

One Nation Under God

Country and Faith through A Grandfather's Eyes

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Smashwords Edition

PROLOGUE

Faith ----

“Anyone who has discovered Christ must lead others to Him. A great joy cannot be kept to oneself. It has to be passed on.”

Pope Benedict XVI, World Youth Day (August 21, 2005).

It is the role and duty of each of us to respond to His call.

Trust ---- Sometimes you cannot believe what you see --- you have to believe what you feel. And if you are ever going to have other people trust you, you must learn to trust yourself. Create the kind of self that you will be happy to live with all your life. Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of achievement.

Country ----

“America is a leap of the imagination. From its beginning, people had only a persistent idea of what a good country should be. The idea involved freedom, equality, justice, and the pursuit of happiness; nowadays most of us probably could not describe it a lot more clearly than that. The truth is, it always has been a bit of a guess. No one has ever known for sure whether a country based on such an idea is really possible, but again and again, we have leaped toward the idea and hoped.” Ian Frazier

“One Nation Under God”

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A PERSONAL PRAYER

Lord, you know I am growing older. Keep me from becoming talkative and possessed with the idea that I must express myself on every subject.

Release me from the craving to straighten out everyone's affairs.

Keep me from the recital of endless detail.

Give me strength to get to the point.

Seal my lips when I am inclined to tell of my aches and pains.

They are increasing with the passing of years,

and the love to speak of them grows sweeter as time goes by.

Make me thoughtful, but not nosey. Helpful, but not bossy.

With my vast store of wisdom and experiences,

it does seem a pity not to use it at all.

But you know, Lord, that I want a few friends in the end. Amen

A PRAYER FOR FATHERLY GUIDANCE

Lord God, author of all wisdom, Teach me how to do my work as a Father according to your will. Enlighten my mind that I may understand what to tell my children when it is necessary to give them direction or advice.

Give me good judgment to understand true spiritual values and to guide my family in your ways.

The world makes little of your wisdom and is not instructed in your ways, and close contact with the world makes it easy to become dulled to things of solid spiritual worth. Be my guide at all times, that I may be a true father and husband, sensitive always to the divine wisdom that only you can impart. God, by the light of the Holy Spirit you instruct the hearts of your faithful. Grant that I may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolation,

through Christ our Lord. Amen

INTRODUCTION

Fathers and Grandfathers have different 'roles' in life, yet very common responsibilities --- from unique perspectives --- perspectives developed thru and based upon their depth and breadth of experience! Recently I had that understanding brought clearly into focus for me, when I realized that the primary 'roles' in my life, had

not changed: to 'teach', to 'serve', to be a 'role model', and to 'pray' for my family and friends; to follow God's commands to Love Him and Each Other!

What I knew, learned, experienced and 'passed on' throughout the years before the turn of the century, has markedly changed --- exploded -- as we enter the 21st Century. What was consistent or supposedly stable --- is now 'different' --- 'changed' --- even being 'destroyed'.

Further, that change is ongoing (where and when consistency would be very beneficial) and is happening faster and faster --- in most cases not for the better! It is also occurring as though there is nothing that can be done and we are told 'not to worry'! It is 'the new normal'; or 'not to worry' because those 'in charge' have it under control --- 'trust me'.... 'trust us'.

During two visits this summer: one by a family member on vacation [my youngest son – Michael and his family – Tara, his wife, and their 2 children – McKinley and Michael] --- the other, a friend from Warszawa (Warsaw), Poland (Caius Grocholski --- 'Cai'), during a month long trip - 'to the colonies'. I met Cai and his wife, Elżbieta (Elizabeth) some years ago, during visits to Catholic schools in Warszawa. [We met during a series of presentations given by Barrie Schwartz (a great friend) and myself --- talks on the Shroud of Turin and its effect on one's faith. Barrie was a member of the 'scientific team' that examined the Shroud in 1978, authorized by Pope John Paul II.]

Cai had taken a few days of his time to visit my wife and me at our home in Savannah and to plan a trip for his 17 year old son, Stanislaw (Stach), to visit and travel here in the United States for a few weeks during the summer of 2014.

If you think my name is long, Stach's real name is Tadeusz Kazimierz Aleksander Grocholski --- should be followed by "King of all the lands east of Warszawa to Belarus, north to the Baltic and south to the Tatra Mountains. I am really excited about spending time with Stach next summer!!

The discussions with Mike and Cai included (1) reflections on governments and their mismanagement, both here in the US and in Poland and (2) faith and political beliefs and their influence on the governing of the two countries.

The views held were similar; but the path to them was different! The end result of our talks was a request, by both Michael and Cai, independently ---for me to articulate the perspectives and beliefs I hold --- to 'write a book' --- record a specific grandfather's perspective on two broad subjects: faith and 'love of country' and their interrelationship -- in this case love of two nations: the United States of America and, its big brother --- Poland.

Specifically --- transcribe for their sons, daughters and friends – perspectives, viewpoints and beliefs I hold regarding country and faith --- not only what my beliefs and viewpoints are, but also how they were derived and can be either defended or, where necessary, changed --- as we move forward.

"Write a book Dad!" seems daunting --- and still does; but to complain and not be involved is not a solution, rather part of the problem; hence, I am obligated to participate – to once again take up my 'teaching role' – and potentially influence the next generation's views through participation in their search for truth and 'their efforts' to build a better tomorrow for their families.

Please remember as you read this 'reflection', I am "talking" to my children and I am imparting this 'reflection', as my mother trained me many years ago ---- "Keeping It Simple --- not 'overthinking' or expecting 'absolute provability' --- rather --- if it is 'truthful' and 'believable' --- move on!" --- So, let's begin!

"Dear Loved Ones" --- I have always loved receiving letters from my mother, who started all her letters with such an opening --- from the start of each letter, Mom let us know that she treasured each of us. "I miss her deeply!!"

A "Fable" --- As relevant today as a 'century ago'!

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought Anybody could do it; but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.

So it ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have!

Each of us is called, from time to time, to be the 'Somebody', who cares --- that gets involved in the affairs of their country, as well as; most importantly, the activities within their family, church, communities and jobs. 'Nations' and their hopes for the future of 'its citizens' --- are at great risk if 'each of its citizens' are not the Somebody that gets involved!

A Basic Item to Begin --- ['each of us is responsible for learning']

Belief in or acceptance of a practice, concept, principle, conduct or 'manner of living one's life' comes through the pursuit of knowledge --- through study and personal evaluation of information combined with 'others' viewpoints / teachings. It is essential that in that pursuit, each of us, 'trust' or build trust --- gain confidence in or reliance on --- 'sources'. Warning: the 'trust' you seek must be built on qualities such as fairness, accuracy, honor, ability, and most importantly -- truth. You must read, study and examine source 'materials' --- books, pamphlets, presentations --- audio / visual; as well as discussing your findings, feelings and beliefs with others --- people, such as parents, teachers, writers, officials (government or church) and educators (not just those found in schools). Some nations have attempted to use 'power' as a replacement for 'trust', to which I suggest a study of Nazi Germany. The leaders had a major amount of power over the country but virtually 'no trust' from the people!!

To follow or adhere -- to believe -- in organized religion or a country's guiding principles, laws and its implementation thereof --- for me -- required that I be able to 'trust' in the 'Founders' (those who established my country and my church) and their founding documents.

My parents taught me to identify and discern truth, so that I could accept and/or place my reliance on - or in - my church and my country. They did so through their example --- their words and actions demonstrated 'right from wrong' in the daily conduct of their lives and their teaching responsibilities; including the schools chosen for my education and who my teachers would be.

So the first step in trusting is learning to trust (most likely from your parents and early teachers) and to then study: gather information / opinions --- the 'pros and cons' --- and then seek out those whom you trust and discuss your findings so that you can then reach acceptance or rejection.

Note: Some lessons cannot be taught --- they must be lived!

You must also, even though you have accepted a teaching or point of view, not be so 'rigid' that your intellectual growth, and continuing evolution of knowledge, cannot affect you and thereby require adjustment in maintaining your specific 'beliefs'. Discoveries and facts learned over your lifetime may challenge perspectives based on 'previous knowledge or facts' and affect the direction in life you have chosen; or a previously trustworthy source, that was key to your belief, may be found wanting. I am not suggesting that you seek a different perspective so that a course of action you have recognized as 'inaccurate or difficult' can be made 'easier or more to your liking' rather than 'straight'.

Twisting logic is not acceptable; nor 'trumps' truth or trust placed in either your own understanding or those you found trustworthy. ----- Knowledge, Intellect and 'Living' must be developed and then accepted --- developed through "trusted -- proven" sources!! Two key points:

1. Learn how to trust!!
2. Be trustworthy --- make sure others can trust you: 'your words' and 'actions' --- how you lead your life!!

Another Basic Item to Begin --- ['the speed of change']

Over my life, change has been consistent in virtually all aspects of my life! The change was gradual through the first 40 to 50 years, while the last 20 to 30 years I have seen / experienced an increasingly rapid pace in change. In some areas, particularly those dealing with information, wealth, integrity, honesty, patience, opportunity, right and wrong and the meaning of words are those that stand out. It's easier to recognize the changes we see in communications --- it use to take 3 to 4 weeks to send a letter to someone and then get a reply and now it is nearly instantaneous, thanks to the internet. The phone was an instrument that we dialed and used wire cables and now we use phones that use radio waves through a plethora of towers around the world or satellites in space. Further, we now carry our phones with us and they are also cameras (high quality at that) and computers --- very powerful, with significant information research capability and storage capacity, as well as for watching movies, playing games and listening to music --- I'm sure I forgot a series of features that happened 'yesterday'. It is more difficult to see the changes in faith, love of country and patriotism and belief 'there-in'.

Many things will change in your life, wherever you live; regardless of how mankind manipulates facts or 'accepted truth'. I fully believe; however, that integrity and truth will be essential for success in any of the changes!!

Morally: Right will be Right and Wrong will be Wrong!!

For any nation to remain 'great' its citizens must be involved!!

You cannot rely 'on the other guy!! --- They are 'most likely' waiting on you!!

Others Have Stated This Warning --- Slightly Differently!!

"The reason people blame things on the previous generation is that there's only one other choice." Doug Larson, Columnist

"The price of greatness is responsibility." Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (May 1940 – July 1945)

"Ninety-nine percent of all failures come from people who have a habit of making excuses." George Washington Carver (Scientist, botanist, educator, and inventor --- dubbed the "Black Leonardo" -Born a slave in 1864 – died a free man in 1943.)

A Final Basic Item to Begin --- ['words have meaning']

The expression -- "words have meaning!" -- was ignited in America in the later part of the 20th century and early part of the 21st by a radio personality: Rush Limbaugh, who used the expression when reviewing claims and 'in some instances – lies' by politicians during election 'cycles'. I find the expression to be a 'truism'!! ---- - Basically, if we don't have a common understanding of what the words used or implied within the Constitution or, for that matter, any document, mean --- how can a nation's people / citizens 'measure' effectiveness, national value or whether we should or can follow / implement words spoken by our leaders, churches or 'our fellow man'.

Rush's point was and still is, that the meaning of words and what brought about their use in America's Constitution are "critical" if "We The People" (you and I) are to be governed by them!!

I also, strongly believe, that the same must be said about the words that are used in the explanation or professing, of one's faith and beliefs. If the basis of my faith rests in Christ's words: 'Love God and Love One Another', which it does (see below); then I had better, not only understand the words, but be able to 'properly articulate' and defend those words and the many words that flow from them. Some of the critical words in the Constitution and within my religious beliefs and what I refer to as my principals are outlined below and at Appendix A. While not necessarily 'complete' definitions, they reflect how I will use the words within this reflection.

The basis of my faith: A scholar of the law tested Jesus: "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply: "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Jesus replied: You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

Three words are very important to me --- from the "motto" of the school where I completed my collegiate studies --- "The United States Military Academy": "Duty --- Honor --- Country" →→→ three, time-honored, ideals!!

Duty --- Something that one is expected / required to perform, that is legally or morally binding or obligatory because it is morally or legally right ---- actions / tasks required of a person, position, function or occupation --- such as a soldier, policeman or clergyman.

Honor --- Fairness, or integrity in one's beliefs and actions --- more so --- through a source of credit or distinction.

Country --- A legally distinct entity in political geography. In this reflection, the 'countries' highlighted are The United States of America and Poland ----- the term Nation – will be used synonymously even though more properly defined as a community of people who share a common language, culture, ethnicity, descent, or history.

The importance of those first three words is best understood ('felt') in the words of Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense under President Ronald Regan: "In the case of our military, one of the reasons why so many volunteer, serve, and sacrifice is that they do it for each other. In the military, 'no man left behind' is a great deal more than a motto. It announces and assures each individual that those in his unit are there for one another.

They can confidently take the necessary risks and place trust in the members of their unit because they know that trust is returned. That camaraderie and sense of purpose encourage acts of uncommon valor -- troops covering a grenade to shield others; holding positions under withering enemy fire to ensure that others can move to safety; flying a chopper into a perilous hot zone to pick up wounded soldiers; and other acts of self-sacrifice that those in uniform routinely perform."

The critical element in the motto: Duty, Honor, Country; is unspoken, yet implicitly understood as essential -- TRUST!

Complimentary 'sister' words to the 'ideals' outlined and frequently used in 'other aspects' of our daily lives, including discussions relating to one's country, nation and their laws; as well as, religious perspectives, and used to help clarify my viewpoints or perspectives and / or their 'use or context', can be found in Appendix A.

"Setting the Stage" --- My Country / Our Allie

The United States of America was 'born' --- established as a nation, in 1776.

Its Founders went beyond a simple Democracy as one can see in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident...all men are...endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights --- that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men."

America's Declaration of Independence acknowledges a Creator as the source of the unalienable rights that 'governments' are instituted to 'protect'!

That acknowledgement was a key foundational element of the Constitution of the United States of America - written to protect and secure our God-given individual rights. I devoted my career as a soldier to defend that concept, with knowledge that if we ever allow this foundation to be eroded and lose faith that 'our' rights are a gift directly from Our Creator to each individual, and not from men --- then we lose the basis of the greatness that is America.

I have encountered no further information that would change the 'trust' I place in my nation's founders. Despite poor political performance, the change in man's intellectual abilities and science developed; the 'original intent' and principles are as relevant and accurate today as in the 1700s.

What are the unalienable rights with which we are endowed? They may be described in many ways, but English jurist Sir William Blackstone wrote in 1766, "...these may be reduced to three principal articles: •the right of personal security (life); •the right of personal liberty; and, •the right of private property...." These rights come from God and must be protected by government, whether national or local.

KEY --- It is "We the People" who are responsible for insuring that the governments we elect 'follow and adhere' to its words and declarations!! It is "We the People" who must insure that the foundation upon which our nation was established is not set aside by the 'whims' or misguided beliefs of those we elect, even if mistakenly, to uphold the laws of our nation!! Every so often 'our voices and votes' will be needed to remind our elected representatives!

Our 'founding' documents ---- establish how our country will be 'governed' --- recognizing that there is a 'power greater than man' and that we place our nation's faith in that being --- Our Creator --- 'God'.

As a culture, I sense that we Americans, over the past half of my life, are perceived as always wanting to have total control --- being able to stand alone --- to be better than the 'other guy' --- for others to 'look-up' to -- - or to 'look to us' as 'the source', a perspective that has placed us in the position of thinking that we are "Democracy's Police Force." In essence, we portray a culture of 'power' rather than one of 'trust', particularly trust in God. We have changed in ways that I believe are 'not in accordance with our founder's wishes':

1. The legal interpretation and / or enforcing of the Constitution and the laws of our country --- are shifting more strongly from a "strict" interpretation to a more "loose" interpretation. --- A shift I do not favor!!

2. The shift has occurred as 'one political party', through elected members' influence, based upon longevity and 'committee control', has affected laws and appointment of Federal Judges and the Supreme Court. I prefer 'shorter terms of service' as envisioned by the founding fathers, in accordance with their written documents and debates, before the Constitution was adopted.

3. The Founders wanted 'the people's representatives' to serve for a limited time and then return to 'live under the laws they 'created'. They saw the work of the legislative bodies 'terms in office' as "service" not a job! Further, they thought representatives should "not be" exempted from the laws they implemented or established 'for the people'. Desires not adhered to!!

4. The apparent 'party influence' has been enhanced by a shift, over the years, from citizen legislators to 'professional politicians' with many being from the legal profession, and serving too long. I believe in 'term limits'!!

To my Polish friends that might read this 'reflection' and the American readers who are unfamiliar with a nation possessing a 'heart and soul' similar to our own ---- I apologize for using a personally modified, short

Wikipedia extraction. I have included this information because Poland is a very special nation that I am privileged to have learned from. I am hopeful that my true feelings for the people of Poland will become apparent and reflect both my mind and hearts --- love of and for Poland --- a nation I 'look to' as "my big-brother"! Poland is over 1000 years old and has seen many forms of governance - rooted in the arrival of the Slavs, who gave rise to permanent settlements and historic development on Polish lands. During the Piast dynasty, Christianity was adopted in 966 and a medieval Monarchy was established.

The Jagiellon Dynasty period brought close ties with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and cultural development and territorial expansion, culminating in the establishment of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1569.

Commonwealth in its early phase constituted a continuation of the Jagiellon prosperity, with its remarkable development of a sophisticated noble democracy. From the mid-17th century, the huge state entered a period of decline caused by devastating wars and deterioration of the country's system of government. Significant internal reforms were introduced in May of 1791, a 'Democracy' ----- but the reform process was not allowed to run its course. [I feel that America is trying to repeat Poland's 1st attempt at Democracy. We are not hearing our big-brother's cautions --- not studying their experiences.]

The Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy through a series of invasions and partitions terminated the Commonwealth's independent existence in 1795. From then until 1918 there was no independent Polish state. The nation was not even found on maps or recognized by other nations as 'existing'. The Polish people (Poles), engaged intermittently in armed resistance until 1864.

After the failure of the last uprising, the nation preserved its identity through educational uplift and a program called "organic work", intended to modernize the economy and society. The opportunity for freedom came after World War I and defeat of the partitioning imperial powers.

The Second Polish Republic was established and existed from 1918 to 1939. It was destroyed by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union by their Invasion of Poland at the beginning of World War II. Millions of Polish citizens perished in the course of the Nazi occupation.

The Polish government in exile kept functioning and through the many Polish military formations on the western and eastern fronts the Poles contributed to the Allied victory.

[A personal note is warranted! --- I believe that one of the major insults to the Polish People is that 'historians / news reporters', frequently and incorrectly, associate the German Death Camps / Gas Chambers, with the Polish people. Those 'camps' were 'German' camps, operated by the German military, on Polish soil and the people imprisoned in the camps / murdered in the camps, quite frequently were Poles; and the German people, through their 'tolerance' of Hitler and his government, are complicit in those atrocities ---- this is not 'a Polish issue' it is a 'German issue' and historians / reporters need 'to get their facts and story correct'!]

Nazi Germany's forces were compelled to retreat from Poland as the Soviet Red Army advanced, which led to the creation of the People's Republic of Poland. The country's geographic location was shifted to the west and Poland existed as a Soviet satellite state.

Poland largely lost its traditional multi-ethnic character and the communist system was imposed. [A 2nd personal note is warranted! --- One of my firm beliefs --- Poland's status as a Soviet satellite state was a 'betrayal' by their American and British Allies --- specifically, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States and Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of England. 'We The People' of America and England owe Poland both an apology for 'our' failure to defend their nation after World War II and our deepest thanks for their support in the defeat of the Nazi Empire!!]

