal answers include:

- Yes, it can fail when people take what is not theirs to take. We need to do better.
- We will succeed if we are together.
- We would have been two countries.

Analysis of the Second Question in the Second Questionnaire

The results suggest that most respondents understood (perhaps for the first time) that their nation was not necessarily eternal and that they must work to keep it whole. It was of great interest to them to consider the idea of their responsibility in the work of keeping the republic together. All this corresponds with the project's hypothesis.

The Third Question

When asked whether governments are “conceived in liberty” and whether or not a person had intrinsic rights not granted by government, five respondents (63%) did believe that there were regimes that were “conceived in liberty.” Three respondents (37%) did not answer the question. All eight respondents (100%) wrote they had intrinsic rights that could not be taken away from them by any entity. Some of the interesting written answers include:

- I believe there is a right of being. I think this is the way God wants us to live and have the choices to make.
- I believe my intrinsic rights are part of my being and can never be taken away.

Some of the paraphrased verbal comments include:

- It is great to hear about inalienable rights. This is why we wear the uniform.

- What does it mean to be free? I believe this relates to our right for same-sex marriage.

Analysis of the Third Question of the Second Questionnaire

As one can see from the last answer above, there seemed to be a sense of antinomianism (at least from one Guardian), about the freedoms we have. However, it is clear that most (if not all) the Guardians understood the idea that they did have inalienable rights that could not be taken away from them and that it made sense to them to have to protect their country in order to preserve this ideal. The weakness in this part of the training is that there could be at least a small wave of civic antinomianism as trainees begin to get a deeper understanding of what it means to be free. The problems of civic antinomianism aside, this corresponds with the project's hypothesis.

The Fourth Question

When asked what their responsibilities were as people with inalienable rights and whether or not there was a correlation to the Coast Guard's core values, all eight respondents (100%) answered that they did have responsibilities because of the rights they had been granted. Six respondents (75%) answered that Lincoln's Gettysburg Address did have a correlative relationship to the core values of the Coast Guard, and two respondents (25%) did not answer. Some of the interesting written answers include:

- Responsibility to act on behalf of all humanity.
- My inalienable rights means that my responsibilities to my family and country is to stand up and fight for them when they are not strong enough to fight for themselves, to be strong for them when no one else will.

The verbal interviews also contained interesting answers. A few paraphrased answers include:

- It looks easy after you do it.
- When you hear the truth you just know.
- We must have a sense of history or we will elect people who will destroy us.

Analysis of the Fourth Question of the Second Questionnaire

The written and verbal answers strongly suggest that all the Guardians interviewed understand the basic ideas of unalienable rights and responsibilities because of those rights. Many believed that the words of Lincoln did correlate (at least in a small way) to their core values and could begin to understand that there were truths in the world worth defending. All this corresponds with the project's hypothesis.

The Fifth Question

When asked a “real world” question about making a hard choice even if one would risk unpopularity with the command, all eight respondents (100%) answered that they would make the hard choice as it is the right choice. A few of the written responses include:

- Yes, always. We should all be responsible for one another, if not we become slaves to ourselves.
- It is hard to make everyone happy but it is easy to learn right from wrong.
- It is never a hard choice for me when I know that I should do the right thing.

The verbal interviews reiterated what the Guardians had written. One comment was especially poignant:

- Abraham Lincoln was killed for what he believed in.

Analysis of the Fifth Question of the Second Questionnaire

It is clear that many of the members did not need to be trained in the meaning of the Gettysburg Address to understand their duty when faced with a difficult choice. Certainly the training edified what was already an understood idea and obligation by all the respondents in this questionnaire, therefore this conclusion does not comport with the project's hypothesis.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

Through this MAP I have demonstrated the need for the teaching of natural law and the idea of universal truth to young Americans in uniform. From my research I have drawn a few conclusions: First, that most men and women serving in the military have some sense that there is a moral framework in the universe that demands a certain kind of life. They may not know exactly what it is or what the implications are, but they understand, as Paul describes in Romans, that “what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.”⁸⁹ Moreover, the core values of the service have some resonance with members of the American military as they make them aware of their responsibilities in serving the republic and of the consequences of moral failure.

The slide presentations I created of the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address were very well received and promoted much conversation between me and many of the members of the command during the entire process and well after it had finished. In the end, it had an effect on many with whom I served, and I strongly suspect the “primer” that will follow these conclusions can in fact be used by chaplains throughout the five services to teach the ideals of natural law and wrap them into things like the core values of their respective branches of service.

This, however, can only be a beginning. We are absolutely swamped in this society with challenges to ideas of truth in the media, the government, the school and

⁸⁹Engelbrecht, 1909.

even the home. Two half-hour presentations by a chaplain can do no more than dent a person's conscience. It is in the daily influence of the chaplain where he will have his greatest effect as he lives and sacrifices alongside those with whom he serves. It is in the days, months and years of mentorship that a chaplain will have the greatest impact on young men and women in uniform, and will hopefully be able, not only to impart a civic righteousness, but the righteousness apart from Law that comes only through our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PRIMER

Chaplains have always been teachers. Through the history of the Army, Navy and Air Force chaplaincy, the clerics of the military have been relied upon to not only be the conscience of the command but to assist the commanding officer in the moral and ethical training of his unit. Many times we are called upon to teach the core values or impart some other kind of moral maxim for the day, all with the intention of helping the unit run more smoothly and efficiently as virtuous warriors become armed with principles that can they can live by and learn to better trust their brothers and sisters who serve alongside them.

Indeed many join the uniformed service of our country because they know they will find values and truths to live by, something that may have been in short supply in their lives. However, others come into the military with an amoral outlook on life and have no real ethical training. Both benefit from the chaplain (and others) not only leading by example but by teaching men and women truths that they can live by. I believe this small primer can help you along in this process.

There are two slideshows in this primer, one on the Declaration of Independence and one on the Gettysburg Address. Each is filled with the themes of natural law and universal truth and emphasize how we have developed not only politically and historically but ethically as well. These slideshows contain short briefing bullets that can be used for the background of each training session (as many will have little or no idea

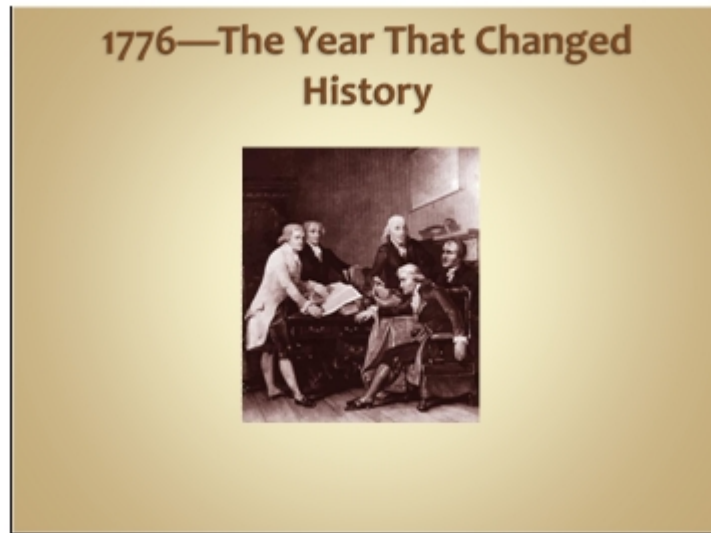
what it is you are doing) and then more specifically, describing their obligations as American citizens serving in uniform. You can use the training evolution to lead in to other conversations about personal responsibility, ethics and the core values of your service. Moreover, this program is flexible enough that you could build on the two training sessions to discuss other segments of history that speak about moral and ethical issues. This is meant to be only the beginning of the conversation that you have with the men and women who serve with you—to get them speaking and thinking about natural law, obligations and moral principles that they should live by.

The Declaration of Independence Presentation

Slide 1

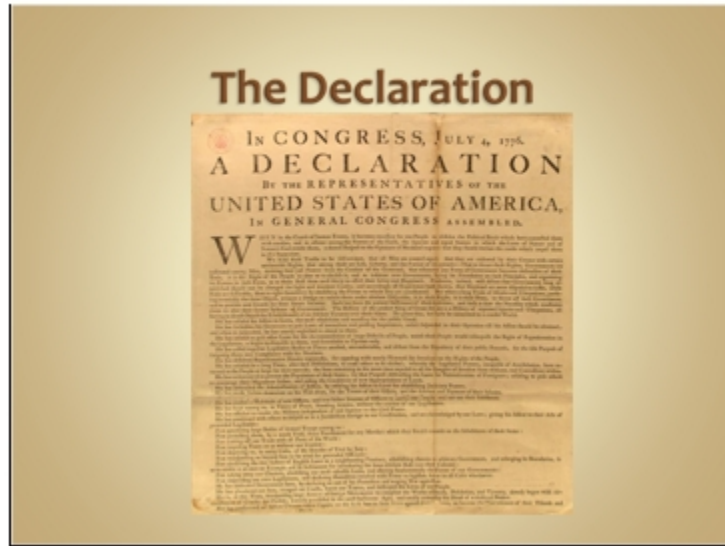


Slide 2



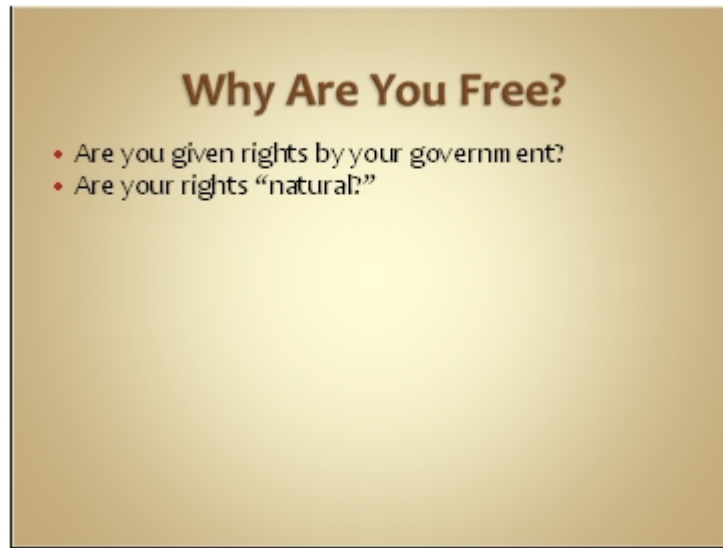
In 1776, the thirteen British colonies in North America declared their independence from Great Britain. Citing a number of grievances, chiefly that there was no representation in Parliament in London for the Americans and that King George III was acting more and more like a despot than an enlightened ruler, the Continental Congress felt it was their obligation to cut ties to the mother country in order to *preserve our unalienable rights*.

Slide 3



Jefferson was the main writer. John Adams, Roger Sherman and Robert Livingston and the great Ben Franklin also helped craft the text. The Continental Congress had charged them with creating a document that would explain why the thirteen colonies were leaving the English realm and, much more importantly for our study, what ideas the new republic used as its central operating ideals.

Slide 4



Before 1776, most would say that any rights a person had were given to him by his government. This is what is so radical about what happened in Philadelphia—for one of the first times in history a republic would be created which was dedicated to equality. There would be no royalty, no titles, but it would be a place where citizens would be, just by being citizens, considered equal under the law. This became the basis not only of the Declaration, but of the Constitution and the Gettysburg Address as well.

Slide 5

“Self-Evident Truths”

- “They are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

This was a fairly radical idea. Most governments, especially in Europe, were kingdoms ruled by strong monarchs who felt that God had given them a divine right to rule any way they chose. Thomas Jefferson thought that any political power must be derived by those who were going to be governed—that way they would make a government that would preserve the rights they felt were intrinsic to their very being. Would this experiment work? Could the thirteen colonies somehow fashion a government that would honor the idea of unalienable rights and still be strong enough to defend itself against a strong English nation?

Slide 6

The Great Tension


- What does it mean to live in a republic vs. a state with a strong, authoritarian government?
- What caused the Americans to rebel and face off against the most powerful country in the world in 1776?

Most people lived with strong kings or other kinds of despots. Most people around the world did what they were told and generally had few, if any, rights. For America to develop a large republic was really a new experiment. Republics had been tried before, but usually they were much smaller and didn't last long. Often they degenerated into dictatorships or mob rule. Only a few years later, France too would become a democracy, but it would soon become a place where the rule of law was decided by only a few people and a dictator would quickly plunge the nation into war. Americans felt that militarily they could resist the English; they were far away from London and the country was much larger than its motherland with a large population. Many Americans hoped for a peaceful settlement, but were prepared to resist a country and a king that they felt gave them no say in how the government was run and, because of that, were intruding on their unalienable rights.

Slide 7

The Most Powerful Man on Earth—King George III

- “No taxation without representation.”
- Do people have an inherent right to a voice in the government?
- What role does the Constitution have?

A portrait of King George III, the third of that name, depicted in formal 18th-century royal attire, including a white powdered wig, a white ermine-trimmed cape, and a yellow and white patterned coat. He is standing and looking slightly to the right of the viewer.

Even though England was, by eighteenth century standards, a fairly progressive country, many Americans felt that George III was acting more and more like a tyrant. The king felt strongly that he and the English Parliament had the right to make tax policy and that the American colonists would be fairly treated there. The Americans did not agree; if they accepted the many new taxes that were being imposed, they felt strongly that they would be servants and not free people. This, then, gave them the right to rebel. Twelve years later, a special convention would meet in Philadelphia and draw up a new Constitution which would enshrine the idea that people are free because their Creator gave them unalienable rights. The new government that would result would be given enough power to defend the state and provide basic services, but it would not be strong enough to interfere with the rights of the people.