By the late 1980s Solidarity, a Polish reform movement became crucial in causing a peaceful transition from a communist state to the capitalist system and parliamentary democracy. [A 3rd personal note: I for one do not view the transition noted --- as a 'peaceful transition' --- and I do not believe those beaten, jailed and murdered, would see 'peaceful' as an accurate reflection of the conditions in Poland under Communism until their liberation in 1989.]

The process did result in the creation of the modern Polish state under which three Constitutions have been adopted by the governing bodies of Poland.

To comprehend the culture and people of Poland requires the reader of this reflection to study, not only the history of Poland, but be able to 'know, feel and yearn' for the heart of Poland as only good authors can present.

I urge you to read Henryk Sienkiewicz, the 1905 Nobel Prize in Literature recipient. He brings Poland's culture to life in his 'trilogy' --- 3 exemplary books: "With Fire and Sword"; "The Deluge"; and "Fire in the Steppe" and a sequel book -- "On The Fields of Glory" - the defeat of Muslim forces in 1683.

To fully gain an understanding of Poland's strong faith in God and its 'depth of faith' within its culture --- read: "The Deeds of Faith" and "A Freedom Within" by a former senior prelate, Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, during the period of history dominated by communism.

I also urge you to read about America in the 1940s through 1980s and you will also see the 'core' of the Polish people and their culture --- as we were, 'in those times', very much like the Poles I first got to know in 2008. I quickly realized their love of nation and willingness to sacrifice and fight for freedom, mirrored our beliefs, our people and our 'way of life' during my youth.

"Setting the Stage" --- Democracy and Responsibility

For democratic forms of government --- under which America and Poland are presently operating --- to 'work', requires involvement of its citizens!! The governed and governing (those elected officials who take 'an oath' to 'uphold their Constitution and the laws of their nation), must then comply with their Constitution and promulgated 'Federal, State & Local Laws', as appropriate.

While our Founders included a declaration reflecting that man's 'laws' must be subservient to 'Our Creator'; the difficulty of maintaining and sustaining a democracy relies upon those governing and those governed --- we are both responsible agents in this form of government!!

The governed ('us') --- being, I believe, the most critical agents of democracy! We must study / learn about the democratic form of government under which we live [how it is supposed to function] --- the rights that must be protected and the 'character' of the nation --- and 'know' who is asking for our vote; coupled with our responsibility of participating in the election process and then insure those governing --- 'do their jobs'.

A Scottish History Professor in 1887, when analyzing the fall of the Athenian Republic some 2000 years earlier, wrote: "A Democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government.... A Democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover that they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury.

From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the Public Treasury, with the result that every Democracy will finally collapse over loose fiscal policy, (which is) always followed by a dictatorship."

[Sounds like the last few elections here 'in the colonies'!! --- what we hear daily on the TV news shows and in most newspapers: wealth redistribution; tax increases on the rich to help the poor; national healthcare; 'open election process with no ID requirements'; open borders and 'no - we can't reduce our escalating need to spend your money --- we have made 'promises'!!]

Alexis de Tocqueville, a French historian, confirms the professor's warning; as recorded in his book 'On Democracy in America', where he articulates that democracy is the 'best' form of government "...if you can hold on to it".]

Continuing the Scottish Professor's words: "The average age of the world's greatest civilizations from the beginning of history, has been about 200 years --- the nations progressed through the following sequence: From Bondage to Spiritual Faith ---- From Spiritual Faith to Great Courage ---- From Courage to Liberty ---- From Liberty to Abundance ---- From Abundance to Complacency ---- From Complacency to Apathy ---- From Apathy to Dependence ---- From Dependence back into Bondage."

I have lived through abundance, complacency, apathy and now the onset of dependency - headed toward bondage --- what will it take to wake us up??

In 2008 we elected a person who stated while campaigning: "My friends: We live in the greatest nation in the history of the world. I hope you will join with me, as we try to change it." --- Were we asleep or do we actually want to be a 'second place' nation, or worse - 'bankrupt and a joke' --- no longer a 'leader'?

I Don't!!!!

The following 'two paragraphs' contain a comparison from recent history.

"We must carry out not only those instructions we understand but also those we fail to understand for the moment, and we must try to understand them in the course of carrying them out." Lin Biao, Vice Chair of the Communist Party of China from 1964 to late 1971.

“We have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it, away from the fog of controversy.” Nancy Pelosi, US House of Representatives, March 9, 2010 ----- A senior ‘Democrat’ legislator following the example of Lin Biao.

Why have we adopted a Communist Perspective of Change?

The on-going media and governmental fomenting of race and equality issues in America today (wrapped in fiscal, living standards, education and legal issues and as seen daily in the Administration’s ‘grasp for power’ and the lack of Congressional ‘balance’ established in Our Constitution) appear to be right out of Mao’s “Little Red Book” and Saul Alinsky’s “Rules for Radicals”.

“The revolution is not a dinner party. It is an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.” Mao Zedong, 1st Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China: ‘Ruled’ from June 19, 1945 – until September 9, 1976

“If God does not exist everything is permitted.” The Brothers Karamazov --- Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky – Russian novelist/philosopher --- November 11, 1821 – February 9, 1881

They are most definitely not part of our Constitution or form of government and should be ‘countered / fought’ by “We The People”, which might have to include that a number of federal government leaders be “fired!”

We humans frequently reflect on our condition and inquire of the cosmos --- the meaning of our lives. We seek answers to the deepest questions: Where do we come from? What is our destiny?

Is there a transcendent source, a “higher law?” that obliges us to rise above our personal interests and desires in order to “do unto others as we would have them do unto us”? I think -- Yes!

“Setting the Stage” --- My Faith / My Church

The American Constitution recognizes each individual’s right to honor ‘God’ without the government’s interference: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ...” 1st Amendment [Bill of Rights] ----- Freedom of Religion --- NOT --- Freedom from Religion

Freedom of religion suggests that such a value is not grounded in a ‘modus vivendi’ --- compromise --- people agreeing to respect each other’s freedom in order to avoid religiously motivated strife. Such a theory obscures the deep ground of principle on which the right of religious liberty rests and the true reasons for respecting the religious freedom of others. Since the beginning of our nation, we have engaged other cultures to advance religious liberty in all the nations of the world --- as an essential element of human dignity.

To respect fundamental human rights is to favor and honor the person who is protected by those rights --- including the rights to freedom of speech, press, assembly and religion.

Religious faith by its nature must be free -- coerced ‘faith’ is no faith at all!!

For those who regard humans as both material beings and spiritual ones --- free, rational and responsible --- it is obvious that their spiritual well-being is no less important than their physical, psychological, intellectual, social and moral well-being.

Because the freedom to live according to one’s beliefs is so integral to human flourishing, the full protections of religious liberty must extend to all --- even to those whose answers to life’s questions reject belief in the transcendent.

The British religious thinker, John Henry Newman, observed in 1874 that “conscience has rights because it has duties.”

When religious freedom in other parts of the world is under siege --- one of the aims of US foreign policy, has been --- and must continue to be --- the combating of such intolerance. America is respected for advancing freedom of religion around the world --- how about right here at home! Liberty is not simply a matter of sensible social compromise, or just an American ideal or Western value, but an essential element of human dignity.

I was baptized in the Catholic Faith and over the years, I have studied and accepted that faith as ‘my faith’. While I have studied other faiths, I did so in a comparative manner, not in an attempt to ‘choose’ another faith, rather to establish a better understanding of the various beliefs and differences.

I grew up in the Catholic faith, observed other faiths in various cultures and locations of the globe, and found a ‘fuller’ relationship with God ‘Our Creator’ in the Catholic Church. I do not look at others who express their belief in God differently --- as either right or wrong! I believe that the fullness of faith is found in the Catholic

Church --- and I do not accept the ‘atheistic view’ that there is no God. Despite failures by individuals; I find the Catholic principles / teachings, to remained ‘rock solid’ and to which I remain fully committed!

Key to what I sense as the catalyst for the apparent decline in America’s form of democracy and most likely will also affect Poland over the next 5 to 10 years -- as has happened in other parts of Europe -- not only through ‘instant news’ and ‘perspective presentations’ provided incessantly through the worldwide internet and national and international news medias; but, more importantly, our loss of respect / belief in a very fundamental aspect of our Democracy --- our ‘Founders’ belief in God and strict adherence to His Power as ‘Creator’! We seem to have forgotten that “Our Creator” and His place in our nation’s life – must remain the “Same -- Yesterday, Today and Forever”!!

The following is from “Off World” a novel by Robin Parrish

“Look around you --- Watch the sun rise and set. Look at the water when it’s all calm. Feel breezes touch your face. See the insects do what they do. See all the things other people spend all day ignoring. Life is poetry! Stop. Watch. Listen. There’s poetry all over. And the thing about poetry

--- It doesn’t write itself.”

I ‘sense’ that America’s future, a nation built on the principles of individual liberty and freedom, through patriotism and ‘hard work’ and the ability to honor our God as we choose to honor ‘The Creator’, is dramatically changing at a faster and faster pace and not necessarily for the better. Technology, coupled with a decline into dependence on the government, and the rapid evolution of man’s intellect and abilities, can bring forth both the ‘good’ and ‘evil’ in men; but the ‘evil’ will dominate as man loses his faith --- his belief and trust in God --- upon whom our nation was founded!!

I fear my grandchildren and their children will live through an era of --- ‘the dominance of the minority’ and be the recipients of ‘bondage’ and ‘face’ the challenge of ‘fighting their government’ for their liberty if we don’t “wake up” and regain the dream that is America!

God is Real and He is Present and He is Our Creator!!

As you can tell from my words to this point, “I think, feel and believe with all my heart and soul - that “God is real!!” AND – that ‘Without Him’ our nation, our culture and all the nations of the world that don’t accept Him, will fail!!!

But can we trust God? --- I can!!!! --- But I cannot answer that for you!! You have to do as I have had to do --- study His Words and His conduct while on earth! Study the Bible! I know it is critical; however, as stated well by Alexis de Tocqueville --- “... if America ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.”

I deeply believe that the process ‘of trusting in God’ begins within the family. It was most definitely so in my development and, through study and living of life, particularly the influence of my mother --- throughout my life!

[For those of you who might reject the ‘traditional’ role of women in society --- you should have known my mother --- more influential than any executive, at any level, that I have met.]

I urge you to study, challenge, learn, trust, pray and, if you do so, I am confident that you will also believe!!

God is very real!! In my life --- my studies --- my learning --- my praying --- He has given me no reason to believe other than the facts that:

He is always good --- always faithful --- and --- always present!!

He loves each of us! --- We are His children! --- He never tires of Forgiving!!

He gives us “free will” and His Mercy --- AND I TRUST HIM!!!!

While my religious beliefs began within my childhood home; it was the living of the Catholic faith’ with the wonderful woman who became my wife (choose your spouse wisely); that helped me accept and fully respond to its calling to follow its teachings and then take the Catholic ‘faith’ fully into my living of life and allow it to guide me in all of my endeavors, which it still does today.

So How Did My Faith / My Beliefs / My Love of Country Evolve?

To understand my perspectives/viewpoints/beliefs, requires understanding my development, who and what influenced me --- who I ‘trusted’ and how that formed my beliefs and the paths taken in my life!

In a nut shell --- We are the products of those who ‘raised’ and taught us and those who ‘raised’ and taught those who ‘raised’ us, as well as friends, enemies, teachers and life experiences; particularly those that expose us to other cultures and nations! My beliefs have been formulated and honed over 74 years! They continue to be refined and strengthened every day of my life.

The 1st key element in the evolution of my beliefs, faith and love of country: Family!!! Family is not just important, it is crucial! It is 'the' foundational block for civilization --- for each country and nation that has ever existed, exists today or will exist in the future!!

I believe that, within my life, it was not just my own family, but also the family of my spouse!! I quickly saw / learned that her family had been an impact in her life and would be a key element in our future together. Without 'family' there can be no governments or religious structures. Family is the basic 'teaching entity in most, if not all – cultures / societies'. I regret today not being closer to 'my extended family' over my life - a product of careers chosen and focusing less on 'making time' and 'too much on excuses'.

Family influences continued to be complimented by my friends; my church; my teachers; those I worked with in multiple careers; and those with whom I deeply disagree. Disagreements (including those with family members) have helped hone my beliefs and need to live by my beliefs!

Also --- two organizations (Legatus and the Knights of Columbus) help me to 'stay focused' in blending my faith, beliefs and daily living. Legatus is an organization of Catholic Senior Business Leaders – Owners – CEOs, whose purpose is to help its members to 'study, live and spread' their faith. 'The Knights' is a men's organization that helps its members in the actual 'doing' of God's command to Love Their Neighbors --- through focused works, activities and public witness.

The main influential forces in my life, which I view as 'fully trustworthy', have been: my immediate family and that of my wife; particularly my mother; my wife, one of my aunts, and my mother-in-law. I also feel that my education at the United States Military Academy and my exposure to other nations (particularly to Poland), peoples and cultures, thanks to my father's career and my own, have been significant in what and how I believe. I was also extremely fortunate to have been able to trust my parents, my brothers and sisters.

A Tennessee gentleman and author, David Johnson, who has devoted his life to helping those who have not been fortunate in their early lives; recently 'penned' a few novels that address the results of such beginnings.

A haunting line from his novel, "Tuckers Way" makes this point clear, when the books heroin, "Tucker", responds to her friend's request to trust her, she replies: "Trust means something -- bad's -- going to happen."

I have observed over time that some young people are unable to trust their family, and hence their 'learning' is deeply affected --- made non-existent in their early years, affecting their capability of gaining understanding of trust or developing it into their conduct.

The beginning --- Life begins the same for each of us whether born into wealth, poverty, or somewhere in between --- into a traditional family, or a single parent family, or an institution. We have a beginning --- some say at their birth; others at what science calls 'implantation'; while my study of science suggests that my life began at conception. From that instant in time - I was neither a frog nor a horse --- I was human!! My chromosomes, a product of my parents, made me distinctly unique. I further believe, that as a zygote (a single cell organism) – I was both a 'road map' to what I would / could become and that I possessed a 'soul', a spiritual component, that makes me human and not just another animal that inhabits the earth, whether 'intelligent' or otherwise; rather a 'human' created by God, Our Creator, in His image.

From that point, we all become a product of gestation; family (love and care or its absence), whether genetic or adoptive; nourishment; training; education -- practical -- physical -- inspirational; as well as, exposure to and interaction with multiple environments / cultures / peoples throughout our lives.

I do not know when I was conceived (a subject rarely discussed by a son with his parents); but records show that I was born on the 26th day of May in 1939 at the hospital at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, north-north west of Chicago.

I was born a few months before the invasion of Poland by Germany, one of those events that 'began the 2nd World War': not my birth - the invasion of Poland.

I was the 2nd son, the 2nd child of seven, of Irving Donald Roth and Judith Baumgardner Roth ---- my parents named me John Claude Chalmers Roth.

The names given to me were in honor of Saint John the Baptist (the one who announced the coming of The Son of God --- Our Lord); my grandfather (Claude Chalmers Baumgardner, a 'Hoosier Poet' --- 'Hoosiers' being a name given residents of Indiana); --- and my parent's ancestry.

I have always found that living up to my names is both a privilege and a 'responsibility'!! Anyone can take your wealth, your home, your possessions; even your life --- but only you can lose your name / your integrity --- through how you conduct your life!!

I moved a few months after my birth, for the first of many times, to Panama where I lived the first few years of life. More later!

My father --- at the age of 14, became an orphan --- living 'on his own' in Fargo, North Dakota, after being deserted by his father. He worked for board and room, until he graduated from High School at the age of 17. After finishing high school, he joined the Army as a Private, later gaining entry into the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York --- where he became a Catholic and later graduated in 1932.

As a young Army Major, when I was about 3 and 1/2 years old, Dad was given the responsibility for organizing an Artillery Anti-Aircraft Gun Battalion of which he became its Commander. He took the unit to Europe, where they joined the American forces in fighting the Second World War.

He came home when I was nearly seven, with a broken back and ankles and had to learn to walk again before continuing his 36 year Army Career --- a career covering Enlisted and Officer positions and service as both a Reserve and Active Duty 'soldier'. Our father taught us strength of character!!

Dad, who 'walked the walk' and taught from his life experiences and training, 'swore me in' as a young Army Private in 1958, over a year before he ended his Army career.

He entered upon a 2nd career as a Mathematics Professor, at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts, where he taught until a few years before his death in 1977, sixteen years after the birth of his last child, my sister --- Therese.

As most young boys that I grew up with, I seemed to frequently be 'in trouble' with my Dad, but knew without any reservation that he loved me, wanted the best for me, insured I was well and properly educated and was 'pushed' ---- sometimes very reluctantly and painfully ---- to do my best and to achieve all that was within me.

Dad was what I call a 'silent Catholic'! He was not 'a preacher' or someone viewed as 'religious' --- he lived his beliefs, which, as a convert, were formed over his 'tough' young life and made integral during his training at "West Point". He was not a 'let's play ball' type or 'openly' loving father, as some experience; rather a busy, focused, and always practical Dad that reflected his youth and lack of an involved father in his life. He was, however, a 'solid' example of strength and caring for his children!!

He accepted the challenges that his nation and faith demanded of him and he lived a life that let his children know how they should and shouldn't ---- and could ---- and must lead their lives. While I had not intended to 'follow in my father's footsteps' --- that is exactly what I did with my own deviations in the manner, method and length of service and what I did after my retirement.

Growing up, my mother, also a convert to the Catholic Faith --- was 'more than my Mom' --- she was also my best friend and helped form my strong faith and early desire to be a Roman Catholic Priest. A career I was ready to follow until, in High School and our move to Austria in 1950, I discovered 'girls' --- other than my sisters --- and got my first taste of 'another culture' --- not from a book, rather from 'living'. My mother taught me to love --- to 'stand tall' and be proud of who I was and the abilities given to me by God --- nurtured through her and Dad; to excel in education and training; and to 'be involved'. She did so through our observing of her living and practicing her faith, while guiding each of her children!!

Mom was a 'family teacher', she inspired each of us; a 'lady' in the truest sense and meaning of the word; a staunch defender and teacher of her children --- she understood the Catholic faith and took the responsibility to insure each of us knew how to live that faith. She was the heart and soul of our family; and the last person on earth that I, or any of her children, would knowingly hurt. We knew without reservation --- that when we failed --- we had already been forgiven in her 'warm and always present love' for each of us. Mom was then, and still is, my inspiration for 'seeing' the goodness of God in those I meet!!

It was my mother who taught me, through her example, Our Lord's simple command: to Love God and to Love One Another. She showed me how all other commands, guidelines and religious principles, passed on to us, were to help us adhere to His simple commands. While I failed to do so more than I am prepared to report, it was trust in God, discovered in study of Our Lord and His Mother and development of a prayer life, overseen by "my mother", that formed and influenced my beliefs --- and it was my mother who guided my path to 'know' Our Lord and His Mother.

It was through my mother's early training, that today I pray the Rosary regularly. In my retirement, having 'extra time on my hands', I now pray the Rosary three times a day (more often when the phone doesn't ring much) and those prayers are directed: The first rosary each day is for Poland and it's people; the second is for

my family, country and culture; and the third is for those who would do harm to others, so God can touch their hearts!

I acknowledge the great support Mom had from priests, brothers and nuns in school; my time as an Altar Boy; and from those that taught me during the time I was deciding if I actually had a 'calling' to be a Priest myself.

It was, however, my mother's guidance ("Keep it Simple") --- to not overthink or challenge in an attempt to 'find the easy path', that would lead me to the convictions, beliefs and 'trust in God' that I hold today and have through most of my life.