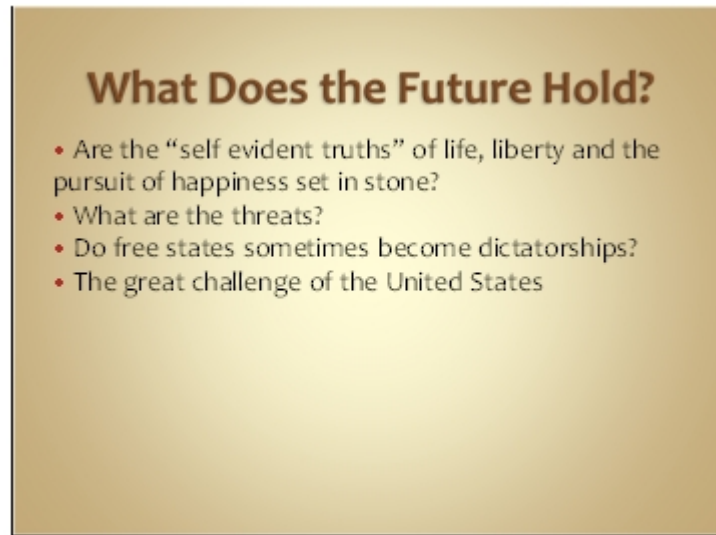
Slide 8

**Living Free—What is the
Obligation?**

- What would your responsibilities be if you lived in a dictatorship?
- How does that change when you are responsible for yourself, your family and your community?
- Where does the stability come from?
- What does it mean to be a “citizen”?

Basically if you live in a dictatorship, you have few responsibilities—you can act like a child—just do what you are told. Some people prefer this kind of government; while it may be less free, many times it provides a much stronger “safety net” for its citizens. In exchange for the loss of freedom, the government promises security. A strong contemporary example for this is Communist China. However, in a free society the stability comes not from a strong central government but from the citizens themselves. Because they are free, they then become responsible to work, raise their families and keep their communities strong. In the end, this is what being a “citizen” is; it is the recognition of the many responsibilities inherent when being a part of a free society. If we do not know that or do not work to be virtuous men and women, our society begins to wobble and fall apart. Remember, the government does not really tell us what to do or how to be virtuous—as free men and women we use our freedom wisely for the betterment of ourselves and our society.

Slide 9



What Does the Future Hold?

- Are the “self evident truths” of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness set in stone?
- What are the threats?
- Do free states sometimes become dictatorships?
- The great challenge of the United States

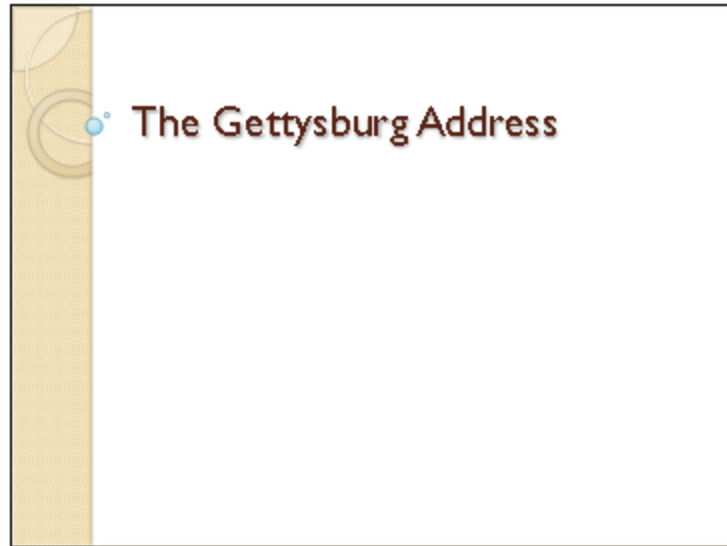
We will be talking about the Gettysburg Address the next time. President Lincoln will look at the proposition that all men are created equal. He knew that the Confederacy was not dedicated to that proposition and would try to enshrine slavery in perpetuity. This is always a threat; there are people who would like to take freedoms from us and make a strong state (Nazism, fascism, communism), and we will have to keep vigilant. Our democracy is not set in stone; we cannot assume our country will last forever if its citizenry does not do its part as virtuous, ethical people to ensure its survival.

Slide 10




The Gettysburg Address Presentation

Slide 1



Slide 2

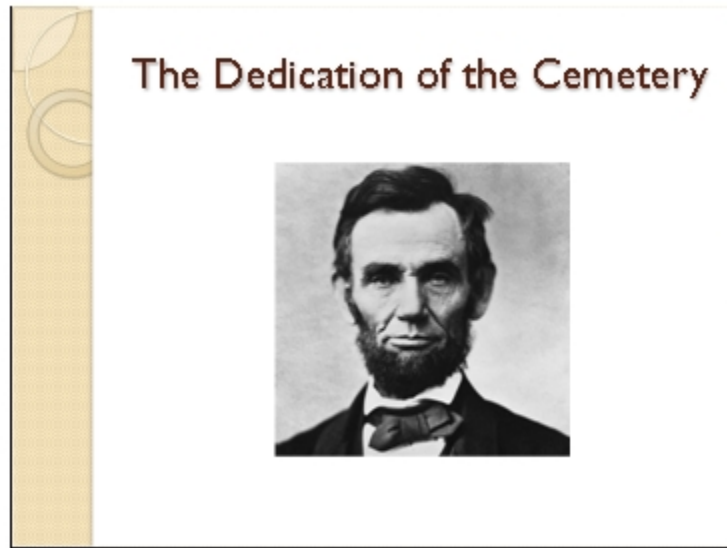


The Great Battle of Gettysburg

- July 1–3, 1863
- 165,000 men fought
- 47,000 men killed, wounded or missing
- A turning point in the war
- At least 618,000 dead in the entire war out of a population of 31 million

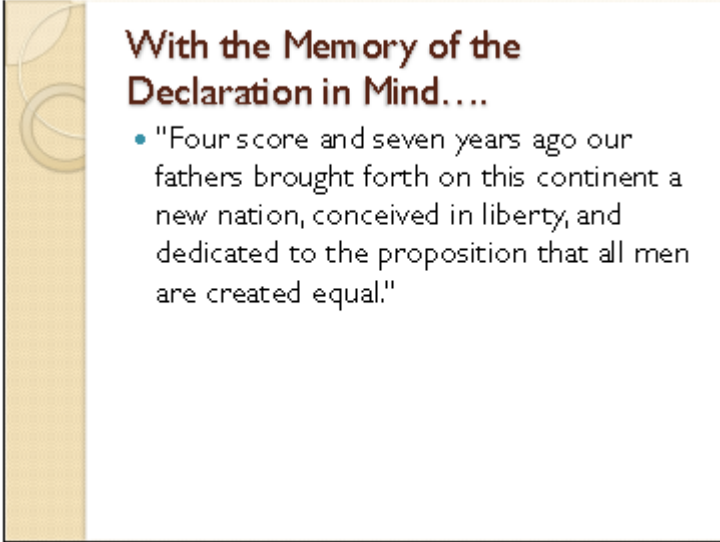
This was a battle unimaginable in our present day. We have about one million active and reservists in 2011. This would be a casualty rate equivalent of 1 in 20 of our current force in *three days*. The casualties in the war were catastrophic for both the United States and the Confederacy. In comparison, we suffered about 120,000 dead in WWI, 400,000 in WWII and around 50,000 in Vietnam. Had the Confederacy won the battle, it is very possible that the two countries would have remained separate—one free and one slave. With the Union victory, however, it was seen as a real turning point in the war. The Confederacy simply could not field and equip large forces to fight the Union in the next two years.