Parenthetically --- if you are interested in understanding Our Lord's Mercy and the unconditional mercy that my mother imparted on her family, read the Diaries of Sister Maria Faustyna Kowalska (Saint Faustina).

My mother practiced in a human sense the Mercy Our Creator gives each of us whom He created when we seek His Mercy --- explained clearly and fully in Saint Faustina's diaries.

As noted earlier, I am the 2nd of 7 children. As I 'pen' these words, all of my brothers and sisters are still living and their families are 'grown' --- for the most part are on their own. Their children are either well into, or beginning the rewarding and fulfilling process of establishing and raising their families.

George was the first born --- on Corregidor in the Philippines on November 20, 1935. We spent our youth together, being 3 ½ years apart in age. He settled, after a tour in the Navy, in the 'Boston area' not far from where Mom and Dad retired. He and his wife Mary Anne have raised two beautiful and talented daughters. The eldest, Rebecca, is married and lives in the Boston area, where she and her husband, Alan, are raising two daughters: Maeve and Aisling; and a son --- Aiden. George and Mary's 2nd daughter, Carolyn, faces the world as a hardworking, 'eye surgery' technician. She lives a few hours from her parents, giving both George and Mary Anne great comfort. She works in San Antonio --- not far from Rockport and the Gulf of Mexico where George and Mary Anne now live --- but its Boston in the summers!!

George and I, while 'normal youth combatants' are, today, very compatible in beliefs, temperament, faith and a 'bunch of aging conditions'!!

Patrick, the 3rd child was born at Fort Amador in the Panama Canal Zone on February 4, 1942 --- a few months before my 3rd birthday. We also spent our youth together. Dad was reassigned to North Carolina, 3 days before Pat's birth and started a period in his life that demanded nearly 100% of his time. We did not see Dad very often during the early part of Pat's life --- He was building from scratch, an Anti-Aircraft (Gun) Battalion and then moved the unit to England to join the forces preparing for the Invasion of Europe during the 2nd World War. Dad's return from combat and into 'our family lives', with a broken back and ankles was not a smooth transition 'back to normal'.

During that period, Pat seemed to always be 'in trouble' with Dad, even more so than the rest of us, a perception that continued for many years. While I do not know why --- it may have had something to do with Dad's recovery from serious injuries or his missing the early stages in Pat's development'. Today, I can only say that it was just that way; although Pat, as he got a little older, did enjoy 'pulling Dad's chain'.

Pat and his wife Barbara live in Dartmouth, Massachusetts and have two daughters: Kristen is married (Evan) and they have no children; while Kara is not married, except to her love --- teaching. Both live near Pat and Barb, which is very much to their liking!! Of all the children, Pat has faced the most difficulties with health issues that resulted from 'botched' spinal surgeries --- yet despite the severe pain and suffering, he remains a 'happy person' living life to the fullest.

One of the great memories I have of the 3 older brothers, was 'finding country music' from our 3rd floor 'hideaway' and listening, from Leavenworth, Kansas, to a radio station broadcasting from Del Rio, Texas. I am still a country music fan --- great stories --- told through great instruments and 'soft voices'. [I do admit that today's 'country music' does not meet the standards of my youth.]

Rosalie was born in Newport, Rhode Island on February 26, 1948, where I became an 'Alter Boy' while in the 2nd grade. As the first girl in the family, she had 3 brothers that, her parents saw as her defenders and she saw as tormentors --- from a realistic point of view --- both; but mostly tormentors. She is married today to Russ Myers. Her 3 children (Peter, Donald and Nicole), who are all adults, are well into finding their places in life. While Rosalie and I were normal siblings; I gained an appreciation for her openness and her efforts to be like Mom --- 'an example' to be emulated.

Rosalie's life has been hard but she has, for the most part, been very happy. Her faith and positive attitude, even when things are 'dark' gives hope to those around her that they can succeed if "they don't give up!!"

Mary was born on October 19, 1950 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. A teacher I had in 4th and 5th Grade --- Sister Mary Laura was close to Mom and Mom chose her name for Mary.

Over the years, I saw what Mom admired about Sister Mary Laura in my sister Mary --- a vibrant warmth and happiness that affected us all. Mary also developed a 'toughness' and 'dedication to family and its defense'. She had her fair share of 'challenges' and she has met them squarely, usually winning! Her children (Christopher is married to Crystal and they have two boys: Declan and Brady; and Gregory who is married to Jennifer and they have a son Tucker) have adopted her drive and dedication and are doing well in life and in raising their families. Chris and his family live in Virginia, not too far from Mary and her husband Keith, while Greg and his family live in the Boston area.

Joseph was born on November 7, 1954 in Salzburg, Austria during my first year in High School. Joe was the first of my siblings that I did not 'grow up with' as I had begun my career in the Army just short of his 4th birthday. I got to know Joe and his family during the time I lived my civilian career. Joe and his wife Ellen have two, unmarried children: Danny, whose health concerns have been severe, more than anyone else in our family has had to face; yet his 'love of life', coupled with being involved in the living of life, are inspirational; and Colleen is now on her own pursuing a 'financially oriented career' --- she also has an inspiring grasp of life and the path ahead. Good parents coupled with two great families Ellen's and Joe's --- have made the difference.

Philosophically, I believe that Joe, George and I are 'on the same wave length' regarding issues of morality, faith and nation. Maybe due to our conservative leanings; but I believe it is deeper and has to do with our relationship, as boys, with our mother.

Therese was born on March 9, 1961 in Chelsea, Mass toward the end of my 'second' year in college, a few months shy of my 22nd birthday.

I lived near my parents during a good part of my sister's early development and observed how hard it was to be 'the little sister' to brothers old enough to be her father. I also have been able to share with her and observe her grow as a teenager, young woman and a proud mother of two wonderful ladies.

Therese married Hugh Storer and they have two daughters. Their first born, Meagan, is married to Edward (EJ) and they have a young son --- EJ. Their second --- Jessica, is in her final year of obtaining, what will be a "first in our family" -- a 'doctoral degree' -- at Ohio State on scholarship. Therese and her husband, Hugh are very, very proud parents!! They have a right to be!!!!

[Parenthetically --- Hugh's father was Dad's senior enlisted soldier during the Second World War --- their 'youngest' children being attracted to each other -- was a 'twist in fate' neither anticipated nor saw coming as they had not seen each other since the end of the war (1946) until 1977.]

In our youth, we were normal children --- 'in competition' and 'in conflict'; and, as was normal --- encountered the customary sex (boys versus girls) and age (oldest versus 'the children') detractors to unity. We were all healthy and in the 'long haul', despite time and distances, we have kept close -- but not as close as I wish we had been!

Today I view my brothers and sisters much differently --- they are stable, for the most part (George and I are getting 'a little forgetful'; cantankerous; and hard to live with) -- yet we are faith filled, loving men and women who share their talents, faith and love within their extended families and communities. We remain competitive; not fighting and trying to find our place / position within the family, rather in following the wonderful example our parents set for us and that we still learn from in our roles as parents and grand-parents.

Our mother and father would be very proud if they could see 'their family' [I believe they do!] and know we are still learning from each other --- sharing with each other. I do fully believe they have become "our guardian angels", whether 'physically' or 'spiritually' and are the reason for our continued love of, and in, each other!

I never knew my father's father (Charles Eugene Roth, born in Iowa on January 25, 1882 and who died on April 11, 1975 at the age of 93, when I was 36 years old). I also knew neither of my fraternal grandfather's wives. My Dad and his brother (Charles) and sister (Lillian) became orphans when their birth mother died in 1921 and their father, in essence, deserted them.

I met Aunt Lillian and Uncle Charlie; but got to know 'Uncle Charlie' fairly well, while only meeting, a few times, my Aunt Lillian, without getting to know her or her family:

(a) Aunt Lillian, was sent to live with her Aunt in North Dakota, where she lived, married and raised and nurtured her family (3 boys: Robert, Richard and James --- all still living in North Dakota) until her death. I regret deeply not getting to know Lillian and her family!!

(b) Uncle Charles, whom I did get to know in my high school and college years, was adopted by a Chicago Police Lieutenant. Uncle Charlie lived in the same home in a Chicago suburb the remainder of his life. Although married, he never had any children. He was a frustrated scientist (self-trained) whose 'theories' of and on 'gravity' were not provable yet he believed them with all his heart and soul --- he was the 'book version' of a "crazy Uncle"; but a man 'this nephew' learned to love.

I also never got to physically know my mother's father -- Claude Chalmers Baumgardner, my names-sake, who was born in Indiana on November 13, 1883 and died November 7, 1943, when I was just 4 and ½ years of age. I was told many great things over my early life about the man whose name I carry, but I have no 'true memory' of the Hoosier writer and poet who was my maternal grandfather. [As I write this reflection I am beginning to 'feel' that this effort's side effect may just be 'my attempt' to get to know him better!]

My grandmother, Rosalie Carpenter Baumgardner, was born on the 27th of November 1885 and died 26 February 1977. --- My Mom's parents had three daughters --- the eldest was Gretchen (born September 4, 1908 --- raised four children on the family farm in Indiana) --- I knew my Cousins as Sugar, Bill, Buck and Morris. Next was my Mom (Judith --- we knew her only as Mom or Judy). The youngest was Julia Jean ('Tezzy'), who was born June 9, 1915.

I got to know Tezzy and her husband 'Buzz' (Horace) and their two sons, my cousins - Mike and Sam, very well. I was closer to Tezzy and her family than with Gretchen and her children. Mike passed away a few years ago after a long period of suffering from cancer.

Sam was a polio victim as a child and still suffers from that childhood disease and has been the main 'glue' that has kept the extended families of Gretchen, Judy and Tezzy together.

I knew, loved and learned much from my Aunt Tezzy, as well as my Mom and 'her Mom' --- who lived to be 92 and in our home off-and-on over the later 35 years of her life --- even my sons got to know her, before her death, and hear stories about her youth in Indiana.

I have 'kept in touch' throughout my life with my cousins on my mother's side of the family and their families --- although the careers of Dad and myself, made our times together somewhat short and sharing happened through letters and other technologies --- the internet and DVDs, CDs and videos transmitted through the internet or sent by 'snail mail'. "Face to face" time was rare and 'our encounters' happened infrequently during 'side trips' or while on vacations or during moves from one army post to another --- in 'stop overs' to get caught up on family matters and memories.

While I have 'known' most of my 'relatives', those outside my own immediate family, my brothers and sisters, I do not feel their influence on my life was central to my beliefs or in the conduct of my life except for my Aunt Tezzy --- whose beautiful spirit and boundless humor I cherished 'then and now' --- it helped me see and know that 'living is much more than just doing things'; and how to see beauty around me, regardless of where I was --- even in Vietnam during combat, where I saw Bengal Tigers with their cubs watering at the river that separated Vietnam from Cambodia; and flowers that were large enough to stick your fist into and so beautiful that the war around you faded.

I was never geographically close enough to have developed the relationships necessary for my aunts, uncles and cousins, to be influential in my life --- to affect or guide my beliefs or the manner in which I lived my life. I do dream about what it would have been like had I known them earlier to the depth I experience today in my memories and thoughts.

The primary 'family' influences in my life, were and will be to my death: my Mother; my Father; my Brothers and Sisters; my Wife; my Aunt 'Tezzy' and my Mother-In-Law, whom I was privileged to share my home with and learn from for nearly 27 years --- a longer period than I lived with my own parents.

I believe my Mother and my immediate family, taught me "a loving -- lived faith"; my parents taught me 'simple, loving discipline'; and my collegiate education not only taught me to discipline my 'learning' and conduct; but to focus my citizenship through "Duty; Honor; and Country"!

The 2nd key element in the evolution of my beliefs, faith and love of country: 'risk taking' / taking responsibility, through active involvement in living life and my faith beliefs! Whether within my family, the military, civilian or community challenges, or church / social groups -- if I joined -- I got involved!!

Early in life, my examples from the families I grew up in, career paths taken, organizations joined --- it was not only important “to be involved” --- it was essential!! To me --- Life not lived to the fullest – was and is ‘not acceptable’!!

My young life, the time before leaving the comfort and security of my parent’s home, was filled with exciting experiences, as I got my ‘first looks at living’. Throughout my first 18 years, I lived in a variety of cultures / environments: the coastlines of North Carolina and Rhode Island; the farm land of northern Indiana; the open plains of Kansas and Texas; as well as the ‘city and urban areas’ in and around New York City; Chicago, Illinois; and New Orleans, Louisiana. I spent the first three years of my life in Panama and the first two years of my High School years in Austria --- one year in Linz and the second in Salzburg, a few years after the end of the Second World War. I still remember with fondness, my days as a ‘country boy’ where I was most happy.

As a young soldier, I was stationed in New Jersey for basic and advanced training, then outside Washington DC --- where I met ‘the girl’ that would become my wife, when she was in her first year of college.

From Virginia, I entered the toughest yet best educational and training experience of my life --- the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, graduating 4 years later.

It was West Point, through its academics and military training programs; coupled with my early ‘unit level’ leader duties, that helped me to understand that life, work and efforts were not the result of “I / Me / Mine”; rather “We / They / Theirs”.

‘Responsibility’ - I learned - was executed through ‘their efforts’, while failure resulted from ‘my failures’ in training, equipping and/or leading. Reaching that understanding and having succeeded in duties and responsibilities given and mission accomplishment ---- began at West Point! During my recent 50th reunion, that knowledge was brought home again to be by a classmate: “Life presents challenges to each and every one of us! To some degree each of us has failed, but we all have succeeded.”

I learned that such slogans as those that follow --- were not just words, rather commitments to fellow soldiers, my nation and myself:

1. “2nd place is the 1st loser!” [Our nation cannot afford to accept less than the ‘best’ from its military and other ‘first responders’, as well as those who work in and guide our government!]

2. “Don’t just live, but live for a purpose greater than yourself!” [We are called by God and Our country to do our best and to ‘serve’ rather than just ‘take’!]

3. From the Navy Seals --- “The only easy day was yesterday.” [We are called to do our best, each and every day, and to improve on our performance each and every day --- in our jobs; our homes; our communities and in the conduct of our lives ---helping Family/Neighbors.]

I also hope you will read and ‘listen’ to Henry David Thoreau: an American author, poet, philosopher, and historian - who wrote in his book “Walden --- Life in The Woods”: “Our way of life is frittered away by detail.” Like a large portion of us, I devoted too much of my energy to inconsequential matters --- spending time and energy on trivial and not essential or necessary concerns. It is my hope that you will achieve sound balance and focus in your lives so you can limit the portion that will have been “fritted away by detail.”

My first duty assignments after West Point were for Basic Officer schooling in Texas and then Airborne training in Georgia. (Airborne teaches you how to jump from an airplane --- high in the sky --- and live.) It was between these two assignments that I asked Nancy Martha Rockenstein to be my wife. We had known each other -- dated off and on -- over the previous 5 years. We agreed to wait another year and be married on August 1st of 1964, about half a year into my first actual duty assignment in New Jersey.

Nancy was the oldest child of 4 from Butler, Pennsylvania. She had a sister (Anne) and 2 brothers (Joe and Tom), all of whom became close friends and, with the exception of her brother, Tom, who died way to young, we are all still close --- can’t thank God enough for ‘bringing us together’.

While I was blessed to become a part of Nancy’s family, and I do feel each are truly a part of my family, it was Nancy that has had the greatest influence on who I am --- next to my mother. Also, her Mom, Mary Stehle Rockenstein and I became very close friends and at a point in life she came to live with us for nearly three decades.

Nancy’s and my mother’s insight and ability to translate their love of God from a feeling to ‘a living’ of that love, was a huge influence in my life.

My first 'duty' and Artillery assignment took me to New Jersey and a Nike Hercules Missile Battery --- also the location where Nancy and I 'set-up' our first home. Subsequently, Germany for two separate tours (one year with the German Air Force --- a Missile Assembly Team supporting our German Allie - an hour south of Bremerhaven) and with the 3rd Infantry Division (Bavaria) for a little over a year in an Adjutant General (AG) job after a transfer to the AG Branch --- I was not drawn to a career in the missile arm of the Artillery Branch as my Dad had been.

On the way to duty in Vietnam at MACV Headquarters and later the 101st Airborne Division, we stopped in Indiana for my AG Advanced Course, where our first son --- Bill, was born on February 15, 1968. He is, today, a Pharmaceutical Consulting Firm founder and owner and lives in Atlanta, Georgia. He has three children --- a daughter (Sarah) and 2 sons (Alexander and Matthew) --- all three give Nancy and I great pride!!

Bill is married to Dawn Hlat, herself a Sales Executive in pharmaceuticals. Like us, they are also 'big time dog lovers'!

While I was stationed in Vietnam, my wife and Bill lived in Butler, PA, where Nancy had lived as a child. Upon return to the States we were 'posted' to New York City, where my father had been stationed when I was in High School.

After 18 months I was notified I was going to the Pentagon, in Washington, DC; but needed a Master's Degree before joining a team in the Pentagon responsible for 'force size management' --- hence, I found myself at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana for 18 months.

During the subsequent assignment in the Pentagon, we lived in Virginia not too far from the Quantico Marine Base where my second son, Michael was born. [Michael lives in Atlanta, with his wife (Tara) and one daughter (McKinley) and one son (Michael Patrick). Tara's Mom and Dad live about 6 houses down the street from Nancy and me. Mike has made a career in the 'exploding information technology arena' --- and is doing very well as a senior leader --- and even a 'greater dad'!

Our sons, for Nancy and I, are truly a 'gift from God', as neither she nor I, according to our doctors, were able to conceive children. Science is not always right. (Big --- Lesson Learned!) We had actually begun discussions about adoption. All I could think of when we were informed we would be parents, was: "Man proposes and God disposes!" We thank Him virtually every day!!

Soon after Michael's birth I was asked to decide between an extension of two years in the Pentagon (another two years of 6 to 7 days a week --- 5:45AM to 8PM) or a tour without my family for 17 to 23 months in Saudi Arabia.

"Uncle Sam" --- 'pushed one to many buttons' and the Pentagon became my last tour on Active Duty, with my transfer to the Reserve Forces. My family and I moved to Rhode Island in December of 1974 and I began my civilian career with Texas Instruments in Massachusetts the next month. I also continued my military career as a Reserve Officer, serving in units from April of 1975 until completion of my final command in late 1994.

The units where I served were throughout New England and, for the most part, were training units or those testing other units' 'readiness'.

My final assignment was to command a unit covering the Southeastern Region of the United States --- the 81st US Army Reserve Command, with Headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. The unit wore a 'shoulder patch' that was originally worn by the 81st Infantry Division, which fought in both the First and Second World Wars. The patch was the 'first authorized patch' to ever be worn by soldiers in the US Army. During my time in the 81st, I was blessed to meet men from my father's unit (the 411th AA Gun Battalion) and many soldiers from the 'Second World War 81st Infantry Division 'Wildcats'. The soldiers, officers and their wives --- that I got to know and still gather annually with, gave me a deeper appreciation for the words and meaning of a nation's critical character traits: "patriotism, heroism, devotion, dedication, and sacrifice" --- demonstrated by "my parents' generation' while defending our nation and those of our Allies.

The "81st" veterans and their involvement in the Pacific is well documented in a book entitled 'Victory at Peleliu'. The book written by Bobby C. Blair and John Peter DeCiccio, details the campaign's fought by the men of the 81st --- battles that secured two key Islands in the Pacific Theater of Operations during World War II in the Palau Islands: Anguar and Peleliu.