Slide 3



In November, 1863, President Lincoln was invited to speak at the dedication of the new cemetery. It seemed appropriate to the northerners that they construct a national monument at a place where so much blood had been shed. Ironically, Lincoln was not the main speaker. The president of Harvard spoke for about two hours and then the President of the United States spoke for only about two minutes—but it was two minutes that would change history.

Slide 4

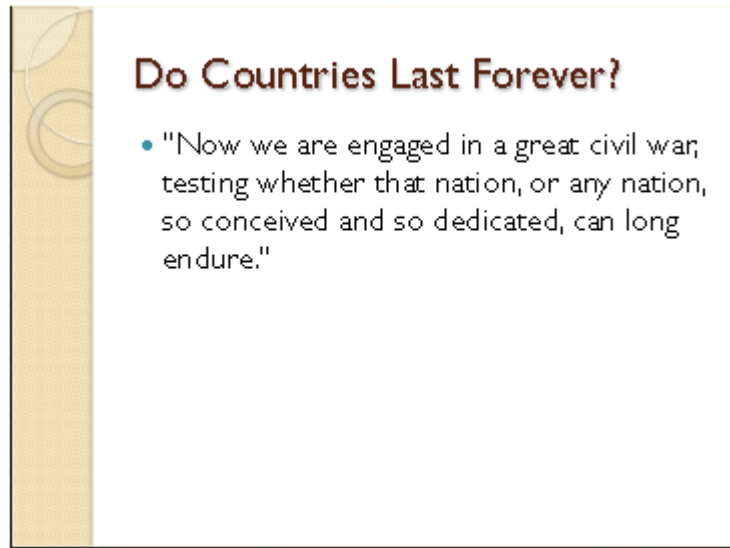
A slide with a decorative vertical bar on the left side containing overlapping circles. The main text is in a dark red font. The title is "With the Memory of the Declaration in Mind...." and the bullet point is "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

With the Memory of the Declaration in Mind....

- "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Lincoln believed deeply in the principles of the Declaration of Independence. He knew that the principle of “all men are created equal” was in deep doubt. If the Union lost the war, then indeed it would only be a *proposition* that “all men are created equal.” Indeed, the Confederacy was dedicated to the proposition that all men were *not* equal. Lincoln is subtly warning his listeners that the Union is only as strong and will last as long as its citizens have the will to sustain it.

Slide 5

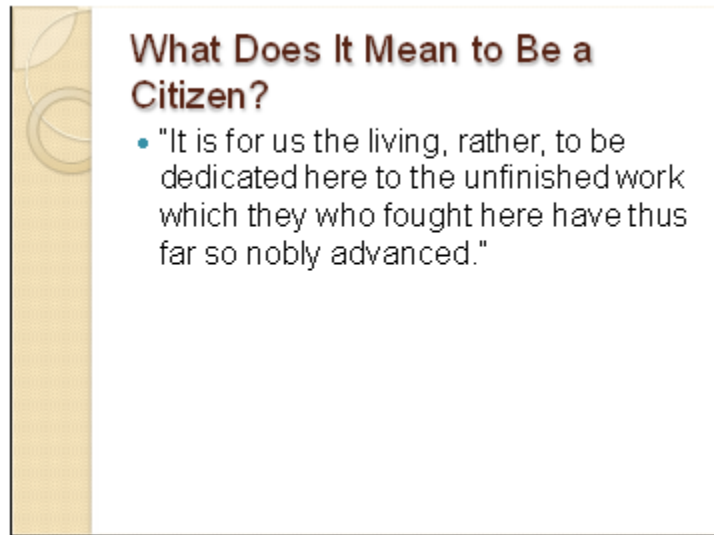
A presentation slide with a title and a bullet point. The title is "Do Countries Last Forever?" and the bullet point is a quote from Lincoln: "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." The slide has a decorative vertical bar on the left with overlapping circles.

Do Countries Last Forever?

- "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure."

Again, he is warning his listeners that their Union may be at an end. Certainly now we can look back and see that the war was less than two years from being resolved and that the Confederacy was rapidly losing its strength, but there was no way to know that in November 1863. In fact, many in the Union felt strongly that they should seek a peace with the Confederacy and let them keep their slaves and accept the idea of two nations—one slave and one free. Lincoln knew that if they gave in on their principles in liberty, their own country would not last very long and the republic's experiment in unalienable rights might perish forever.

Slide 6

The slide features a light beige background with a vertical decorative bar on the left side containing overlapping circles. The title is in a dark red font, and the bullet point is in a dark blue font.

What Does It Mean to Be a Citizen?

- "It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced."

Again there was no way for the people in the audience to know how long the war will last. They had already seen horrific casualties but there certainly would be a lot more. The sad truth was that without the willingness to sacrifice life and treasure, they would not win the war, and the people who had already sacrificed so much would have suffered in vain. He was challenging them to be citizens—nobody else would or could do the work that they must do.

Slide 7

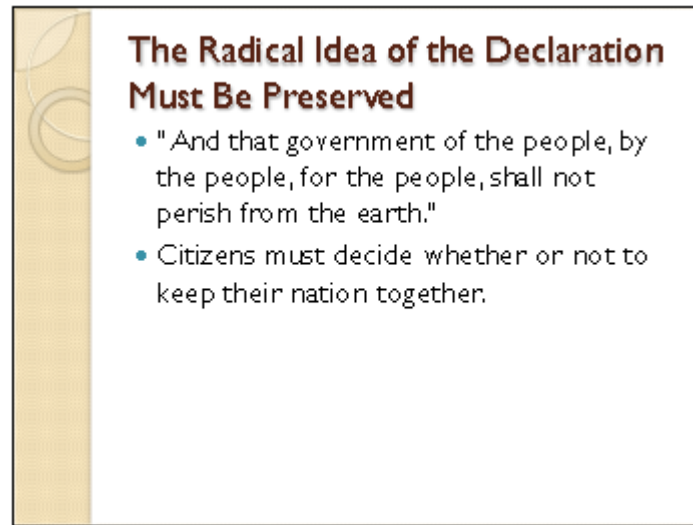
A presentation slide with a light beige background and a vertical decorative bar on the left side containing overlapping circles. The title "Lincoln Continues..." is in a dark brown font. A single bullet point in blue text contains a quote from Lincoln.

Lincoln Continues...

- "That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom."

As I mentioned in the briefing on the Declaration of Independence, a large part of the reason that the American colonies left Great Britain was simply that they felt King George III was violating their God-given liberties. Lincoln here is reminding his listeners that that belief still holds that all men are created equal—and that hopefully the bloodshed in the war will keep liberty alive for those who plan to live in peace in America. But there was simply no way it would happen unless citizens were willing to work to make it happen. As people of virtue who understand their obligations as citizens, they had to understand it was their duty to do the work put before them so their liberties and the liberties of their children would be secure.

Slide 8



The slide features a title in bold brown text and two bullet points in blue text. The background is white with a vertical gold bar on the left side containing faint circular patterns.

The Radical Idea of the Declaration Must Be Preserved


- "And that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."
- Citizens must decide whether or not to keep their nation together.

If you remember my training on the Declaration, you may recall that a government by the people was quite radical and certainly unique for a republic of our size. Most countries had kings or other kinds of strong leaders who many times infringed on the rights of their people. For Americans, the best way to protect the rights of the citizens is to ensure they have a say in the running of the government. It is assumed that they will send to Washington representatives who will work to keep the principle of "all men are created equal" alive for all the nation's citizens. But, again, the nation can only last as long as virtuous people keep their eyes and ears open and work hard to keep their country stable through personal and private virtue. As George Washington said in his Farewell Address, "Our policy is based on private morality." In other words, the stability of the country must come from its citizens, to work and act appropriately for the country to survive. The stability of the country does not come from the king and his army, it comes from the lowest levels of the nation—the people—and that is why Lincoln is appealing to the virtue of his listeners and the nation to have them honor their obligations as free men and continue the good fight.

Slide 9

The Short Speech That Changed the World

- Only about two minutes long
- Little applause
- One of the most recognized of all time



People did not know right away how good the speech actually was; after all, it was only two minutes long. Some said there was no applause, some said there was a smattering of applause. It is hard to say how the crowd really felt about it. But, over the years, it has become one of the most recognized speeches not only in America but around the world, as it is a clarion call for people to reach for their God-given liberties.

Slide 10



Here is a picture of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. Again, if the American ideal is correct, then all people are created equal no matter where they live and governments exist to protect those liberties. It is up to us to live our lives in a way that keeps our country stable, as we are the possessors not only of many freedoms but of the obligations, then, to use them virtuously and wisely.

Slide 11



Possible Questions after the Lectures

- What does it mean to have “inalienable rights?” Are there such things as “universal truths?”
- How does that affect our obligations as citizens?
- Can these inalienable rights be taken away by a government? Are they always there regardless of where we live?
- Do our daily obligations as citizens in uniform really change all that much in our professional or personal lives?
- What would have happened to those who led the Revolution if the Americans had lost?
- What happened to Abraham Lincoln at the end of the Civil War?

- Throughout world history how many people have enjoyed the same rights as we have?
- Can countries rise and fall, or are they eternal? Does the preservation of our country require our vigilance as citizens to do the right thing in our professional and personal lives?
- Would you be willing to face off against powerful forces if you knew you were right, even if the outcome could be very bad for you?

APPENDIX ONE

WRITTEN RESPONSES

Interview sheets for Declaration of Independence

March 16, 2011

L

Interview Sheet for Declaration of Independence Training Segment

Age 45

Rank CWO2

Gender M

-Have you ever read the Declaration of Independence before? YES

-After this training, do you think the Declaration has any relevance to your current job or your conduct in your professional/private life? YES THIS DOCUMENT SETS

THE TONE FOR AMERICANS FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS.

-Before this training did you believe that our Creator granted you certain inalienable rights or did you think your government granted you rights? YES

-What relationship does this have with the Coast Guard's Core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty? THESE VALUES ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO HOW WE SHOULD RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER AND OUR PERSONAL BEHAVIOR.

-What does it mean, when you have to make a hard decision-like turning in someone who is obviously doing something wrong? (Like trying to drive while intoxicated)

IT IS A MORAL IMPERITIVE. NOT ALWAYS EASY TO DO.

Interview # 2 (cont)

2. I think having the choice to fight for my country relates to the declaration.

In my personal life, the ability to pursue the things that make me happy relates to the declaration. The declaration also gives us the right to make our own decisions concerning the tasks that we carry out in our daily lives.

3. Before my eye-opening experience with Jesus, I thought that the rights we had were designed to establish control. At first, I was under the impression that the law only benefitted its creators so that they could enjoy life. Now I believe that GOD made us free from the beginning.

4. The coast guard core values are their declaration from the other branches.

Comment [D1]:

5. I think that it is a hard decision because of the life that we live. Most of us do not want to turn so one in for a crime that we may do or maybe subject too.

March 16, 2011

12

Interview Sheet for Declaration of Independence Training Segment

Age 28

Rank E-5

Gender M

-Have you ever read the Declaration of Independence before?

NO

-After this training, do you think the Declaration has any relevance to your current job or your conduct in your professional/private life?

I think

-Before this training did you believe that our Creator granted you certain inalienable rights or did you think your government granted you rights?

-What relationship does this have with the Coast Guard's Core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty?

-What does it mean, when you have to make a hard decision-like turning in someone who is obviously doing something wrong? (Like trying to drive while intoxicated)

March 16, 2011

Interview Sheet for Declaration of Independence Training Segment

Age 21

Rank 3

Gender M

-Have you ever read the Declaration of Independence before?

NOT THAT I RECALL, HIGH SCHOOL AND BEGINS A BIT OF A BLUR.

-After this training, do you think the Declaration has any relevance to your current job or your conduct in your professional/private life?

YES, I FREELY STUDY ARCHAEOLOGY, I GO TO DIG SITES, AND I BELIEVE IT ~~BATHED~~ ^{PAVED} THE WAY FOR ME TO DO SO.

-Before this training did you believe that our Creator granted you certain inalienable rights or did you think your government granted you rights?

GOVERNMENT - YES
CREATOR - NO

-What relationship does this have with the Coast Guard's Core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty?

NONE? THE HONOR RESPECT AND DEVOTION TO DUTY ON A PERSONAL STANDPOINT IS A CHOICE I MAKE TO HAVE IN MY LIFE BUT WITH THE COAST GUARD'S RELATIONSHIP, THEY BOTH ARE POSITIVE IN THE EFFECT THEY HAVE ON SOCIETY.

-What does it mean, when you have to make a hard decision-like turning in someone who is obviously doing something wrong? (Like trying to drive while intoxicated)

ITS PURELY A JUDGEMENT CALL, DO YOU ACT AS A FRIEND TO POSSIBLY MAKE AN ENEMY, IT IS A MUCH EASIER DECISION TO MAKE IF YOU DO NOT KNOW THE PERSON.

March 16, 2011

4

Interview Sheet for Declaration of Independence Training Segment

Age 29

Rank E-4

Gender MALE

-Have you ever read the Declaration of Independence before?

NOT IN ITS ENTIRETY

-After this training, do you think the Declaration has any relevance to your current job or your conduct in your professional/private life?

YES

-Before this training did you believe that our Creator granted you certain inalienable rights or did you think your government granted you rights?

I BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE INALIENABLE RIGHTS

-What relationship does this have with the Coast Guard's Core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty?