My civilian career consisted of managerial assignments in small, medium and large companies from small team --- section leadership to management; primarily in the north and northeast (Massachusetts, Rhode Island

and Connecticut), as well as Ohio. I also held key positions in Georgia and Florida and even got to experience 'consulting'.

I ended my civilian career from Florida after full company leadership and subsequently, ownership of a firm my partner and I 'built'* in the central part of Florida. [We had to 'close' our company as a consequence of the 'attack' on the twin towers in New York City.]

* In all deference to Mr. Obama's belief that individuals don't 'build businesses' ---rather government does - --- 'we built that business' --- without assistance from the government, yet the government took a 'large amount of tax dollars'!!]

Most of my civilian career was in Information Technology, Engineering and Manufacturing Management of companies that built / made / constructed --- from micro-chips to carpeting to jewelry to heavy metal products. While my duties and time demands were challenging, they did not diminish my ability to stay active in my church and community. I joined the Knights of Columbus in Rhode Island in 1974 and have been an active 'Knight' for most of my adult life.

In Florida as a business' Chief Operating Officer and later Owner, I joined the Orlando Chapter of Legatus, becoming active in the Chapter and later its national and inter-national activities.

The 3rd key element in the evolution of my beliefs, faith and love of country: Exposure to cultures, both those living under rules of liberty, freedom and self - government as well as those living under oppression, domination and dictatorship.

While living in other countries / cultures (some European and an Oriental), I not only learned 'different ways of conducting and sharing my life' but also 'observed' the presence, power and love of a God that not only 'gave me life' through wonderful parents and role models ---- but strengthened my belief in His presence throughout His 'creation'.

The young people my age and their parents always made me feel 'at home' and broadened my ability to 'see' God in all 'colors' of peoples and their desire for a 'better life' for their children and their countries. Those experiences occurred throughout my childhood, my time in military service and to a lesser degree during my civilian careers and current retirement --- however, over the past 8 years, my 'international exposure' has been my time in Poland.

Civilian life brought a certain amount of stability to our family, but we still moved to new locations, challenges and cultures. My 'international' exposure and that of my children continued, while not as aggressively as the early years of my life.

Texas Instruments (TI) employed me in 'information technology' on corporate teams in Massachusetts, Tennessee and Texas; later in the engineering and manufacturing management in the Massachusetts facilities.

I left TI for a highly interesting / educational move to the aircraft engine manufacturing industry in Connecticut, where early 'numeric control' machinery was being used and through that knowledge I am now able to understand and communicate with a good friend in the southern region of Poland who operates a manufacturing firm supporting the 'power generation' and mining industries in Poland as well as Europe, the Middle East and Africa, using second generation 'numeric control' equipment.

A former 'boss' convinced me to return to Rhode Island, to a manufacturing operation of Textron (a precious metals and china manufacturer that also was involved in the distribution of 'gift items' from around the world).

It was during this period that I was able to expose my children to parts of the globe: Michael took a two week trip with me to Asia on business for Textron, where he was able to travel up into North Korea where he saw first-hand what the loss of freedom means, while also observing (in the non-communist areas) peoples that 'looked different' but 'looked for' the same happiness that he already understood.

Bill took a 'school trip' to Italy, where he was when the United States bombed Libya to remove Muammar Muhammad Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi (an attack that did not kill him but 'made the point'). Bill witnessed a 'full-out' Socialist Parade against America in Rome and, in his words, 'see the face of evil'!

They continue to travel and 'see the world', with plans for their children.

We then moved to Savannah, Georgia where I managed a family owned pharmaceutical distribution company that was, a few years later, acquired by a conglomerate; hence, to northern Ohio to a new concept in pharmaceutical support to the nursing home industry and later to a competitor to implement an 'automated' distribution concept in southern Ohio --- once established and operating, we moved to Florida to managed a small manufacturer of back-up mobile emergency power generator housing units.

My last business move was within Florida. I partnered with an entrepreneur in Florida and we acquired the necessary equipment from my previous employer who was consolidating his operations into the northeast and would not be a competitor in the southeast. Business started slow but soon became a regionally accepted --- quality source.

Soon after the 'twin tower' destruction in New York, my partner and I were forced to close our business. (Business 'capital funds' were the primary source for the acquisition of 'back-up emergency power' units; and due to 'industrial caution' resulting from the terrorist/religious fanatic attack, such funds 'dried up' for nearly a year after the invasion of the United States.) While that part of my life ended differently than hoped, that 'event' refocused me on family, faith and friends, and continues to be 'my driving force' as I 'pen' these words.

At this point I need to review, a 'most wonderful' period in my life --- outside those associated with being a member of a 'great family'; my Baptism and Confirmation; graduation from West Point; marriage to 'a woman who wants to 'save my soul'; and the birth of my sons and grandchildren ----- a trip to Poland, for the first time. I made the trip to Poland during a period where I was re-reading Thoreau and found the following paragraph to be prophetic:

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion."

My first trip to Poland was in 2006 and now I visit regularly, and openly announce, that I have 'fallen in love with' Poland and its people!!

Poland, during my first visit, was well into its transition from a period of Communist Control ---- 'state domination' to a 'free people' ---- from a nation restricted in its movements, expectations and dreams of an open society ---- into freedom to access and experience a world driven by an internet dominated and open culture that was evolving to a man centered rather than God centered world.

I was introduced to Poland by one of the nation's 'strong Catholic business leaders', Jerzy (Jurek) Jamontt and his wife Aleksandra (Ola), presently living in Mikołów, a town southeast of Kraków. My wife, Nancy, had met Jurek and Ola during a Legatus trip to Kraków in 2005, while I was closing my business.

Jurek and Ola had been members of Legatus for about a year when Nancy met them. A few months later, Jurek made a trip to the US on business, where we met and found many common beliefs. After his return to Poland and a discussion with his wife, I was invited to spend two weeks with them --- travelling throughout Poland. [Nancy was unable to join me on that trip.]

In my many visits to Poland, I have been able to 'get to know' the Jamontt's five children (Kuba, Kinga, Josef, Asia and Michał), and many of their extended family and friends. For two of the Jamontt children, Asia and Michał, I was able to share in their Baptisms and early development.

Kuba and Jurek at the 'rim' of the Grand Canyon in 2012.

Their eldest son (Jacob - 'Kuba') spent a few weeks in 2011 and 2012 here in the United States with Nancy and me, travelling throughout our country --- even to West Point and driving --- in 2012 --- 'West' to the Rocky



Mountains and the Grand Canyon.

Kuba also 'adopted' me as his Dziadek (Polish for grandfather) since his 'real' grandfathers are deceased and he wanted a grandfather in his life --- quite an honor for me --- I also attend his graduation from High School in 2013.

Jurek joined us on the trip west and he and I have also been able to visit a few other times here in the US during business trips.

I also met, during an Easter Holy Week trip to Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (a pilgrimage site I visited with the Jamontt family) --- Michał and Monika Kamiński from a suburb of Warszawa. With over 30,000 participants in a 'drizzling' cold rain --- between the 'live' Stations of the Cross, conducted on Good Friday, from 6AM through 3PM and into the night and services the next day --- Holy Saturday; I lived, experienced the deep faith of the Polish people. The experience had an altering effect on me --- opened my eyes, heart, mind and soul to work harder at being a better father, husband, grandfather, friend and Catholic.

These two families have become very close friends --- opening their homes and hearts to Nancy and me, sharing their home, love of country and faith.

Monika introduced me to Warszawa (Old Town – St. Anna Church – the Cathedral and tomb of Primate Wyszyński and the Museum of the City of Warszawa and its underground that was used during the Uprisings in the 1940s with movies of Warszawa before --- during --- and after World War II. Brought to life a number of the books about Poland that I was reading and gave me a much more realistic view of 'man's inhumanity to man'!

During my 2nd trip to Poland, I met the Kamiński children: son (Gabriel) and daughter (Aniela). Monika was able to visit here in the US - in the 'southeastern states' and met our youngest son and his family during a trip to Atlanta. Gabriel will visit us in the summer of 2014 for a few weeks. Plan to 'head west' - boys enjoy mountain climbing and ending up in Texas --- swimming in the Gulf of Mexico. The photo above is of Monika and 'my Nancy' in the Tennessee mountains.

I have also met their extended families (brothers and sisters; mothers and fathers; their cousins, aunts and uncles), as well as many of their friends, from across Poland. In a number of business group meetings, parish retreats and universities, where I have been asked to speak, I have met Poles from all walks of life and from all ages. In each of these encounters, I 'walk away' invigorated and 'blessed' by meeting them, and sharing experiences and their culture. A number of those I have met touched me in a very special way:

Father Marek Barański and his many 'children' (the youth he cares for in a number of Silesian Homes near Rumia and Kniewo in the northern area of Poland) --- children from 'homes', broken through parental alcoholism, in the nation's farming region.

If you have an interest in supporting this "great endeavor", even with a small donation, you can e-mail Father Marek at: naszdom@sdb.pila.pl.

Bogusław and Maria Kania (While Bogus' life was cut short, he remains in my memories and prayers --- I am confident that he is with Our Lord and looking out for his family and friends – hope I am one of them);

Mira Jankowska --- Founder of MAM (Mistrzowska Akademia Miłości --- Master Academy of Love) --- a 'trail blazer' in outreach to young people to help them understand a different view of marriage and the proper relationship between men and women – Strategies for Happiness --- I also was privileged to share social time in her home with her closest friends;

Mirosław Gońda, a professional interpreter / translator whom I got to know over a week long speaking tour with Barrie Schwartz (one of the 'team' approved by Pope John Paul II to examine the Shroud of Turin that wrapped the Body of Christ and a close personal friend). I also met his family and saw 'marital love' that was both inspiring and genuine --- like in my own home;

Łukasz Olszewski --- A young man, who, with his wonderful parents (Jacek and Małgorzata) are involved in the life and care of their parish and community. They represent the involvement in church that my family did within the parishes we belonged to when I was growing up in different States and Countries --- all through the example and inspiration of our wonderful mother.



Jacek is 'a natural artist' whose work you can see in this photo. The replica of the Vatican is made totally from 'grains' grown on Polish soil. Jacek's annual 'creations' are entered in the Diocesan competition and very often places in the top tier --- he has also won the competition.

Mrs. Izabela Dzieduszycka and Mr. Adam Pietrzak are two of Poland's leaders in the work of expanding the availability of Catholic schools within Warszawa and its surrounding communities;

Agnieszka and Krzysztof Kuczyński --- I had the experience of celebrating my 70th birthday in Poland and was honored to have a 'birthday party' at their home. They opened their home for the celebration and gave both Nancy and I the opportunity to celebrate 'Polish Style' a birthday I had originally wanted to just let 'go by quickly'.

Mrs. Jadwiga Sz wajc owzka who sent me a CD of Traditional Christmas music, which she recorded in her own voice for my wife and I --- touching our hearts and bringing us even closer to the Polish people;

Father Jan Machniak, a theologian and writer, a 'priest's priest' and Assistant to Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz --- the Cardinal of Krakow and former Secretary to Pope John Paul II --- both are wonderful representatives of their nation's religious leaders and speak well to the faith's future;

♦ Janusz and Grazyna Rosikoń owners of Rosikoń Press --- Janusz is a photographer and a member of the Polish Union of Journalists. His photographs have appeared in Time Magazine, Newsweek and Schweizer Illustrierte. Janusz' works have appeared in individual exhibitions at several venues in Poland and abroad, including Stara Galeria (Old Gallery) in Warsaw, the Barbican Centre in London, the Academy of Fine Art in Vilnius, the Piast Castle in Głogów, the Civic Centre in Wrocław, the Arthur Court in Toruń, the Old Orangery at the Łazienki Park in Warsaw and the Polish Parliament. It was an honor to work with them and spend time in their home. They work closely with Ignatius Press here in the "States".

Grzegorz Gorny a journalist and writer --- founder of a quarterly magazine "Fronde" which he edited for 11 years --- author of a series of documentaries for the Special Report TV Polsat and co-author of reports on the activities of the Military Intelligence Services in the Polish media. Collaborator with the Rosikons in a number of wonderful books!! Recently he became a weekly columnist on "The Web". His wife Angelika is a member of a musical group (like her name, her voice is that of an angel) they have five children.

Grzegorz has become a friend to both myself and Barrie Schwartz, with whom he has collaborated with on a few books.

Magdalena Nakielska (now Mrs. Robert Mixa), a young lady I got to know fairly well as Nancy and I assisted her in coming to the US to attend Catholic University for a Master's Degree and where she met her husband --- Bobby. I deeply regret not attending their wedding in her home town Grajewo --- a town in north-eastern Poland situated in the Podlaskie Township.

Carmen Lya Gallardo, the wife of the Chilean Ambassador to Poland --- a most gracious, charming and 'special' woman, much like my own mother. Her support to Polish Orphanages and Father Marek are beyond excellence.

I was also pleased to meet and work with Rafał Sikora and Krzysztof Orzechowski who were instrumental in bringing the Knights of Columbus to Poland's population of devout Catholic men -- worthy of recognition by Our Order! Rafał later helped in the creation of 'The Knights of John Paul II', also a great group of men, visibly witnessing and working for nation and God!

Very significant ---- Two extremely special people to me and to Poland are Father Tadeusz Bożełko the pastor at Saint Kostka Parish in Warszawa and an attorney, Mrs. Katarzyna Soborak -- 'the' key figure in the 30 year long process it has taken to obtain the beatification of a modern day martyr, Father Jerzy Popiełuszko -- a priest of Saint Kostka Parish and a singularly exemplary, holy man. Katarzyna is an example to all who know her: for her depth of faith, dedication to Father Jerzy, her family, church and country!

Jerzy Popiełuszko --- A citizen of Poland and a Roman Catholic priest associated with the Solidarity union; when asked by a western reporter if he was concerned about the danger to his life, replied: "Jesus Christ sacrificed His life in order to announce His divine truth. Likewise, the Apostles sacrificed their lives. Therefore, the role of the Priest is to proclaim the truth and suffer for the truth, and if necessary, even to die for the truth. Such examples are plentiful in Christianity. And from these examples we should draw conclusions for ourselves."

Father Jerzy was murdered at the age of 37, by three agents of the Polish communist internal intelligence agency, the Security Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. A model for all Priests --- worldwide!!

Thanks to the Archbishop of Warszawa, Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz, my wife and I, on the 6th of June, 2010, attended the ceremony, in Warszawa recognizing him as a martyr by the Catholic Church. Blessed Father Jerzy Popiełuszko --- through whose suffering and sacrifice for his country, joined to that of Our Lord's crucifixion, done in the spirit of the words of Saint Paul -- 'confront evil with good' --- has been an inspiration to his nation and the world!!

The people of Saint Kostka are also an inspiration to me and, through them and their Pastor; I have learned much history about their church and country under communism and their inspirational Priest -- Father Jerzy Popiełuszko.

In my life I have been exposed to many 'saints and holy men and women' through my studies and reading; but in Poland I was drawn into a 'deeper understanding' of the "Gift of Blood" given to mankind by the Son of God --- Christ, through His suffering and death for 'our sins'. Father Jerzy is, for me, a significant 'teacher and a leader who lived what he preached', as did Christ!

Lech Wałęsa, a Polish trade-union organizer and human-rights activist during 'the days of communism' in Poland --- a charismatic leader, who co-founded Solidarność (Solidarity), the Soviet bloc's first independent trade union; when asked about the suffering of Blessed Father Jerzy, replied:

"He sacrificed his life for the truth and for justice."

I was also affected and drawn closer to the meaning of suffering in our lives through another Polish Religious 'leader' --- Saint Faustyna. In this reflection I am unable to bring Sister Faustyna or Father Popiełuszko 'to life' for you, but suggest some readings to at least 'meet them':

"The Dairies of Saint Faustyna" (I am now engaged in a third reading and I am still learning). While this is not an easy read, it is well worth your time and thoughtful deliberation. (Sister Maria Faustyna Kowalska, born Helena, is commonly known as Saint Faustina.)

"The Priest and The Policeman" --- This book is easy to read, but the story is hard to fathom --- that such inhumanity was ongoing because my nation and Britain, failed to stand up to Stalin.

Further, the world continued to ignore a nation's suffering, until the world met Karol Józef Wojtyła (Pope John Paul II). Mankind owes this great leader -- deepest thanks for being the "Somebody" who did what 'Other World Leaders' should have done and done much earlier.

"Without Suffering there is no Salvation!!

One of the reported 'miracles' that occurred as a result of prayer to Father Jerzy being examined in Rome as a part of the process of elevating Father Jerzy to 'sainthood' --- involves a gentleman (Paul Hensler) that served in Vietnam during a period when I was also in that country, although we did not meet until a few years ago.

During his service as a forensic pathology technician, working with chemicals (he was exposed for long periods of each day to formaldehyde and frequently 'agent orange') virtually every day of his time in Vietnam.

Through the consistent exposure to those chemicals, Paul sustained an 'insult to his body' that later in his life began to destroy ('eat away') his feet and legs. After leaving the military, and before he was aware of the 'insult' to his body, Paul became a film producer and 'optioned the rights' to the book "The Priest and The Policeman" that I recommended earlier.

Paul also attends Mass daily and has prayed to Father Jerzy for healing!! A few years ago Paul began losing his toes on his feet and a little over a year ago the doctors amputated Paul's left leg below the knee. During a trip to Poland in 2011, Paul went to Father Jerzy's church (St. Kostka Parish), sat on the floor and asked Father Jerzy to heal his disease. A few months later, during a follow-up exam it was determined that the disease that was 'eating away at his body' was "gone". Paul feels strongly that his recovery is because of his prayers to Father Jerzy, since a 'group of doctors' could not explain the recovery other than call it miraculous.

Paul recently released a 'documentary' on Father Jerzy that will be followed by a full length film. Paul is also an inspiration to all he meets!!

I found strong faith throughout Poland, such as in the small, yet active and happy people of Father Piotr Śliwka's Parish (The Most Holy, Our Lady Queen of Poland) in the rural town of Józefów, just outside Warszawa; and Father Kazimierz Chudzicki (Blessed Mary Virgin, Help of Christians) in Rumia; and numerous others.

I was blessed to meet, young people whom I was privileged to speak to about faith, country, liberty and patriotism at the high school and collegiate levels in southern, central and northern regions of Poland.

Exchanging ideas and viewpoints with business leaders and faith filled groups located in/near the cities of Gdańsk, Poznan, Kraków, Warszawa and Częstochowa, trying to 'hold on to their faith' in the rapid changes occurring since their return to 'self - government', are part of my many fond memories. I have been honored to speak on love of country and patriotism in Father Bożełko's and Father Śliwka's churches during my visits that overlapped with their celebrations of their Flag and Constitution Days.

I have experienced on a few occasions the celebrations surrounding the first few days of May --- welcoming the change of seasons on May 1st (formerly a socialist celebration); the nation's Flag on May 2nd; and it's Constitution on May 3rd. It is almost impossible to relate the internal warmth and admiration for the Polish people that one gets in joining with them on these special days.

As an example, on May 3rd in 2008, I joined a celebration held at the Divine Mercy Shrine, where I was able to join tens of thousands of Poles in the Łagiewniki District of Kraków, honoring their Constitution ---- 250,000+ participants, including well over 150 priests, 50+ Bishops and 3 Cardinals in an outdoor Mass --- honoring their Constitution --- thanking God and His Mother for the return of self-determination and liberty to the Polish People --- one of the most inspiring patriotic events in my life!

I have visited throughout Poland to historic sites, shrines, buildings, castles, churches -- and, as I have traveled, I have seen the land, beautiful woodlands and forests --- for me 'middle America' farmland and majestic mountain ranges --- and the Baltic --- so cold we couldn't even swim there in the summer.

Most significantly, Poland's people --- whose eyes penetrate my soul --- eyes of dedication, commitment and love --- the belief in God and His Mother that was always present in my mother's eyes!

I have witnessed their culture, their trust and belief in God, their deep love and respect for their 'home land', their family lives and met the many strong, disciplined and religious leaders of Poland --- Cardinals, Bishops, priests and religious men and women --- the nation's heart and soul.

That first and frequent other visits to Poland, some lengthy, through today, refocused me on the key elements of my earlier life and reacquainted me with the wonderful examples and training I received early on and throughout my 'short life'.

One trip I even got the opportunity to 'visit Hel' (not spelt wrong, the actual name of a town in northern Poland) --- I even have a 'get out of Hel free card' for use when I meet Our Lord.

I find it very easy to answer the frequently asked question I receive from Poles:

"Why

do you love Poland?"

I realize it during each of my trips to Poland, when I realize that "I am Going Home"!! Intellectually, spiritually and emotionally, I am returning to the country that reminds me of the country I was born into and grew up in'.

Poland “is” what I loved so much about my own country in my ‘early years’: Patriots willing to sacrifice for neighbor and nation; Leaders who understood and accepted their responsibilities; and a People whose love for God and their neighbors was molded and inspired through their respect for and honor of Our Lord’s Mother, a belief ‘burned into my mind and spirit’ through the example of my mother. Poland --- its culture and its people, even without a drop of Polish Blood, makes me realize - I am Home!

Poland is a culture that ‘sings to me’! It ‘shows me’ the answer youth seeks --- love! Love of God - Love of Neighbor - Love of Family - Love of Nation - Love of Faith and Love of His Creation – Self!

Whether in the time of its lowest points: being erased from recognition by the world or being left by its Allies to live under communism after ‘fighting for Europe’s freedom from the blight of Nazism’ --- Poland remains true to God, true to His Mother, true to its heritage / culture and true to each other!!!

Their ‘home’ is the ‘home’ of my parents, my brothers and sisters and my extended family --- homes of love, concern, respect, patience, discipline --- all guided by the Word and Love of God!

Poles know and live by the adage:

You protect freedom with honor and life through God!!

America needs to ‘get acquainted’ with its big brother!

Nancy and I, a few years after our business failed, moved back to Savannah, Georgia to be near our children and grand-children. I continue frequent trips to Poland and will so as long as I can afford to do so and my health allows!!

Throughout my life, with many moves around the world and within America, I have been exposed, to a variety of cultures, religions and perspectives that have broadened my understanding and acceptance of my Catholic Faith. I have lived in Austria, Germany, Panama and Vietnam and visited for lengthy periods in Italy, Japan, Poland, Okinawa, South Korea and Taiwan.

I have travelled in nearly all of the States, including Alaska and Hawaii, as well as lived in 20 States, experiencing city life as well as suburban and ‘country living’. Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia, at some point in time were – ‘home’.

Regardless of country or state I lived in, I was always happier and more comfortable when living near lakes or oceans, or the extreme difference, high in the mountains.

As I ‘pen’ these reflections, I have lived under the leadership, or lack thereof, of 13 Presidents:

1 and 2: Roosevelt and Truman [I was not old enough to vote for either man. I do have strong negative feelings regarding President Roosevelt (his treatment of our nation’s Allie – Poland, was and is inexcusable!) --- - I admired President Truman and agreed with his difficult decision to use the A-Bomb to bring the Second World War’s Pacific conflicts to a rapid end without the anticipated large loss of American and Allied lives --- had invasion been required. The alternative was a plan that would have cost nearly a quarter of a million US soldiers lives just to secure a landing before launching an attack to obtain Japan’s surrender.]

3. Eisenhower [I was not old enough to vote for his first term, while his second term was the first time I voted in a Presidential election and I did vote for him. I deeply admired his service to our nation and programs to repair / remake our nation’s economy.];

4. Kennedy [While he was a Democrat and my political views were more in alignment with the Republican Party at that time, I did vote for him.

He was a stronger candidate than his opponent and he held sound economic policy beliefs. He died before being able to initiate his ‘social agenda’ which his predecessor, unfortunately implemented. Kennedy’s use of a phrase had all of us ‘looking in the dictionary’ to learn a new word, an aphorism, when he used the expression: "A rising tide lifts all boats". That expression reflected the idea that improvements in the general economy would benefit all citizens, businesses and the national economic policy --- through focusing on the general macroeconomic environment first and foremost. He used ‘the aphorism’ in a 1963 speech to combat criticisms that a dam project he was inaugurating was a pork barrel project. The phrase is now more commonly used to defend tax cuts and policies where initial beneficiaries are high income earners.]

5. Johnson [He assumed the Presidency at the death of Kennedy and was elected, without my vote, for a ‘2nd’ term, his true, ‘1st term’. His entire program in office dealt with social programs, which had been President Kennedy’s and he was able to implement them through ‘friendships in the

Congress' built over 25 years in Congress. I do not believe that President Kennedy could have had his social programs passed by Congress, while Johnson did have the contacts, expertise and friendships to do so.];

6. Nixon [I voted for him and met him during a briefing, while serving in the military in Washington, DC --- ethically, I had significant issues; but admired a number of his policies and concern for our Country.];

7. Ford [He completed Nixon's term subsequent to Nixon's resignation and I did vote for him when he ran for office after completing Nixon's term. It was a time when both candidates were weak and Ford lost the election to Carter.];

8. Carter [I did not vote for and have -- until the election of Barack Obama, felt that his policies and style of leading was the worst during my lifetime.];

9. Reagan [I met him during his campaign and worked for his election both times he ran for office -- He was the most effective President in my lifetime.];

10. George Bush, Sr. [I met him and voted for him, even in his loss to Clinton. I believe he 'ran out of gas' or was just 'tired' --- his 2nd effort was very poor.];

11. Clinton [I voted against him both times, even though I found his opponents weak in the execution of their campaigns, but their political philosophy was more in line with my own beliefs. His two terms were filled with scandals.

President Clinton was involved in a serious 'sex scandal' and underwent impeachment proceedings that failed to remove him from office];

12. George Bush, Jr. [I met him and voted for him both times -- I believe that his leadership and integrity will be favorably recognized in history.]; and

13. Obama [The current President: I did not vote for him either time! --- He is singularly the one President that I unequivocally state --- I "do not trust him nor believe a thing he says"! In virtually all of his comments, observations or pontifications --- the nicest thing I can say is that he is misleading or lying.] I could have guessed that 'lucky thirteen' would not be our luck, rather his.

Obama appears to believe that he is "King" --- rather than President of a Nation governed under a Constitution and laws initiated by 'the people's representatives' or the people themselves. He has demonstrated a number of times that when he doesn't think a validly instituted law is 'good or to his liking or philosophy' that he has the authority to decide not to enforce the law!! If you think this is an 'overstatement' ---- review his record and know that --- in his oath of office he 'swore' to "...support and defend the Constitution..." and the laws of the nation, yet he has stated publicly that the Constitution is a "...fundamentally flawed document...".

How can he 'defend' or follow something he believes is 'flawed'??

He doesn't!! He should be 'impeached'!!!

Of all these men, as noted above, I believe the best leader --- who had the greatest respect for his nation -- demonstrated through his policies and the execution of his duties -- was Ronald Reagan.

The worst (can't be called a leader): I believe my previous comments on the Presidency of Barack Obama are sufficient to reflect my feelings about his policies and conduct in office. I am convinced that Barack Obama weakened, harmed and demeaned our country, the Constitution and our international relationships, and for which I also hold responsible his 'Political Party'!!

I have also lived during 13 Papacies: Pius XII (met him - spent 5 minutes with him when I was a teenager and I believe the Jewish Nation "owes" him); John XXIII (not a big fan --- I view him as 'a little too liberal'); Paul VI (he allowed the liberals brought in by John XXIII to have power and change the focus of the Mass from sacrifice to resurrection --- a change, I believe, is doing long term damage to the Catholic Faith); John Paul I (died before we knew him); John Paul II (met him with a group and feel history will find him 'great' for 3 reasons: he taught us as Our Lord did during His life: 'how to live'; 'how to pray; and 'how to die'; Benedict XVI (a great teacher); and Francis --- I have great optimism for him and his papacy. Frances and Benedict may be jointly remembered for their Encyclical on Faith --- "Lumen Fidei".

Each of these men has, in leading the Catholic Church, influenced me in guiding / focusing my beliefs through their teachings, actions and --- failures. Despite the Holy Spirit's influence in the world --- sometimes the hope and faith we place in leaders does not always come to fruition. We must recognize man's weaknesses and failures; but strive for and pray for better.

All of my experiences have helped me to respect peoples of the world and 'see' the love of Our Lord in even the poorest of cultures and have allowed me to be what I believe.

The 4th key element in the evolution of my beliefs, faith and love of country:

I have become --- an "AVID READER", which I did and still do, for both relaxation and for knowledge: religion, history, science, mysteries, science fiction, thrillers and business --- not big on romance.

I discovered during my 'young adult life' that you never know when someone may ask you about something that will be crucial to further interaction or to know what guides your interest in the world around you. Further, being as current as possible in key aspects of life, allows one to be able to 'defend and articulate' one's beliefs.

Lastly, understanding requires language and the proper use of words, even when 'pontificating', or you may 'end up' looking 'stupid' as the testimony before Congress by Hillary Clinton, then Secretary of State, has done for her.

"What difference does it make what we know and when we knew it, Senator?" Testimony regarding the attack on the US Embassy in Benghazi in 2013 where a number of lives of US citizens were lost!

Answers: To a soldier in combat it means everything!! To someone who wants to insure that we understand so we can prevent it in the future, it means everything! To an individual that wants to be a candidate for President as a member of the Democratic Party ---- 'nothing'.

A modest warning: Do not review/examine other sources to prove someone wrong or yourself smarter, rather to strengthen your own understanding of what you believe to be 'truth' and to relax your mind while keeping it active.

A much stronger warning: Many of the books being recommended for school age children, particularly those in High School (marked YA for Young Adults), are not what I would want to see my grandchildren read despite the 'literary competence' of the writer --- they are becoming "increasingly lurid, grotesque, profane, sexual, and ugly". [Meghan Gurdon, Children's Book Reviewer]

Meghan also recommends that 'when shopping for books for children' we should keep the words of Saint Paul the Apostle in Philippians 4:8 to the front of our thoughts: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable --- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy -- think about such things." I echo that feeling for 'the games' we allow children to play --- prevalent through technologies!

The 5th and final, yet most crucial factor in the evolution of my beliefs, faith and love of country: My Catholic Faith!! For one's faith to have any meaning in one's life, it must be---- Understood (you must study -- learn the faith / the truth); Believed (you must accept and profess your faith); and Followed (you must live what you profess).

The US Constitution allows Americans to honor "Our Creator" in the manner that they wish and government is precluded from interfering in the exercise of their religious liberty! This does not mean that we can follow a religion that includes sacrifice of human life as a part of its beliefs. The religion must be real and civilized.

God established a number of 'desires' as a part of creation and His Son articulated God's expectations for 'mankind' during His time here on earth, that are recorded in what we title the 'bible' - the prime teacher of truth - the truth that is God --- and I believe 'inspired by Him'! As I indicated at the beginning, I will keep this simple and leave the heavy studying to you.

However; I do strongly recommend you 'study' the Bible, and read Lumen Fidei (The Light of Faith) --- the encyclical explains why faith in God remains the only authentic way to make sense of life.

Each of us must develop a "friendship with Christ". You can do this through reading and studying the bible; a routine of daily prayer; and showing kindness to all you meet.

Bible reading and studying should be an on-going task across your lives as the bible lessons become more meaningful as we grow and experience more in our lives. One part of the Old Testament that I strongly recommend is the section known as Proverbs --- great advice from Solomon on how to lead a "good life" from a father, grandfather and son of David, King of Israel. His guidance is relevant today and most grandfathers wish they had been able to articulate 'rules to live by' as well as given to us by Solomon.

Proverbs --- Solomon, son of David, King of Israel ---- Relevant to today!!

Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge --- while fools despise wisdom and discipline. The knowledge imparted in Proverbs will help:

--- for attaining wisdom and discipline; ◇ for understanding words of insight;

--- for acquiring a disciplined / prudent life; ◇ for doing what is right and just and fair;

--- for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young to let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance; and

--- for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.

A few examples: 3:35 [The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace.]

3:28 [Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it" – when you have it with you.] 6:16-19 "There are six things which the Lord hates, seven which are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and a man who sows discord among brothers."

I do not want you to think that once my mother had imparted to me, her beliefs as a Catholic --- that I did not challenge. I remember, when I left home 'to make my own way in life' that I stopped going to Mass and 'essentially I walked away from my faith' so carefully given to me over nearly 19 years.

I had not been to Mass or said morning and evening prayers for nearly six months when I met the young woman who became my wife. When she questioned me about my faith, I gave some ignorant explanations about 'my beliefs' and that I didn't need 'all that mumbo-gumbo' to lead a good life. At that point she believed she had her mission in life --- save this boy's soul!

To keep the story short --- she tricked me into meeting her the next Sunday at her 'Catholic College' and when the nun greeted me at the door --- she immediately took me to the school's chapel since I was the only boy available and they needed someone to 'Serve' --- to be an 'Altar Boy' at Mass at an 'all girls' school. I have not missed Mass since that time, except for health and combat reasons in Vietnam.

While I know I will "hear" about the next few paragraphs / pages and foresee that some will wish I had 'kept that thought to myself' --- I feel obliged to reflect where I see the change occurring, where we have failed as a people in accepting the change / or for not standing up to stop or reverse, unwanted / unwarranted change, and what we can do now. Even though most would say you can't put the toothpaste back in the tube once it is 'squeezed out' --- you can remove the product from the marketplace and/or 'buy another brand'.

Anyway --- Here goes!!

'We the People' --- Have a Voice --- It is Ours!!

Frequently "others", with and without our permission, 'speak for us' --- such as parents, legislators, political parties, bosses and 'officers' of groups we might belong to; but every so often we actually have to use our own verbal skills!! This segment is 'my voice' and those of whom I feel speak as I would if I had the 'microphone'.

It is not my intent to be a spokesman for my Catholic Faith in this reflection!! I will 'speak'; however, about some concerns, through 'eyes of faith' ---- issues that address assaults on the American Constitution and belief in God, that need to be repaired, adjusted, or revoked --- and where 'we must act soon' or it may be too late to save our nation and/or 'our souls'.

Remember: Its belief that gets us their!!

The first two observations are what I consider our greatest challenges that must be 'addressed', as they deeply affect all other concerns!!

1 — Education -- Over most of my life it has been the 'teaching profession' that was instrumental in 'building the nation's intellect' preceding/enhancing the technology expansion that has led to solutions for many of the aspects of our daily lives. Technology --- much driven by information availability and the speed one can attain information, as well as 'functionality' --- has brought us great, to very unbelievable, advances!!

Advances in: medicine, food production, creation of 'tools' to make life easier and aide in learning, as well aiding the handicapped and injured, those returning from war with severe burns, wounds and loss of limbs. Advances in medicine alone are extending life expectancies by tens of years as illnesses and diseases are confronted and silenced; and surgical procedures (even without a knife) are prevalent with unbelievable results: running a competitive race with artificial legs and near full recovery from severe bodily damage. Many of the advances are attributed to the 'space programs' and the evolution of the 'micro-chip' --- which have spawned intelligent tools and toys --- affecting a number of fields: new and helpful chemicals; stronger yet lighter metals; fibers that can protect the body from gunshot wounds; and engines for cars and planes that burn less fuel and still go faster and safer .

We are now reaching into space --- 'visiting' other planets and establishing 'platforms' above the earth that are not only enhancing communications but making 'information' instantaneous and our daily lives / activities -- less cumbersome and more fulfilling.

Most of these advances can be directly connected to an education system --- that worked!!

In the past 15 to 20 years; however, the teaching profession has (1) lost a large 'core group' when a number of religious orders (primarily in the Grade School and High School levels taught by 'nuns and brothers') diverted from 'teaching' to 'I'm not quite sure what'; and (2) the 'professionals' within the public systems became a 'unionized work force'. [Note: Religious education has also been negatively affected --- the catechetical programs and 'Sunday Sermons' have not proven effective in most areas of the country in replacing the 'parish schools' in the teaching of the Catholic Faith.]

Coupled with the changes in the teaching profession, we also changed the system of education from a focus on 'corps essentials' --- in a competitive environment: reading / writing / history / mathematics / science / government and physical education ----- to a more social orientation with 'dumbed down' / 'no competition' curriculums and an attitude that everyone is intellectually equal --- basing the system on the 'lowest achiever' rather than motivating students to reach beyond the possible to excellence.

I do not sense that the 'new system' serves our students, their future or their on-going intellectual growth --- particularly with the greater involvement of government in the 'setting of standards' and 'controls' through funding and regulatory 'requirements'; not to mention the 'political and cultural invasion' into the process of educating our children while using the 'education system' to 'gain entrance' into the privacy and sanctity of the individual family.

Our young people, in many school systems are learning 'how to use things' not how to develop their minds for use in 'creating things' - 'reaching beyond'.

Many of the great teachers have 'retired', as a result of the changes, and less qualified 'teachers' have taken their place; while, at the same time, the education materials have become 'social documents' rather than materials that excite and open minds to a desire to 'know more' and learn to think so each student can reach new heights.

Further, the education system is taking over many parental responsibilities, without the competencies or permission of the parents. Even key decisions about a student's health are 'kept from the parents'.

"Lunch programs" -- now "3 meals-a-day" programs, which gives government control over a key element of a parent's responsibilities and potentially their political allegiance.

A 'nanny' perspective is "a real and present danger"!

Many parents have lost faith in the system and are teaching their children themselves in home schooling programs, where the results are bearing fruit. Not unexpectedly the 'teacher unions' are 'up in arms' and want regulatory efforts undertaken to 'require' all students to attend 'public schooling' so that all students are treated equally, using a 'common' curriculum. Government's response to date has been a program known as 'Common Core', which many states (for financial reasons --- 'kickbacks from the Government through the Federal Department of Education) have adopted and are now beginning to have doubts as more and more parental revolt is occurring in virtually every state. Local legislators don't appear to see the issues / problems, rather only the 'revenue' from 'government' for cooperating and 'union aggressiveness'.

A similar program known as "Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative" (CCCII) has also been initiated within more than 100 Diocese of the United States to be able to --- 'you guessed right' --- be able to 'gain funding' from the federal government.

The comments below are from a 'mother and organizer' whose involvement started through her 2nd grade daughters request to be removed from her public school, which was using Common Core, and be taught at home --- even a 2nd Grade Student could see that the program hurts children!!

"It's a violation of privacy --- the government will tell you there is no central database that is a part-and-parcel of 'Common Core', but that's an outright lie. They're tracking over 400 data points, from parent's political and religious affiliations to how much money they make, what the child eats, behaviors and attitudes toward sex...everything. It's Orwellian, I had my eyes closed to this and I didn't believe any of it until I saw it myself...I'm not a conspiracy theorist and I'm not some crazed woman... But we're leading our kids right into communism. You have them choosing their career path by middle school and you have standards that every child is going to learn the same thing the exact, same way, no matter who they are as individuals, or what they

bring in terms of ability. Children are not common. People are not common. They are unique. And that's not what Common Core is about."

Further --- Catholic publications are also now warning Catholic parents with children in Catholic Schools --- to be on the 'look-out' for what could be the demise of Catholic Schools if CCCII is not 'stopped' --- 'refocused'!!