IF HONOR AND RESPECT IS FOR YOURSELF THEN YOU SHOULD WANT TO BE FREE. ~~NOT DEVOTION TO DUTY~~ YOU SHOULD ONLY HAVE DEVOTION TO DUTY IF YOU BELIEVE IN WHAT YOU ARE DOING. I.E. DEVOTION TO THE USA NOT THE GOVERNMENT.

-What does it mean, when you have to make a hard decision-like turning in someone who is obviously doing something wrong? (Like trying to drive while intoxicated)

DRIVING DRUNK AND DOING THINGS THAT ARE OBVIOUSLY WRONG CAN HURT SOMEONE ELSE. THE CONSTITUTION SEEMS TO GIVE US THE RIGHT TO BE FREE BUT NOT TO HURT OTHER PEOPLE. EXAMPLE IT'S MY RIGHT TO SWING MY ARM BUT IF I HIT SOMEONE I AM INFRINGING ON THEIR RIGHTS AND THERE FOR SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO DO IT.

March 16, 2014

15

Interview Sheet for Declaration of Independence Training Segment

Age 210

Rank E-4

Gender E

-Have you ever read the Declaration of Independence before?

Yes, in earlier grades in school.

-After this training, do you think the Declaration has any relevance to your current job or your conduct in your professional/private life?

Yes because I'm still responsible to do the right things on/off duty.

-Before this training did you believe that our Creator granted you certain inalienable rights or did you think your government granted you rights?

government granted you rights

-What relationship does this have with the Coast Guard's Core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty? AS a member of the coast guard, I am responsible for upholding these core values. Similar to my responsibility to follow through for myself and family. I'm not forced to do this, but it's the right thing to do.

-What does it mean, when you have to make a hard decision-like turning in someone who is obviously doing something wrong? (Like trying to drive while intoxicated)

It means you are being responsible when that person is not and you're looking out to protect their freedoms. ~~that~~ AS an American I have the right to speak up and stop something if I feel that it's wrong or may harm someone.

March 16, 2011

16

Interview Sheet for Declaration of Independence Training Segment

Age 25

Rank LTJG

Gender F

-Have you ever read the Declaration of Independence before?

Not entirely

-After this training, do you think the Declaration has any relevance to your current job or your conduct in your professional/private life?

-Yes, it reiterated the difference b/w the American Society compared to others, and that we have basic liberties the gov't can't take from us.

-Before this training did you believe that our Creator granted you certain inalienable rights or did you think your government granted you rights?

-Yes

-What relationship does this have with the Coast Guard's Core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty?

- That we have to honor + respect each other, and it is our duty to ensure ~~basic~~ inalienable rights are not infringed upon

-What does it mean, when you have to make a hard decision-like turning in someone who is obviously doing something wrong? (Like trying to drive while intoxicated)

- To protect other other people + the intoxicated person, for example, the right thing to do is stop or prevent drunk driving.

March 16, 2011

17

Interview Sheet for Declaration of Independence Training Segment

Age 31

Rank E5

Gender F

-Have you ever read the Declaration of Independence before?

YEARS AGO. ALWAYS GET TO HEAR IT BEFORE THE SUPER BOWL THOUGH.

-After this training, do you think the Declaration has any relevance to your current job or your conduct in your professional/private life?

VERY MUCH SO. BEING IN THE MILITARY SOMETIMES ~~YOU~~ ^{WE} FORGET ABOUT HOW MUCH FREEDOM WE HAVE.

-Before this training did you believe that our Creator granted you certain inalienable rights or did you think your government granted you rights?

GOVERNMENT.

-What relationship does this have with the Coast Guard's Core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty?

THE CORE VALUES BRING PRIDE TO MYSELF IN KNOWING I have a small part to "Fight for our Rights + Freedom."

-What does it mean, when you have to make a hard decision-like turning in someone who is obviously doing something wrong? (Like trying to drive while intoxicated)

EVERY ONE SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS. ~~A~~ TURNING SOME ONE IN FOR BREAKING LAWS OF COURSE IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO. WE DON'T WANT OUR FREEDOM + RIGHTS TAKING FROM US. What if that one bad apple tried it for all of us.

March 16, 2011

LY

Interview Sheet for Declaration of Independence Training Segment

Age 53

Rank LIV

Gender F

-Have you ever read the Declaration of Independence before?

Yes - in school & when I taught school.

-After this training, do you think the Declaration has any relevance to your current job or your conduct in your professional/private life?

Yes - by conducting myself as a partner in maintaining those rights for all humans on the planet. We all have a responsibility to protect those rights.

-Before this training did you believe that our Creator granted you certain inalienable rights or did you think your government granted you rights?

Our Creator - gave us everything! (Even the government that we hope will further protect us)

-What relationship does this have with the Coast Guard's Core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty?

Honor is respecting each person's right to worship, live, speak, assemble is what the CG is protecting. As part of "Team Coast Guard", I also agree to those core values - my devotion to my "team" means that I back them in those values - I am a part of them and am devoted to them.

-What does it mean, when you have to make a hard decision-like turning in someone who is obviously doing something wrong? (Like trying to drive while intoxicated)

Ultimately, if their behavior or choice has the potential to harm someone else (or someone's rights), it is my duty to do what I can to protect the lives, health and rights of others (as well as that person and myself too!)

Interview sheets for Gettysburg Address

#1

Interview Sheet for Gettysburg Address April 6, 2011

Age 32

Rank E5

Gender Male

-What did Lincoln mean he was dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal?

He was saying we meant to lead by the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence. He intended that we as a nation should not be subservient to man.

-Did Lincoln envision a day when the nation wouldn't exist if good people didn't stand up for its defense?

Yes because that is the truth in most all of the world.

-Are there governments that are not "conceived in liberty"? Are your intrinsic rights part of your very being or are they given to you by the government that rules over you?

Yes. Rights are given by the Creator, not by man / kings / rulers / dictators / overseers etc.

-Knowing that you have unalienable rights, what does that mean for your responsibilities to your family and your country? Do the words Lincoln uses have some kind of correlation to the Core Values of the Coast Guard?

Responsibility to act on behalf of all humanity protect family and country "against all enemies, foreign or domestic". Yes - Honor, Respect, Devotion to Duty - To family, country and Coast Guard.

-Do you have an obligation to make a hard choice even if it means being unpopular with members of your command? (Like turning someone in when they try to get through a checkpoint while intoxicated)

Yes always. We should all be / share responsible (ity) for one another, if not we become slaves to ourselves.

#2

Interview Sheet for Gettysburg Address April 6, 2011

Age 26

Rank E-4

Gender M

-What did Lincoln mean he was dedicated to the *proposition* that all men are created equal?

I BELIEVE HE WAS SAYING THAT TOGETHER WE AS A NATION ARE STRONGER WHEN WE ARE EQUAL AND WORK TOGETHER.

-Did Lincoln envision a day when the nation wouldn't exist if good people didn't stand up for its defense?

I FEEL YES BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THE WAR WAS NEEDED FOR UNITY AND SUCCESS.

-Are there governments that are not "conceived in liberty"? Are your intrinsic rights part of your very being or are they given to you by the government that rules over you?