Public education, and hence its effect on Catholic Schools, seems to be more obsessed with control of the nation's children --- teaching sex (including perversions of sex as normal) and removing any reference to God, than we are with teaching our nation's 'real history' to our young!!

The school books are being rewritten and they are 'changing history' as well as making 'Americans the bad guys' for most of our history, while insuring we teach 'sex-ed' and homosexuality to our Kindergarten through 12th grade level children. English, Science, History, Government, Literature (not trash), Languages (across the years so that a student receives 'a desire' to potentially 'master' a 'foreign' language), Geography, Mathematics, and Athletics must be restored and be the keys to the American system.

Further, God is an integral part of each American student's life, as it is a part of our nation's Declaration of Independence, and they should understand that 'fact' as a part of their education, while a specific faith should be left to the student's parents!!

The US or State legal and teaching professions, with 'Union' support and money, have made God the enemy and 'No God' an objective in government facilities and/or properties, including and primarily focused in our schools. [They need to read and understand the Declaration of Independence and Our Constitution.] A very small minority is 'dominating' the majority!

Schools are teaching our children to accept views about the family, sex, marriage, which parents find 'highly offensive', and in some instances false teaching about Our Constitution and how our various governmental bodies were designed to operate and enforce laws.

Teachers, paid for by 'the people', are acting in opposition to the fundamental teachings of virtually every church in America, our Constitution and to the mainstream of society and its families, which seem to be 'too busy' paying the bills, to recognize the 'train coming down the tracks, hell bent to destroy'.

I also feel the collegiate level has been 'dumbed down' as the students in the lower levels have not been properly prepared for what use to be a college level course. Further --- a large percentage (at least 70%) of Collegiate 'professors' are actually left, to very left wing radicals that teach 'one perspective' rather than challenge the minds of their students, without bias.

The end result to our society is that industry has to 'import skilled / critical labor' from abroad to off-set the lack of available US trained / educated applicants. A socially engineered college grad is not what industry needs; rather, inquisitive / trained / challenging minds! The future is bleak!!

I also see that advanced degree programs are suffering, as noted in the legal profession, where 'word manipulation is the order of the day' coupled with 'social - feelings' while logic and specific knowledge needed by US and State Court 'Justices' to impart rulings that suggest they understand 'logic and the Constitution' --- are well below the standards of 30 to 40 years ago.

Across all levels of education --- schools appear to be more concerned with 'political perspectives' and 'social engineering' than the development of a student's 'mind' so that they can not only succeed in the 'future world' but help the world advance in the disciplines needed for man to continue to evolve and through their knowledge 'help their neighbor'!

A travesty is that the system has brought to students from poor families and those where both parents work to support their families --- diminished hope!!

The child being the loser --- 'stuck' in 'lesser - low quality' public schools --- and the terrible result --- generational poverty and welfare conditions continue and only get worse and expanded --- we now give welfare to citizens that don't qualify or need welfare, encouraging them to 'not even try' --- which appears to be primarily a 'political tactic' to control voting.

Our Founding Fathers would be appalled if they entered a public school in most States of the United States, especially in the larger city schools; or examined the recent rulings by the Supreme Court.

We need to return to basics and get rid of unions in the government run and managed functions, such as education.

Harken back to the Scottish Professor's warnings —democracy collapses after 200 + years when the people walk away from the basis of their democracy -----for us, our belief in 'The Creator' and our liberties --- the end result of this trend is dictatorship / government control / dependence on a ruling class.

Not Me! Or is it Not I?

2 — The Media

In Sun Tzu's The Art of War, we read, "Speed is the essence of war. Take advantage of your enemy's unpreparedness; travel unexpected routes and strike him where he has taken no precautions."

We need to hear these words when dealing with the media --- for many of them are the enemy!!

When determining your beliefs --- you might want to avoid listening to the media, wringing their hands on their incessant, all day long – 'news' and 'opinions' programming. Take the 'long view' as God does! The Media's motivations don't lead to a thoughtful process --- essential in the governing of Our Country.

Remember --- a long battle, like we are involved with to regain the nation of our 'Founders', requires stealth, patience, and a willingness to take the long view and to be involved. Media wants ratings, a big story, to be 'respected' --- and they usually do so from a conservative or liberal perspective and they 'pander' to audiences.

You get a liberal or conservative 'spin' -- frequently presenting radical perspectives. If the media doesn't draw an audience, they don't make money, i.e., convince advertisers to use their station to reach the public. A tactic may be to stop listening to them! But then you won't be able to keep track of or understanding of 'your enemy'.

Most broadcast stations have a tendency to 'hype' events and present with 'spin', and they do so from an expectation of their audiences' political perspective to reach them and keep the funds rolling in or provide a 'rallying' or 'conversion service' for those that listen. ----- "Hype" / "Spin" are frequently a 'nice way' of saying --- lie; twist; stretch; or fudge --- the truth.

It is important to understand both political views; but remember, to develop a 'belief' it should be done with facts, information, opinions from "trusted sources".

I urge very careful review of any 'fact or opinion', whether 'right or left', presented by 'the media', before you allow that input to be 'the' input for your belief decision!!

As an example, regarding the debate on ObamaCare, believing the media that appear to support ObamaCare, must be balanced by the many articles in other, reputable but fewer sources, that frequently 'speaks for a larger 'majority' of the nation's doctors and medical support personnel', who believe that ObamaCare is not what our nation needs and believe in the following statement:

"We are headed in the exact wrong direction. ObamaCare expands the role of the third party and practically eliminates the role --- and the say ---of the patient in the delivery of health care" Taken from an article in the Wall Street Journal by Dr. Singer, who practices general surgery in Arizona and is an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute. He also has done some great work in 'explaining' the negative effects of third party providers / insurers that have driven costs very high for doctors and for ourselves, even though that fact is 'hidden from us'.

After watching Union Leaders leave the White House in September of 2013

from lobbying to have ObamaCare exempt them from parts of the law they find offensive (reduced services at higher costs) after having been the main lobbying force to get the law passed in Congress --- and coupled with the Congressional 'waiver' granted to Congress, a few weeks earlier --- the following saying 'from my youth' jumped into my mind:

"When the 'cooks' refuse to eat the food -- something's wrong in the kitchen!"

Media, like any tool, can do good or evil!! It happens that in the later part of my life, I sense the media is shifting from 'information' to 'propaganda' and there is a growing indication that wealth (particularly in Hollywood and such private citizens as George Soros) is funding the more evil aspects of media. Further, the effect of the internet and social media has given even 'a poor pervert' a means of reaching into our lives --- from a very, very early age!!

The growing inability to trust any media source enhances the Scottish Professor's warning nearly 300 years ago --- that we are getting closer and closer to 'bondage' --- near total control by government and potentially --- without God's daily protection --- which will be upon us if we reject 'Him' ---and then we will be without hope!! "We the People" must act very soon!!!

3 — A 'Right to Life' ---- One of the most overused expressions by those supporting left and right causes and their political allies in recent years has been "You/They have a right to _____" [fill in the blank: a

house, a car, a salary/job, tattoos, an abortion, happiness literally anything]. This trend began with the 'right' to an abortion, which precludes the protection of a specific right defined in the Constitution --- the right to life.

Our nation is ignoring God's Command to Love One Another, through the legalization of abortion. The judicial, legislative and administrative arms of government do not have the authority to negate a citizen's 'right to life' and science knows 'full well' when life begins, even with only a mere 98% surety - a 'just' nation errs with caution.

Science 'knows' when life begins --- they know that the new cells in the mother's uterus are not a tumor, cancerous or a goat; even though it doesn't have all the features one sees in a picture of a new born child.

As a zygote, I did not look like the child that was 'born' into my parent's home nor did my brothers and sisters look, at birth, like when they were 'single cells'. We were; however, 'the image of God' (we have a soul that makes us His child!) and mankind had best wake up to that fact / belief before we face His Justice! --- The killing of an unborn child, at any stage of its development, is murder and an affront to both Our Creator and our Constitution!!

The 'Supreme Court of the United States' got it wrong regarding 'abortion' and 'we the people', through our Federal government or the States need to 'fix their error'. I deeply believe Our Constitution was written to defend life, even life 'in utero', with as much conviction and judicial power as for a 'new born' or any stage of the human beings development. The arguments presented by the attorney's involved in 'protecting this "right"', brings back a childhood remembrance: 'how many angels can dance on the head of a pin' -- interesting word manipulation --- but doesn't make good law!

We have already slipped to a point where we don't even protect a child born if its mother and/or the doctor 'were trying to kill the child before it was born'!!

Further, "euthanasia" (frequently referred to as "mercy killing"), the putting of someone to death painlessly or allowing someone to die --- withholding extreme medical measures --- when they are suffering from an incurable, and usually painful disease or condition, or just entering 'old age' --- is becoming, like abortion, a 'choice'.

Every reputable religious leader throughout the world has warned us of the consequences of legalizing abortion and euthanasia. Our governing bodies and the judiciary have placed 'we the people' in a direct assault on 'Our Creator' and Our Constitution!

A frightening thought for me: Euthanasia may remove a person's 'suffering'; but thereby restrict the individual from uniting their suffering with Christ's suffering and potentially suffering essential to the salvation of their soul.

Pope Benedict XVI reminded the world in his teachings "of what it means to be human in the face of a civilization of forgetfulness." While nicely said, I am afraid we have come to the point where we need to reach for 'the sledge hammer'!! Ronald Regan had it RIGHT!!!

"Make no mistake, abortion-on-demand is not a right granted by the Constitution. No serious scholar, including one disposed to agree with the Court's result, has argued that the framers of the Constitution intended to create such a right. Shortly after the Roe v. Wade decision, Professor John Hart Ely, now Dean of Stanford Law School, wrote that the opinion "is not constitutional law and gives almost no sense of an obligation to try to be." Nowhere do the plain words of the Constitution even hint at a "right" so sweeping as to permit abortion up to the time the child is ready to be born. Yet that is what the Court ruled."

It is time for us to stop the lunacy!

4 — Sex ---- A thought being 'fostered' into society by 'our cultural elite' --- 'Sex is no longer a given element of nature', but a 'social role we choose for ourselves'. I believe that only an idiot or a very evil person could make a statement like that!!

Does anyone think that our Founding Fathers didn't know the difference between a man and a woman? God created them equal, not the same!! Are we to believe that men and women --- as created realities - as the nature of the human being --- no longer exist? Are we calling our nature into question? From now on are we merely spirit and will?

If we allow our government to continue to reject the 'pre-ordained duality of man and woman', then we reject the family as a 'reality established by creation'. The consequences of this attitude for our children; my grand-children and great-grandchildren, is already upon us:

“The child has become an object to which people have a right and which they have a right to obtain, or destroy.” That assessment of societal conditions in America today was recently made by a Catholic Bishop, with which I fully agree.

I fear for God’s reaction after He has given us enough time to ‘wake up’ and stop acting like we are God. Our leaders place us in ‘conflict’ with Our Creator, when we assault the natural law (a part of God’s creation).

Assaults to ‘nature’, such as the propagation of prostitution, pedophilia, pornography and homosexuality --- ‘relations’ other than those related to marriage or family are --- to a person of faith, to our Founders, believers in Our Creator --- an affront to God --- Our Creator!

We must protect the young from graphic information that may lead them to ‘unhealthy’ choices at a delicate age. [As addressed earlier: A major invasion is on-going within the public and religious school systems of our nation.]

We have organizations established around the world to protect peoples from diseases and conditions that breed unhealthy lifestyles, such as ‘too much salt’ in one’s diet or eating ‘too much sugar’ or smoking. Yet we foster sexual appetites that bring about ‘plague like results’ such as AIDs, which we then demand government -- ‘cure’. This will only get worse if we don’t Hear God!!

Pope Paul VI promulgated an encyclical [Humanae Vitae (Human Life)] in July of 1968. The encyclical dealt with married love, responsible parenthood, natural law, and union / procreation. 45 years later, the Pope’s words have proven to be prophetic --- as he ‘forecasted’.

Our nation has experienced a significant lowering of moral standards, over the years, since the promulgation of the encyclical. All one has to do is review the statistics: broken families, infidelity, cohabitation, increased disrespect for women, children in poverty, unwed mothers and abortions.

5 — Marriage --- The definition of marriage has ‘never’ included ‘hedonistic’ conduct -- the definition of marriage has never included ‘raw sex acts/conduct’ or ‘sodomy’. Such conduct was always viewed as ‘perverse’ and redefinition to satisfy the ‘perverse’ for political or population control reasons is wrong, and an affront to God – Our Creator, and, in my terms, idiotic!!

A man and woman enter into a permanent relationship (marriage) for many reasons --- two key purposes: protection and procreation.

In the early cultures, such unions involved ‘partners’ being selected for the young by parents, churches and even governments and ‘love’ between the ‘couples’ was not considered essential or even important.

Early in mankind’s existence, multiple wives was deemed acceptable in society for the purpose of raising populations and being able to support families and tribes; even to have sufficient ‘hands to do the work of living’ as a family and consequently as nations. As the world became more populated and dispersed across the globe, more structure occurred.

Christ, during His time on earth, elevated marriage to a higher commitment and purpose --- a sacrament (a state or condition in life ‘established as sacramental’--- meaning ‘holy’) in the eyes of God and done so by Christ at a wedding at Cana, where he performed His first sign of His existence and Power. That change has evolved over 2,000 years and ‘humans’ understand the purpose of marriage to have changed from protection and procreation to also include love and, for many, including my wife and I, joining in an effort for the salvation of each other’s souls.

While society eventually rejected a man having multiple ‘female’ partners; it has “never” included ‘sodomy’ as an acceptable term for marriage, nor should it!!! The primary purposes of marriage --- procreation and salvation of souls!!

The ‘judicial’ and legislative actions against marriage calls ‘we the people’ to action!! We will be fighting in defense of marriage “rightly understood” and against what Pope Benedict XVI often called the “dictatorship of relativism”.

Recognizing the union of two of the same sex as ‘marriage’ is both an affront to God and to Our Constitution. It is in fact --- sodomy, which has throughout history been a sin against God and nature and never accepted as a social standard for mankind --- rather something to abhor! Is America becoming Sodom and Gomorrah? Do we want the results??

Government leaders, with the willing cooperation of the ‘courts’ of Our Nation, have done all in their power to redefine fiction into fact. It now falls to us – “we the people”, who know better and now need to be heard --- clearly heard --- by the government.

Further, I have never been able to integrate into my logic structure a concept that says 90+ percent of a society must accept/condone immoral behavior -and be told that we must 'respect' others viewpoints even though better than 90 to 95% of us know 'it's not normal'.

'Homosexuality' was and is perverse and an affront to 'Our Creator' and governments can't change that without consequences!! While a few, extremely wealthy men and women are funding many legal battles to 'get there will placed into law' --- mankind --- including the other nations of the world -- know it's wrong and God calls us to fight!!

We need to support the legal actions ongoing to correct the errors that have been made, as well as 'staffing of the House and Senate' ('Our' Congress) and the White House -- the "People's House"!! Very simply -----

If they don't get it -- then fire them -- or not elected/re-elected them!

God's patience can be pushed to a point of 'no return' and we are 'stupid' to allow the people we elect to defend our way of life, to test that patience!!

[The following words are from an article --- written by one of the attorney's defending 'marriage' before the California Courts --- presented as my own words, because they represent exactly my concerns. To the attorney -- my thanks for saying 'so well' what I would have said if I were more articulate.]

"While the decisions by the 'courts' worry me; I am actually less worried about the damage done to the institution of marriage than I am about the damage done-to-the-body-politic. Marriage is an eternal truth, and a profound good. Its value to society is inestimable and it will get protection. No government, judge, or politician has the power to change the inherent nature of marriage and in the end --- the truth of marriage will prevail, even if the law decides to abandon it for a time.

Democracy on the other hand, is not nearly so stable. Preserving it depends upon the integrity of our institutions, which are charged with specific functions to serve the interests of the body politic. Legislatures and voters pass laws they believe will benefit society; executives must fairly administer and defend those laws; and courts must impartially interpret the laws.

When the votes of millions of people are ignored by the elites in government, when politicians can ignore their oath of office and assume for themselves extra-constitutional authority, when judges can ignore their own internal conflicts and impose their own political views on an issue in direct contravention of the expressed desires of the people, and when the Supreme Court can turn a blind eye to the matter and let the politicians and judges get away with it, public confidence in government is seriously, and perhaps permanently, eroded.

I am wavering at this point!! All of the political parties are failing!! I feel like the rule of law has been shredded, and conniving politicians have been rewarded for ignoring their sworn oath of office. Public confidence in the judicial system has been dealt a severe blow."

Archbishop Nienstedt (Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of New Ulm), recently noted, "marriage is a social justice issue," while explaining that "growing up in intact homes versus broken homes has real consequences: on school performance, emotional health, identity, sexual abuse, delinquency, incarceration, and child poverty."

Further, he reflects that: "Fathers and mothers parent differently. Both are needed. And research shows that fathers do play a critical role and distinctly influence the sexual activity of children."

Some world governments (Eastern Europe and a number of the European Union countries) are following Russia's lead to protect children by curbing advocacy for 'non-traditional' [I prefer 'perverse'] sexual acts. Through votes in those countries and open comments during meetings with Mr. Obama, when he was attempting to foster a 'right to same-sex unions/marriage' in Africa at public presentations; he was nicely told to 'pedal his misguided thoughts somewhere else'!!

The obvious now requires --- 'a fight for common sense!!'

Understand that the key reason for the denials of homosexual marriage in Russia and 'much of the non-American world' is simple: common sense ---procreation --- and economics --- not morality. Morales are affected but the issue is more basic for most nations!!

Further, the homosexual lifestyle, in particular, is associated with a host of health risks. Individuals who engage in homosexual activity are 18 times more likely to contract HIV/AIDS than persons who don't. They are at higher risk for other sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, depression, and suicide.

Thought: I wonder if the new ObamaCare program will charge homosexual 'couples' higher premiums to reflect their 'higher risks'?

Where is this headed: In an area of our nation where hedonistic attitudes are prevalent --- the San Francisco's Bay area of California --- the media reports:

"Animals are more highly valued than children."

6 — The Family

"The family has been under attack for over 50 years, with the advance of contraception, abortion, no-fault divorce, pornography and, more recently, same-sex marriage.... Satan knows all too well the role of the family is to promote good...and needs to be dismantled.... The record shows he is succeeding --- fertility is viewed as a hindrance not a blessing, men and women are viewed as the same, the government has now established a powerful tool to enforce contraception, and the role of the father is being marginalized."

Archbishop Nienstedt

On December 21, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI said the family in Western society (us!!) is undergoing a "crisis that threatens it to its foundations," owing to false ideas of human nature that equate freedom with selfishness and present God-given sexual identities as a matter of individual choice to the profound detriment of human dignity.

The following 'teaching' by Cardinal George of Chicago by way of the Wall Street Journal:

"In response to Cardinal George of Chicago's reflection that it would be necessary for the church to end its financial support for an immigration 'rights' group that sought legalization of same-sex-marriage --- eight Illinois lawmakers recently published a statement that included their belief that the threat of funding withdrawal 'was not worthy of the church we know, love and respect'; and further claimed that the Cardinal was using "immigrants and those who seek to help them as pawns in a political battle.' In response to the politicians and other critics, the Cardinal used the 'criticism' by the lawmakers to 'teach the flock': "It is intellectually and morally dishonest to use the witness of the church's concern for the poor as an excuse to attack the church's teaching on the nature of marriage...the church is no one's private club...." [He then reminded the politicians, that in a few years they would:] "...stand before this same Christ to give an account of their stewardship." He also reflected that: "Jesus is merciful, but He is not stupid." He also reflected, for the doubting lawmakers, that: "The bishop has authority to teach, and he has authority to teach you!" He also recently decried how "this tendency for the government to claim for itself authority over all areas of human experience flows from the secularization of our culture. If God cannot be part of public life, then the state itself plays God. The Cardinal focused the issues significance --- [issues within an 'all out culture war' within the United States] --- talking to the intrusion of the government and what it means for church and state relations: "I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square."

Poland has lived through similar conditions within my life-time!!

"It seems to me that in the history of the church, in the history of Christianity, there are many examples showing to what extent you have to defend the truth --- you have to defend it to the end." A quote from Blessed Father Jerzy Popieluszko; Martyred for his faith in God (speaking truth) and love of Country (23 September 1947 --- 19 October 1984)

7 — My Church / The Catholic Church / All Churches --- Our representatives must not be allowed to establish 'laws' that directly attack a 'belief' in God' and our nation's churches by insisting on their participation in practices that are in opposition to those church's 'non-negotiable' beliefs, such as --- funding of abortions, contraception, sterilizations, sex changes and conducting 'same sex unions'.

"Catholic" groups have also been deeply involved in the care and placement of children through Adoption Agencies they operate, which are now being forced to close rather than place children in same sex couple homes.

A number of Catholic colleges and hospitals are facing similar issues and are evaluating and announcing withdrawal from government assistance programs, rather than provide access to and funding of abortions through student and faculty health programs, thereby reducing the access to 'good educations' to many young people.

"We the People" are the losers!! --- And 'we' need to get fighting mad!!

8 — Our Government / It's Leadership --- Evil is winning a battle that will place our nation amongst those that have failed if we continue to 'walk away' from Our Creator and the principles articulated by Our Founders!!

“No human laws or court decisions can undo what the Creator established in the beginning.” A statement by Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the Archbishop of Washington, written in the Washington Post on June 28, 2013, in reflecting on the Supreme Court’s ‘marriage decision’ --- actually the lack of a definitive ruling, which should have been easy and obvious, for the Supreme Court.

He also stated that the court has “simply reminded all of us that there is a great difference between what a law can decree and what God has created.”

Our government (legislative, administrative and judicial) appears to be doing its best to ignore existing laws and gain power to control all aspects of our lives, the lives of ‘we the people’!

It seems they want to implement what socialist /communist governments have done in other countries --- like Russia, North Korea and Communist China --- as well as most Muslim nations; although, even they know enough to reject ‘homosexual marriage’!! Our government is acting as if they no longer believe in the ‘free enterprise system’; our industrial/business complex; our military; its people --- you and I; and Our Constitution.

More damning, our government opposes “Our Creator” in many ways and ‘we the people’ must not permit them to continue to ignore “Our Creator” --- if we don’t, our nation will fail!! We – You and I – will fail!!

“President Obama asserted the unilateral power to “tweak” inconvenient laws in last Friday’s news conference, under-scoring his Administration’s increasingly cavalier notions about law enforcement. So it’s good that the judiciary – a coequal branch of government, in case the Administration forgot – is starting to check the White House.” ----- Taken from the Wall Street Journal (Review & Outlook Section) --- Wednesday, August 14, 2013 --- from an article covering the DC Circuit Court of Appeals ‘writ of mandamus’ issued against the government regarding spent-fuel storage in Nevada’s Yucca Mountain.

The President --- his administration --- today (2013) --- demonstrates --- daily, an increasing contempt for the Constitution and is ignoring / fighting the process of implementing laws:

Recently the United States Attorney General failed to defend DOMA (the Defense of Marriage Act) before the Supreme Court. He did so since the President, himself an attorney, thinks the law to be unconstitutional, despite a majority of Congress voting to pass the legislation.

In the first case, regarding Yucca Mountain being ‘closed after we have spent billions creating the facility’ -- - the President protects an election ‘promise’ his ‘buddy’ Senator Harry Reid of Nevada made to his constituents so he could get re-elected in 2012.

In the second case, he fights DOMA so that he won’t offend ‘Gay Supporters’ and lose their financial backing. Remember the old saying:

Money is the root of all evil!

A Small Point: The Attorney General is not the President’s attorney, he has his own, he is the attorney for ‘we the people’ and our legislatures passed the law on our behalf and I believe the Attorney General should have defended the laws, in the name of the United States --- You and I! I also believe, more importantly, that the Congress should have demanded it or removed him from office through impeachment!!

Further, the President demonstrates frequently that he feels he can change laws at his whim. A recent example is having his Secretary of Health and Human Services change a Healthcare Law passed by Congress, without Congressional authorization and which he has then defended publicly. He does not have that authority!! It rests with Congress!!!

Also he has allowed an invasion into the ‘people’s’ right to privacy through the National Security Agency (NSA), beyond that authorized by Congress or the Courts --- acknowledging such action and stating that he had reviewed that action and we should trust him.

Mr. Obama --- does not have my trust --- quite the opposite!!

He acts as an Imperial President ----- rejecting what has been to those who preceded him --- as responsibilities accepted as ‘solemn duties’.

And now he even believes he can ‘attack another country’ even if told by Congress not to do so: “Mr. Obama said on Wednesday that he could order strikes against Syria even if Congress doesn’t authorize them...” The Wall Street Journal --- Sep 5, 2013.

So How Should We Defend Our Faith / Our Beliefs / Our Country?

Simplistically / Practically:

BE PREPARED --- Know / Learn / Develop your beliefs and convictions so that you can present and defend your ideas / viewpoints!!

BE INVOLVED --- Join groups that help you stay focused; however, insure you do your 'homework' before joining groups. Be an active member that can be relied upon for 'knowledge' and 'effort'! Be sure you can trust the group!

BE ACTIVE --- This will be a lifetime commitment and you must prepare for 'the long haul' --- Don't just 'be involved' – be a leader, a spokesperson, a person that others look up to for ideas, analysis, confirmation and action.

BE VOCAL --- Speak out --- but do so from knowledge and commitment. When you speak it must bring value, focus and/or clarification.

BE CONSISTENT --- If you 'waffle', your impact will be minimized!! "Don't be thrown around by the winds of change – be strong in beliefs and articulate your beliefs clearly and succinctly.

BE PERSISTENT --- Quitting should rarely, if ever, be an option. You may 'rethink and refocus or even reinvigorate' but try not to quit. → →Remember: If you 'give up' today, you will not be a part of tomorrow's success.

Some Closing Thoughts --- If I were the King!

There are a number of things, that if I had the power, I would change or at least allow 'we the people' to decide upon. Some deal with 'my church' and the rest with the size and 'grasp of power' at the Federal level and intrusion into the people's personal lives under a 'reasoning' driven by the need to 'defend the people' and the intentional expansion of political partisonships fostered in part by "a highly partisan media" that either 'twists' or outright 'lies', without concern for the integrity of their profession or damage being done to Our Country.

I --- Regarding My Church: I remain 'fully' committed to the Catholic Faith! I do believe; however, there are a few areas that I would 'seriously review' ----were such responsibility mine --- they address the perceptions of the 'church' and not the teachings of the Catholic Faith:

The Term 'Catholic' has meaning --- Significant damage is being done to the name "Catholic" through the conduct of teachers/administrative staff at "Catholic" Universities and Colleges; through Catholic Hospitals and Hospital groups; and charities carrying a 'catholic logo' or imprimatur.

Action is necessary without the usual 'slow - deliberate' -- excruciatingly lengthy 'review and deliberation' process / period normally associated with 'studies / rulings' within the Catholic Church.

Schools ---- Pope John Paul II promulgated an encyclical on 15 August 1990 entitled "Ex Corde Ecclesiae" and is now decades old. Many 'catholic' schools (universities and colleges) ignore the document and 'fight implementation' by 'study' and now and again – outright notice that it is not applicable to their school --- it's time to enforce it!!!

If "Catholic Colleges/Universities continue to 'drag their heels' regarding Pope John Paul's encyclical because of government restrictions on student grants / loans, then (1) they need to 'stop' reflecting they are a "Catholic School" or (2) forego the government loan process that stipulates 'how Catholic' a specific "Catholic School" may be!

"Agreeing with the Devil" should not be a path taken at Georgetown, Notre Dame, Marquette or any other Catholic University / College. Government is not a friend, rather an enemy --- "This administration does not want a strong Catholic Church, nor a strong relationship with it, as it sees the Church as an obstacle to its liberal social agenda." Jim Nicholson --- Former Ambassador to the Vatican reflecting on President Obama's outlook/viewpoint of the Vatican Ambassador.

President Obama recently had to undergo a 'nomination process' to replace the Ambassador to the Vatican, Miguel Humberto Diaz, who resigned effective November 5, 2012. During the process, it was reported, that Mr. Obama came close to not nominating anyone to the Vatican Ambassador position. I believe he did so because the Vatican represents faith beliefs he doesn't agree with and he 'fights' daily. As an alternative he has nominated Ken Hackett, the former president of Catholic Relief Services to be the United States' ambassador to the Vatican. (See my comments regarding CRS in the next segment.)

By using the term Catholic in marketing materials and not acting in accordance with Catholic principles, parents and students are misguided about what will be taught and 'allowed' to be 'proper conduct' within the 'student life' at many 'Catholic' schools.

Bottom Line: Catholic's don't send their children to a Catholic school to have them lose their faith developed in the student's home and local Parish!!

At the lower levels of schooling (High School and Grammar School) the issue is more focused to "us" --- specifically, the Catholic faithful. One bishop helped me to understand the issue: "Before the 1950s, a strong Catholic sub-culture protected against secularization.... Then American Catholics began to dismantle their sub-culture and we were changed by the culture."

[I would add that part of that sub-culture change was a large number of Nuns and Brothers whose Orders 'voted' to leave the local Catholic Schools.]

We the 'Catholic Faithful' (1) stopped sending our children / grandchildren to 'parish or diocesan schools' as the 'nuns and brothers' began changing their "religious orders" from teaching to social work and moved away from 'local schools' and (2) we did not respond to the change and hence "Catholic grade schools and Catholic high schools" have become "few and far between!" We need to "get back in the ball game!" I'm sure we can fund, build and manage far better programs than our government / public schools are doing!

Even if the support is to broaden 'parish assistance' that would strengthen the home-school families within a parish --- study facilities (old school / buildings) / science level classes by retired 'professionals' in such disciplines as biology, physics and chemistry; funding for books; parish level 'day care' to help single parents whose children will attend 'a neighborhood level' home school group.

Catholic Organizations ---- Organizations managed / owned by a Catholic Religious Order or group from a Religious Order; or operated and/or owned by a Catholic Diocese; or use the term Catholic in their organization's name; those that specifically use 'Catholic' in their literature as an indicator of 'who they are' or as a 'marketing tool' that is used purposely to reflect, even if not followed, Catholic principles --- need to actually operate under Catholic Doctrine!! If not, I believe they should be legally required to remove any 'Catholic' indication in their advertising / marketing or labeling.

As an example the CHA (Catholic Hospital Association) has taken positions and supported legislation that violates Catholic teaching / doctrine --- such as specifically supplying abortifacients, and supporting the use of sterilizations, in vitro fertilization, and/or sex change surgery as either a required 'product to be provided' or as required through federal or public insurance programs. The current leader, a nun, has openly spoken for the CHA and taken position in favor of the HHS 'modified' mandates on contraception, abortifacients and sterilization, while opposed by the Catholic Bishops of America. 'Sister' rejects the Bishops' opposition to the HHS Mandate as a 'business decision' needed to protect the Association's hospitals from an 'aggressive retaliation', by the government. Are any of us 'dumb enough' to believe that it is what God would do!! It sure doesn't comply with His Teaching! --- either in supporting the hierarchy or rejecting 'His representative on earth's' teachings, which is done in 'His Name'.

The Catholic Church through either the USCCB or the Vatican should step-in and either have 'Catholic' removed from the group's name and/or remove the nun or the 'recognition' of the nun's religious Order as a part of the Church!

Another 'Catholic' Group that is 'significantly funded' by the Bishops of the United States' --- through direct donation drives in church's across the country is CRS (Catholic Relief Services). This organization uses part of that funding for use in abortions, sterilizations and other 'non-Catholic' doctrine activities in foreign countries. The Bishops need to withdraw their support for the obvious reasons, as well as restrict, from the CRS, their use of the term 'Catholic' -- through legal action unless immediate changes are made.

Parenthetically, Catholics in those foreign countries 'serviced' by CRS, know that abortion is wrong, and, further, that it is wrong for the church to aide in sterilization programs. Not sure when American Catholics stopped seeing it that way??

Catholic organizations and Catholic Schools must be exactly that --- they must stand for, even be willing to 'die for', Catholic values and teachings and not waiver one iota from them. Benedict XVI tells us: We must avoid letting ourselves be "tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine." We should cultivate a 'friendship with Christ' --- Hear His Words --- and Follow His Words!! He left the Pope and Bishops to guide us!!

II Regarding Politics --- As a boy growing up it was always fun to hear the 'men' argue about who should be President, Senator or the Tax Collector. Regardless of the position --- personal integrity was at the heart of the discussions and a determining factor on who would get 'my uncle's vote'.

Now we just accept as fact, not even an assumption, that most candidates are in some manner 'fudging the truth' if not 'outright lying'! The shift in that feeling was placed in concrete by Bill Clinton's conduct and encased in steel by Barack Obama. Politicians have lost a key / important understanding:

'politics is a morally serious business'

The breadth and depth of the lack of integrity in politics is such that a large portion of the voting population have 'stopped' --- stopped voting, stopped believing and stopped having faith in their government.

They do not believe that 'government' is capable of solving problems or even running the nations' day to day activities, including defense of the country, the interests of the people, and violations of our geography --- our borders.

When right no longer means that; when trust has been so badly damaged that hope is in danger; when we excuse God from our nations' life --- the future can be, and does look, very bleak.

Over the last few decades, we have come to the realization that we cannot rely on Congress and the Courts (regardless of level) --- Congress has become polarized and the Courts have become a product of the political structure.

The 'nice thing', the 'saving facts'; however, are (1) that God has not left us; and (2) the problem is not politics! It is us!! --- and WE can 'Fix It!!!

'We the People' elect our representatives and who will lead our nation; hence, we must insure we do our job, with enthusiasm, integrity - 'sound/aggressive' performance ----- AND NEVER QUIT!!! We also know that when others violate the basic laws and loose trust in "We the People", that does not give us the right or latitude to do likewise!!

► Political Parties: [We need to get involved and refocus 'our party'!!]

When I cast my first Presidential ballot in 1958:

1. Republicans --- were viewed as Conservative.
2. Democrats --- were viewed as Progressive (a few were openly Liberal)
3. Libertarians --- They were solid Conservatives that thought our interests should end at our borders.

[Hawaii was a shock!!]

4. Independents --- Fiscal conservatives and social liberals.

Today, the names are still the same, but the definitions have changed:

1. Republicans --- They are the Progressives, headed toward liberal.
2. Democrats --- They are now solidly Liberal and well on the way to being Socialists and some desire Totalitarian Rule.
3. Libertarians --- They are still Conservatives but now know that the world doesn't end at our borders,

maybe because we can't defend them.

4. Independents --- Remain fiscal conservatives and social liberals.

The political leaders, with the 'consistent / influential' assistance of the 'media' --- during years of influence by special interest groups and expanding technology --- giving them the ability to reach small and large audiences and to slowly but surely and, with virtually no counter movement by the "vocal opposition"--- have convinced many voters to accept their 'point of view'.

Parties appear to be shifting left and rejecting conservative / moral positions. The shift has enhanced a significant degradation in ethics across the nation, particularly amongst the young and impressionable and 'uninformed voters'. As the saying goes:

"We are getting "the best that money can buy"!!

It is past time for 'We The People' to reclaim the 'high ground'! The criticality demands that each of us MUST become the "Somebody" that steps forward!! Even if only addressing your small circle of friends and acquaintances!!

III. Society: Before I tackle the Government, I need to address two social issues the we need to 'fix' -- not government --- 'us'.

Racism --- it comes in many forms, and continues to be a problem in American and throughout the world - and it will remain a problem until we (mankind) realize that 'all men are created equal' --- a statement that reflects the involvement of 'Our Creator' and the recognition that 'in Him' we have an ability to overcome racism. God only wants us to "Love Him and One Another" --- Not "Love Him and 'those who think and/or look like ourselves'". It will be in following the Creator's guidance, as given to us through His Son -that the

issue will be resolved ---not looking to government to gain equality --- we are already equal --- government needs, in most instances, to stop dividing us --- creating false barriers / ineffective solutions --- even fostering racism.

I often hear the argument – ‘don’t blame me’ --- after all “It was my Party, that voted “FOR” the law known as “The Civil Rights Act of 1964” while ‘those guys’, were in opposition to the Act. We must stop telling the ‘other side’ that they have succumbed to a ‘lie’ --- the issue belongs to ‘we the people’ and how we treat each other --- and the political parties be damned!!

I am not asking you to condone bad behavior or crime by any race or worse --- ‘sin’. What I am saying is that Our Creator calls each of us --- to respect his creation!! It’s time to hear and listen to Him!! It is done by treating your neighbor as if He / She is Christ --- Visiting You / Reaching out to You.

A ‘Give it to me Society’ appears to be the focus / desire of many of us. We feel we are ‘somehow owed’ things, partly through politicians promises and our own misunderstanding of our system of government --- false expectations:

No sexual limitations (same sex marriage) --- If it feels good it is OK! (a major rejection of the concept of right and wrong) --- If you can have it, so can I - even if I have neither the ability or desire to ‘earn’ it (redistribution of wealth) --- and Congress must set rules so I have a ‘right’ to own property, even if I can’t afford it (the recent economic crisis that we are still recovering from and was primarily caused by ‘bad property loans’) --- school lunch/meal programs that replace parental responsibilities in many instances --- and welfare for tens of thousands that don’t need it.

It is time for ‘we the people’ to take responsibility for our actions or lack of actions by assisting those in need without government’s creation of another program -- Love your Neighbor is God’s challenge to us to ‘help those in need’ and demanding government ‘do so’, is not the answer --- we are the answer!! We are called, within our own communities, to the best of our abilities, to support / help those who truly need assistance --- not expecting ‘the other guy’ to do it, but for all of us to do it!! If it does take government resources, we should call on ‘local government’ to lead and control such efforts --- building programs and structure should be the very last thought rather than the first as we seem to get focused on doing today --- as you study history, you will quickly learn (if taught properly) government solution is or leads to what is known as socialism --- a concept we have fought for many generations!!

III. Government

I almost don’t know where to begin!! There are so many things that I feel need ‘fixing’!! In the last 20 to 30 years, our government has changed so much, I am absolutely confident that my Father and Mother would not recognize their own country / government, nor would they be at all happy!!

Our Defense – Our Armed Forces --- I was actually trained for this subject! The future of the defense of America should be a huge concern!!

The primary duty of our federal government when established, was basically (1) ‘to protect this country’ – its people and ‘its interests’ and (2) to ‘represent’ America in the international world -- not to be our ‘mother / father’ or replace the ‘free market concept’ and / or to ‘guide or rule over’ an ‘independent --- liberty driven’ people!! Further, we did not establish our government to be the world’s ‘police force’, as we were reminded during the recent debate on use of force in Syria, when Congressman Alan Grayson (Democrat of Florida) stated a principal that we seem to have forgotten: “We are not the world’s judge and jury!” I would also add: ‘and we aren’t qualified or armed to do so!’