YES, BUT WITHIN THEIR OWN LIMITS.

I BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT KEEPS ORDER AND GUIDES THE PEOPLE

-Knowing that you have unalienable rights, what does that mean for your responsibilities to your family and your country? Do the words Lincoln uses have some kind of correlation to the Core Values of the Coast Guard?

TO STAND UP FOR WHATS RIGHT AND DO THE RIGHT THING.

YES BECAUSE WE AS COASTIES ARE EXPECTED TO DO RIGHT NO MATTER WHAT.

-Do you have an obligation to make a hard choice even if it means being unpopular with members of your command? (Like turning someone in when they try to get through a checkpoint while intoxicated)

YES, BECAUSE THE INSIDENT COULD END UP HURTING SOMEONE INCLUDING MY SELF AND THAT FALLS UNDER HONOR, RESPECT, DEVOTION TO DUTY

#3

Interview Sheet for Gettysburg Address April 6, 2011

Age 30

Rank EE

Gender M

-What did Lincoln mean he was dedicated to the *proposition* that all men are created equal?

He knew at that time that all men were not treated as equals but he believed in the idea that one day they would be.

-Did Lincoln envision a day when the nation wouldn't exist if good people didn't stand up for its defense?

yes I believe that he had moments of ~~desert~~ doubt, but that those moments made his resolve stronger.

-Are there governments that are not "conceived in liberty"? Are your intrinsic rights part of your very being or are they given to you by the government that rules over you?

yes ~~there~~ there are governments that are not conceived in liberty. I believe that I was born with my intrinsic rights.

-Knowing that you have unalienable rights, what does that mean for your responsibilities to your family and your country? Do the words Lincoln uses have some kind of correlation to the Core Values of the Coast Guard?

It means that I should help protect my family and country from those people that would try to take those rights away. yes fighting to keep everyone together no matter the cost and respect every one as an equal.

-Do you have an obligation to make a hard choice even if it means being unpopular with members of your command? (Like turning someone in when they try to get through a checkpoint while intoxicated)

yes you have to make the right choice no matter how unpopular. Its hard to make everyone happy but it is easy to learn right from wrong. I took an oath and swore to uphold the law that's why I have an obligation.

#4

Interview Sheet for Gettysburg Address April 6, 2011

Age 44

Rank E6

Gender M

-What did Lincoln mean he was dedicated to the *proposition* that all men are created equal?

I BELIEVE HE FELT THIS WAS THE WAY GOD WANTED US TO LIVE. REGARDLESS OF RACE OR COLOR. ONE PEOPLE, GOOD PEOPLE.

-Did Lincoln envision a day when the nation wouldn't exist if good people didn't stand up for its defense?

YES, HE WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE US AND ITS POSSIBLE COLLAPSE IF THE COUNTRY BECAME DIVIDED. HE KNEW THIS WAS THE VERY BACKBONE OF OUR "FREE" COUNTRY. ALL ARE CREATED EQUAL.

-Are there governments that are not "conceived in liberty"? Are your intrinsic rights part of your very being or are they given to you by the government that rules over you?

I THINK THERE ARE MORE GOV. NOT CONCEIVED IN LIBERTY THAN ARE. YES, HE WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE US. I BELIEVE THEY ARE A RIGHT OF BEING. I THINK THIS IS THE WAY GOD WANTS US TO LIVE + WE HAVE THE CHOICES TO MAKE.

-Knowing that you have unalienable rights, what does that mean for your responsibilities to your family and your country? Do the words Lincoln uses have some kind of correlation to the Core Values of the Coast Guard?

I BELIEVE THESE RIGHTS ALSO ALLOW ME TO RAISE MY KIDS + FAMILY WITH WHAT I BELIEVE IN (RELIGION, WORK, PEOPLE'S RIGHTS). ALSO FREEDOM ALLOWS ME TO GO ON AS A PERSON.

-Do you have an obligation to make a hard choice even if it means being unpopular with members of your command? (Like turning someone in when they try to get through a checkpoint while intoxicated)

I BELIEVE THIS IS A DIS OBLIGATION. ONE THAT SEEMS TO FALL OVER & OVER AGAIN. SO MANY PEOPLE ARE WORRIED ABOUT "TURNING" SOMEONE IN. I BELIEVE THE C.G. WOULD BE A BETTER PLACE IF MORE PEOPLE ~~FOUR THE~~ DID NOT LOOK THE OTHER WAY.

#5

Interview Sheet for Gettysburg Address April 6, 2011

Age 26

Rank LTJG / O-2

Gender M

-What did Lincoln mean he was dedicated to the *proposition* that all men are created equal?

The proposition that all men are created equal in the declaration of independence. He was dedicated to seeing the ideals of that document come to fruition.

-Did Lincoln envision a day when the nation wouldn't exist if good people didn't stand up for its defense?

I'm not sure. I believe that he maintained the mindset that the nation "couldn't" exist without good people standing up for it. However, I am not sure if he envisioned its fall.

-Are there governments that are not "conceived in liberty"? Are your intrinsic rights part of your very being or are they given to you by the government that rules over you?

Yes, there are governments not "conceived in liberty." I believe intrinsic rights are part of your very being. This is partially due to the fact that I am American and I have been accustomed to this train of belief since the time I could comprehend it as an idea.

-Knowing that you have unalienable rights, what does that mean for your responsibilities to your family and your country? Do the words Lincoln uses have some kind of correlation to the Core Values of the Coast Guard? I have a responsibility to family and country to defend against those who seek to strip persons of their unalienable rights.

Lincoln understood sometimes you have to fight, as the lesser of two evils in order uphold unalienable rights, it was his devotion to duty.

-Do you have an obligation to make a hard choice even if it means being unpopular with members of your command? (Like turning someone in when they try to get through a checkpoint while intoxicated)

Yes

#6

Interview Sheet for Gettysburg Address April 6, 2011

Age 23

Rank EA

Gender F

-What did Lincoln mean he was dedicated to the *proposition* that all men are created equal?
I believe Lincoln meant that all men & women, no matter, Race Gender or Age, no matter in the U.S or somewhere else are created equal in his eyes and that is how it should be.

-Did Lincoln envision a day when the nation wouldn't exist if good people didn't stand up for its defense? YES, Lincoln did envision a day when the nation wouldn't exist if good people didn't stand up for its defense because he knew he could not do it alone and that if he could get just a few people to follow him then he could change things.

-Are there governments that are not "conceived in liberty"? Are your intrinsic rights part of your very being or are they given to you by the government that rules over you?

I believe there are governments that are not conceived in liberty, we see it on the news daily. I believe my intrinsic rights are apart of my being and I don't feel that they can ever be taken away.

-Knowing that you have unalienable rights, what does that mean for your responsibilities to your family and your country? Do the words Lincoln uses have some kind of correlation to the Core Values of the Coast Guard?

My unalienable rights means that my responsibilities to my family and country is to stand up and fight for them when they are not strong enough to fight for themselves, to be strong for them when no one else will. Lincoln - ("all men are created equal") in correlation with our core values are that no matter Rank, Rate, Race, Gender we are all equal.

-Do you have an obligation to make a hard choice even if it means being unpopular with members of your command? (Like turning someone in when they try to get through a checkpoint while intoxicated)

It's never a hard choice for me when I know that I should do the right thing, doing the ~~right~~ right thing comes first because you will be helping fix things or people that need help.

7

Interview Sheet for Gettysburg Address April 6, 2011

Age 47

Rank E-9

Gender M

-What did Lincoln mean he was dedicated to the *proposition* that all men are created equal?

At the time all men were not treated equally. He was dedicated to the idea that all men were created equally.

-Did Lincoln envision a day when the nation wouldn't exist if good people didn't stand up for its defense? Yes.

-Are there governments that are not "conceived in liberty"? Are your intrinsic rights part of your very being or are they given to you by the government that rules over you?

Yes. I believe that our intrinsic rights are given by the creator and that we must be vigilant to keep our rights.

-Knowing that you have unalienable rights, what does that mean for your responsibilities to your family and your country? Do the words Lincoln uses have some kind of correlation to the Core Values of the Coast Guard?

My responsibility to my family and my country is to do all that I can to protect our rights. Yes. The words Lincoln uses could be used to help describe our Core Values.

-Do you have an obligation to make a hard choice even if it means being unpopular with members of your command? (Like turning someone in when they try to get through a checkpoint while intoxicated)

Yes. # You have a responsibility to protect your shipmate (and the public) even if they don't see it that way. Hopefully you can make a difference before they get hurt or hurt someone.

8

Interview Sheet for Gettysburg Address April 6, 2011

Age 35

Rank E6

Gender F

-What did Lincoln mean he was dedicated to the *proposition* that all men are created equal?
He meant that if he were to accept the idea that all men were created equal, a principle upon which our country was founded, then his actions as a leader must follow this conviction.

-Did Lincoln envision a day when the nation wouldn't exist if good people didn't stand up for its defense? I believe he did. His speech at Gettysburg indicated that our country as a political entity, was an experiment that had (and still does) the potential to succeed or fail. Consequently, if American citizens failed to uphold the principles upon which it was founded, failure was certain.

-Are there governments that are not "conceived in liberty"? Are your intrinsic rights part of your very being or are they given to you by the government that rules over you? Absolutely, there are many countries that are not "conceived in liberty". Intrinsic rights are ~~given to~~ every human regardless of the country in which they live, given to us by our creator and NOT our government.

The condition

-Knowing that you have unalienable rights, what does that mean for your responsibilities to your family and your country? Do the words Lincoln uses have some kind of correlation to the Core Values of the Coast Guard? It is my responsibility to defend my own rights, as well as those of my fellow human beings who have had their rights taken away. Lincoln's words do relate to our core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty. The first two indicate our stance on how all human beings are to be treated, and the

third dictates members of your command? (Like turning someone in when they try to get through a checkpoint while intoxicated) Absolutely. Behaving with integrity is something that is done regardless of who is around to see it. Having "integrity" only when someone is watching is not integrity at all. It is great to relate to your fellow man, but not at the expense of violating your ethics and moral code.

That action or our part is required if we are to uphold those rights for all men.

APPENDIX TWO
ORAL INTERVIEWS

First Set of Interviews—The Declaration of Independence, March 16-17, 2011

Interview One

- He had read the Declaration before. On a scale from 1 to 10, his knowledge of the document before the training was a 3 and after was an 8.
- When asked if the Declaration had any relevance to his current job or conduct he answered, “I never thought of it as fundamental to our freedoms. I had never thought of natural versus positive law.”
- Answering Question #4, he did see the linkage between the Coast Guard’s core values and the Declaration of Independence.
- General Comments: “When you are given so much freedom, you will falter if you have no virtue.”

Interview Two

- He had not read the Declaration before, but ended up spending the night after the training researching on the internet about the Declaration, natural rights, slavery and personal obligation.
- General Comments: It was clear he was impressed with the training and that it made him seriously consider the relationship of his nation’s founding documents to his life and his responsibilities.

Interview Three

- “I am a man of science who believes in objective truth.”
- He was a self described “digger,” an amateur archeologist who had been to several survey sites and loved the scientific process. Although he didn’t say it out loud, I felt it likely that he was an agnostic or an atheist.

Interview Four

- This Guardian felt there was a direct relationship between the obligations in the Declaration to things like our seat belt laws. He wondered where the demarcation line between natural and positive law was drawn.
- He wondered, “Are we really free?” and “Should criminals be granted positive rights?”

Interview Five

- She liked the training but did not have anything else to say about it. She refused to answer any questions.

Interview Six

- This Guardian wondered if the new federal health care law was a natural right.
- On a scale from 1 to 10, she said her knowledge had increased from a “5” to a “7.”
- “Integrity is doing the right thing when nobody is watching you, in uniform and out.”

Interview Seven

- Her main exposure to the Declaration was when she sat with her family and watched the Super Bowl.
- She found the relationship between natural rights and positive rights very interesting.

- “This is like the rights and responsibilities of parenting. You can lose the right to watch your children.”

Interview Eight

- This Guardian had last read the Declaration in 1985.
- On a scale of 1 to 10 she felt her knowledge had gone from a “4” to a “9.”
- She didn’t realize only a third of the colonists rebelled against England.

Second Set of Interviews—The Gettysburg Address April 6-7, 2011

Interview One

- This Guardian found the training very informative and important. He said that he lacked the background and had not read about the Gettysburg Address, and thought that it was very important for him as a uniformed service member to have the training.
- He did see a definitive link between the Gettysburg Address and the core values of the Coast Guard.
- “What are we doing as a country? Do we have obligations and values? We are not doing them. People are taking what is not theirs to take. We need to do better.”
- “This training was cool.”

Interview Two

- This Guardian felt the training was very informative.
- “All Lincoln was trying to do was do the right thing—to get rid of slavery.”
- “We are stronger and are more likely to succeed if we are together as a nation.”

Interview Three

- This Guardian was impressed with how important Abraham Lincoln really was to the future of the country.
- “We would have been two countries.”
- “After something is done, it looks easy after the fact.”
- “He was killed for what he believed in.”

Interview Four

- This Guardian felt the training was very informative and important but refused to provide any other information.

Interview Five

- “It was great to hear about inalienable rights. This is why we wear the uniform.”
- This training wasn’t too informative as this Guardian had a background in history and was familiar with the Gettysburg Address.

Interview Six

- This Guardian had last read the Gettysburg Address in ninth grade.
- This Guardian felt that the Gettysburg Address showed that natural rights should extend even to same-sex marriage.
- This Guardian struggled with the question, “What does it really mean to be free?”

Interview Seven

- “I’m not sure history is being taught in school.”

- This Guardian was taught the Gettysburg Address when he was a small child but hadn't really thought about it or seen it since.
- "We must have a sense of history or we will elect people who can destroy us! It is up to us!"

Interview Eight

- This Guardian was very impressed with the training and had a great grasp of natural law and the obligations we have as citizens.
- "When you hear the truth you just know."

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