Somewhere over the past 20 to 25 years --- ‘Military Policy’ has shifted away from adherence to the Founders’ perspectives. We seem to be more focused on being a ‘world police power’ operating in areas of the world based on social and moral reasoning; ‘stretching’ the principle of defending ‘our interests’. We allow ourselves to become embroiled in conflicts that to most Americans, and frequently ‘the Congress’, have not been ‘sold’ on the reasoning that the conflict is in defense of ‘the nation’ or ‘our national interests’.

I have spent nearly half my life working alongside great patriots that not only made me a better person --- they dedicated their lives to the defense of treaties and our national interests with honor --- we must continue to insure that our military actions reflect that honor, while serving ‘the people’. Our national leaders must use ‘the nation’s military might’ under the mantle of our Constitutional and they can then expect soldiers to fight and win.

When many members of Congress had served in the military, decisions about strategy that the nation should adopt, seemed to flow from the Constitution!! Not sure we can make 'such service' a criteria; but do believe we the people should make it one of our 'desires'!! When you have 'served in the military', particularly in time of war, you have a much clearer understanding of what it means 'to defend the nation' and to 'go to war' ---- and I think Congress must have a deeper understanding to put our futures -- 'in harms way'!!

Reminder: Our military comes under civilian control / orders and; hence, military senior leaders give the nation's leaders their best advice within their understanding of the capabilities of an enemy (its people, equipment, geography and the size/capability of the enemy's armed forces, as well as our own, and then execute what is approved / directed by the nation's leaders. This demands selecting the best military leaders, listening to their guidance; and then having 'civilian leadership' that can assess the planning and make decisions, not based in what is the best political decision, rather the best decision to 'protect and defend' the United States and its interests.

When the military and its actions become a 'political force' rather than for 'defense of nation' --- our military will quickly 'lose its edge'. Further, when the military is used as a 'cultural testing group', i.e., for 'social engineering', such as permitting women in combat, implementing medical and marriage regulations where Doctors / Nurses / Chaplains cannot comply with their oaths and / or 'religious oath' and hence can't serve in the military. Further, the implementation of 'social training' has a tendency to weaken a soldier's resolve in a most emotionally tense environment - putting one's life on the line for his country --- we weaken our military's capability and its ability to "respond when called to fight".

"The Obama administration has a nasty habit of equating basic conservative values with terrorism." Under a section in a military training manual entitled "Extremist Ideologies," the document states, "In U.S. history, there are many examples of extremist ideologies and movements. The colonists who sought to free themselves from British rule and the Confederate states who sought to secede from the Northern states are just two examples." Note 1: [As a citizen watchdog --- my government better understand why 'States' may want to secede!!]

"It's a disturbing insight into what's happening inside Obama's Pentagon," Tom Fitton, a staunch conservative, told Fox News. Note 2: [Tom --- it's not Obama's Pentagon --- it belongs to "We The People"!]

It is; however, gratifying to acknowledge that the 'soldiers' of our nation continue to be "the best" armed combat teams in the world. Further, those who serve their nation, for the most part, serve with pride and distinction.

As has been true over my lifetime, the current soldiers are as solid as any that served during my father's generation and my own!

Karl Rove, a Senior Advisor and Deputy Chief of Staff during the Presidency of George W. Bush, recently wrote 'a piece' in the Wall Street Journal regarding Lt. Jason Redman, US Navy Seal ----- "Jason represents the current generation that brought down the Taliban, liberated Iraq, turned the tide in Anbar, stabilized Afghanistan, went after alQaeda and systematically protected America in the first conflict of the 21st century." While recovering from eight gun-shot wounds received in Fallujah in September of 2007, he told Karl that he was becoming tired of all of the sympathy and posted on his door, that his hospital room was a place of "fun, optimism, and intense rapid regrowth and if you are not prepared for that, GO Elsewhere."

His attitude and conviction is what the military is all about and what the attitude of our government should be! It is the caliber of men like Jay, who is retiring, and others like him that are also leaving the military, that embolden my belief in our future as they openly declare ---- that they are not leaving the service of our country!!

The size of the 'Piggy Bank' --- We need to significantly reduce the size of the Federal Government, which now costs 'we the people' --- as 'a financial person would say' --- around 40% of GDP. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the market value of all officially recognized final goods and services produced within our country --- our nation's annual wealth during a given period.

39 years before I was born, at the beginning of the 20th Century, the amount of GDP, consumed by government, was 6.9%. Much happened after that period, which has affected the size of the GDP consumed by federal agencies. Spending took a big increase during World War I and ended up at about 12% of GDP in the 1920s.

Then came the Great Depression, in which President Roosevelt and the New Deal cranked up federal spending, and government spending rose up to 20 percent of GDP.

World War II really showed how the United States could commandeer its national resources for all out war. Government spending peaked just under 53% of GDP in 1945.

50 years later, President Clinton said, in 1995, that the era of big government was over. It should have been; but he was wrong! The post World War II era has been a golden age of spending by our government, and it shows no sign of ending. Although spending dropped back to 21 percent of GDP immediately after WWII, it steadily climbed until it hit a peak of 36 percent of GDP during the bottom of the recession of 1980-82. Thereafter spending chugged along in the mid 30s until the mortgage meltdown of 2008 --- primarily created by the actions of the Federal Government, yet blamed on others. In the aftermath of bank and auto bailouts, government spending surged to wartime levels at 45 percent of GDP. Near term government spending is pegging at 40 percent of GDP.

[The % of GDP information presented is found on government websites.]

In the past six years, our national debt has doubled! While running for the 'presidency'; Barack Obama called the near 8 trillion debt 'unpatriotic'; while as I pen this reflection he is at 17 trillion and calls the 'debt' 'not really debt'.

We need to return to a reasonable level of GDP being spent on government!!!

What should we do? What can we do? Where do we start?

If it was your home / family council gathering, how do you think they would respond? I am sure your answer would include: 'Cut spending! --- Use less costly brands of needed items! --- Maybe use more 'hand-me-downs' --- delay your vacation or pick a 'less expensive' option --- Better planning for use of items that require high cost fuels --- Hide the credit cards --- I think you get the point.

Our government has to 'shrink its overhead' and restrict its 'appetites' rather than 'go further into debt' unless we want to rely on 'someone' who 'will bail us out' such as the "tax payers" [that's you]; maybe China [great when your enemy 'owns' you]; or continue to build infinite credit by printing whatever we need, obviously reducing the value of the nation's currency as we have done throughout 2013 and have indicated will be continued into 2014.

To a home owning, hard working guy and / or gal it seems obvious; while our government only tries to 'spend more' and pray the problem goes away, before they get caught. What to do? --- What to do?

How about we start with a greater reliance on States and local governments and 'we the people' to handle some of their/our own problems, while the Federal government focuses on 'their constitutional duties'. We the people have allowed our federal government, through our elected representatives, to 'get entriely too big / too invasive (at home and abroad) / and too expensive.'

It might also help to rethink our legal system that outright lies / twists the language / delays and delays and manipulates until 'they wear you down'. I recently told my wife that I thought the most corrupt professions in America, as we enter the 21st Century, are the media (journalism) and the judiciary (the lawyer level through the courts) --- running side by side with politics.

A few other thoughts: 1. Cut federal spending and any automatic growth in spending (how about restricting 'the governments cash availability' to a maximum of 30 to 20 % of the previous years GDP, over a 10 year period, unless approved by 2/3rds of Congress --- House and Senate); 2. Demand a balanced budget at all levels of government; and 3. Simplify/Lower taxes – I prefer the 'Fair Tax' approach and 'drop the IRS'.

First Step --- The Federal Government's size, structure and conduct.

Remember!! --- the Federal Government was created by the States and the Constitution provides a method for their ability to ammend the Constitution -Article 5!

"The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate."

We can not 'trust' the federal government --- we need to bring control of our nation's future back into the hands of the States!! Its time for the States to reevaluate the powers relinquished and reduce their dependence on a central government that fails to achieve 'acceptable results' at an excessively high cost; and thereby reduce the massive expenses associated with 'federal government overhead'.

I can not believe that our Founding Father's thought that the 'States' would:

Have relinquished so much control to a central government; and

That 30 to 40 % of their nation's hard earned money would go to creating excessive and invasive restrictions on its citizens' liberties.

The Process of Change will be difficult and lengthy, but 'we the people' have been left with no other option. Politics is basically corrupted and the Federal Government believes they are 'above the Constitution and the nation's laws'.

'It is time' for the States to reestablish what the 'federal' government 'will be' empowered to do by holding a convention under Article 5, as noted above to:

(1) 'Amend' the Constitution, as needed – definitely establish: (a) the definition of marriage; and (b) when a human being becomes a citizen and is protected under the law.

(2) Send specific instructions to their federal representatives (House of Representatives and Senate) to 'reclaim' some of the powers formally granted the Federal Government through a restructuring of the Federal Government. Powers to be reclaimed are to be specified by the Conventions of the States.

We are not a 'nanny state'; we are not a welfare nation; and we should 'never' have allowed "government unions" --- dumb, dumb, dumb!! I believe the size of government and the impact of public unions is bleeding the nation and causing decline. Its time to reexamine and reduce!!!

All functions relating to activities currently established, managed and administered by a Federal Department or Agency needs to be reviewed: [I do acknowledge the need (a) for the States to collectively establish standards, that need to be adhered to within all of the various States; and (b) I believe in a 'small' federal structure, whose size / functions should be established and funded through a Federal Budget; focused on our defense and international relationships (trade and defense related); but even so, if we must employ a greater breadth of agencies, we should require a 'review and confirmation' by a Convention of the States every 25 years.]

The enforcement and administration of federal laws is in the hands of many 'bloated' executive departments, created by Congress to deal with specific areas of national and international affairs.

The heads of the 15 departments, chosen by the President and approved with the "advice and consent" of the U.S. Senate, form a council of advisers known as the President's "Cabinet". They need to be severely reduced to, in affect, become an advisory rather than governing body with limited administrative / support staff and enforcement bodies, with the understanding that size and duties are to be reviewed 'from time to time' by a Convention of the States. They all started with good intentions, but their power is well beyond what I believe our Founding Fathers would consider realistic even knowing the world conditions of the 20th and 21st centuries.

They need to be curtailed so that the peoples' liberties' are not 'trampled upon' as I believe they are today!! For those agencies that 'should' exist, overlapping functions need to be consolidated, such as the 'Intelligence Agencies' and those that oversee the 'nation's defense capabilities'. We need to reduce the 'paths' of supervision and reporting of key information that can delay decision making and reduce inter-agency conflicts so advice is timely.

In addition to departments, a number of organizations are grouped into the Executive Office of the President, which includes the White House staff, the National Security Council, the Office of Management and Budget, the Council of Economic Advisers, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Office of Science and Technology Policy --- and recently a 'large number' of special assistants known as "Czars" that are repetitive to the Cabinet and agency functions. There are also independent agencies such as the United States Postal Service, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Agency for International Development. In addition, there are government-owned corporations such as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the National Railroad Passenger Corporation.

All need to be evaluated and decisions made regarding 'value / necessity and size', if needed at all. "Overlapping" responsibilities must be eliminated such as the 'Czar' type positions in the White House, which should be integrated into the Cabinet Officer responsibilities!

The massive growth in the federal government is 'the' significant reason for the invasive cost of government and 'invasion' into our daily lives --- and in some instances (such as the Internal Revenue Service and NSA) have become political arms of the 'White House'.

We need to rethink and restructure the government to make it 'much leaner and focused' and require regular reviews to insure that each department, agency and function of the government is what, through our Congress, we require for national defense and management.

A few "Cabinet" level agencies I strongly believe should be eliminated or realigned or duties restricted:

The Department of State --- We need to severely restrict the 'welfare to other countries' controlled through this department. Blind unrestricted budgets approved by Congress to be used to 'support other nations' that ends up fostering (1) corrupt governments and (2) social positions abroad - must end.

[We do not need to be the 'piggy bank' for international social efforts, such as 'birth control', sex changes and abortions!! --- I do support assistance to 'allies' who help in our defense through a forward shield and support treaties, but it needs more oversight by Congress!]

The Department of Education --- Education is a State Function! Let the State's establish the proper teaching method for their citizens and let economics (companies will not stay in or move to a state without 'good schools') versus unions set the tone for such things as salaries, impacts on state economy, etc.. We are using schools as agents of social change, even 'child care stations', rather than knowledge building and developing citizens. I do acknowledge the need for 'broad standards' across the nation, but that does not require a 'bloated' federal beauracracy. The logic that education affects all states and therefore is a federal responsibility, could be made about virtually any and all governmental actions and is not in keeping with our Founders. [My vote is to fundamentally eliminate this Department or make it a small 'policy group' and to sell the buildings they presently reside in to help reduce the national debt --- as we should with all reductions in government.]

The Department of Labor --- Do not see the need for this Department! I suggest the States assume total control and determine 'fair practices' within their States. Salary / Benefit issues that might give one State 'an edge' over another should be resolved at the state government level and not let one state's 'accepted living standards' drive pricing in another state with lesser living standards. If a 'policy group' is deemed necessary, it should be small!!

The Department of Health and Human Resources --- Get it out of the Insurance Business and cut---'way back'!! I would suggest that the agencies that oversee Drugs and Medical Equipment evolutions, need to have less 'buracracy' and more 'ability to work faster' as the palethra of new drug and medical equipment are created and need approval to 'enter the marketplace'.

The Department of Energy --- It's policies appear to have halted more energy development than created and delayed drilling / exploration efforts for years, in order to appease 'environmentalists' or other nations we support --- who need to protect their ability to 'control' oil and gas pricing for their benefit --- usually not their peoples benefit, rather that of their ledership.

The Department of Justice [Believe the duties expected and the management of this agency should come through the Congress and not the White House! The White House has its own attorney and we need such a national structure also, but under 'our representatives' --- Congress.]

The Department of Defense --- This department should include the operatons of the Armed Forces and include the efforts currently managed by the Departments of Veterans Affairs; and Department of Homeland Security --- including the operations of our boarder security forces.]

Environmental Protection Agency [Useless --- A tool of the 'far left' environmentalist movement. Suggest severe downsizing!/prefer elimination!]

I would hope that a Convention of States called under Article 5, would also review the need for 'term limitations' within our Federal Court system and the United States Senate and House --- limiting Congress Senate in service, a move that will allow all of our representatives to focus / concentrate on performing the 'service' they are undertaking rather than 'building war chests for their next election' -- more in line with the Founder's published desires --- 'service' that was "short" and rules established that would not exempt them

from being affected by the rules established. Today they exempt themselves from many 'rules' established for 'the people' --- they should (must) apply to the government at all levels, including Congress.

Simultaneously --- The Revenue / Tax System "must" be overhauled --- simplified!! Implement a fair Tax concept!! The tax would be based upon type products purchased and be a % of the cost – the total % being a combination of a federal % and a state / local %.

Savings in the size and number of documents currently published would be huge! Legal fee savings would be even greater. While I anticipate objections from the legal and accounting professions, that will economically be affected, this should / must not be delayed and should include elimination of the IRS!! Thanks to technology, the taxing transactions could be handled on a daily basis and require virtually 'no overhead'. The savings in one year from the significant reduction in the IRS, and the buildings 'sold off', just might be able to make another 'significant dent' in our national debt!!

A Few Closing Challenges

Study --- Not just while you are 'in school'; but throughout your lives! You will see and experience much change as the years go by --- stay current and informed. Don't let others make your decisions --- 'kept up to date'!!

Trust Wisely --- Don't accept everything you hear or read --- examine, discuss with those you trust, and always 'think things through' to conclusion. "New" does not mean good, relevant or necessary --- just new!

Pick your Friends Wisely --- Friends are an emotional necessity and good for each of us --- some will agree with you and others may think you are 'nuts'.

Pick them for their support, counsel (not necessary that it always be sound or in agreement with yours), and to be there for you as you face challenges, the trials and celebrations of life.

The most important friend you will select is the one that you will share your life with as your spouse --- make sure you agree regarding (1) the children you will raise; (2) your religious views; and (3) that you want 'to save each other's souls' and those of your children!!

Love --- Work daily on the 'love' that brought you and your spouse together. There will be many challenges and your spouse should always be 'up front' in your thoughts and actions. She/He, must know daily that you love them and that each day is made special by them and the sharing of your lives.

Most Importantly --- Seek the Kingdom of God!! God also wants to hear from you regularly, even more than 'once a day'; but throughout the day! Know God --- Trust God --- and do all in your power to comply with his only two commands from Him: Love Him!! And Love Each Other!!

Our Lord's visitation to Jerusalem before He was 'crucified', foretold of what would happen if Jerusalem did not change its ways; and, has also been for me a notice / warning that there is a date and time of my death!

I pray you will know him when he visits you to 'bring you back to Him' or 'secure your relationship with Him' --- that you will sense He visits you --- and that you will respond to His visits?

His visits can only happen, when you are open to receive Him! You will find it through prayer --- so I suggest frequent short 'thanks', along with your requests for 'help' --- throughout each day.

The 'best' times to hear and receive Him are during prayer --- when having Him central in your thoughts and actions. Let Him know at least twice a day --- when you wake and before you sleep --- Prayer doesn't need to be complex

--- just a simple "I love you" and a "Please watch over Me".

He Loves You and I Love You!! ----- Granddad / Dziadek



Nancy, John and friends from Rumia and Mikołow at the Beatification of Blessed Father Jerzy Popiełuszko

GLOSSARY

Belief --- An opinion or conviction which gives one confidence in a truth, existence, or reliability of something/someone, although done so without absolute proof that one is right in doing so; and/or, having confidence in the truth or existence of something not immediately susceptible to proof.

Consistency --- Being firm and steadfast in adherence to principles and a pattern of behavior.

Courage --- mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.

Dignity --- An individual's bearing, conduct, or speech indicative of self-respect or appreciation of the formality or gravity of an occasion/situation.

Discern --- To perceive by the sight or some other sense or by the intellect; to distinguish mentally; recognize as distinct or different; or to distinguish or discriminate.

Faith --- Will be used in context of confidence/trust in a person, in their ability; as belief not based solely on proof --- more likely a hypothesis that is substantiated by fact; and or doctrines or teachings of a system of religion, such the Christian faith --- the Jewish faith.

Freedom --- The state of being free or at liberty rather than in confinement or under physical restraint; external control; interference; or regulation.

Integrity --- adherence to moral and ethical principles --- the soundness of moral character and honesty.

Liberty --- The value of individuals to have control over their own actions --- conceptions of liberty articulate the relationship of individuals to society in different ways— relating to life under a social contract such as the American Constitution. Active exercise of 'freedom' and 'rights' are essential to liberty.

Loyalty --- Faithfulness to commitments or obligations; as well as, adherence to a sovereign, government, leader or cause.

Moral --- Pertaining to, conforming to, or concerned with the principles or rules of right conduct or the distinction between right and wrong, conforming to the rules of right conduct.

Patience --- Bearing of provocation, annoyance, misfortune, or pain, without complaint, loss of temper, irritation, or the like; or having the willingness to suppress restlessness or annoyance through steady perseverance; being even-tempered; and diligence when working with others.

Patriotism --- Having a cultural attachment to one's homeland --- a devotion to one's country and a willingness to defend it!

Right --- To be in accordance with what is good, proper, or just; in conformity with fact, reason, truth, or some standard or principle; correct in judgment, opinion, or action; fitting or appropriate.

Rights --- Legal, social, or ethical principles of entitlement; fundamental normative rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people, according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory.

Role --- A socially expected behavior pattern usually determined by an individual's status in a particular society.

Salvation --- Being saved or protected from harm or being saved or delivered from some dire situation. In religion, salvation is stated as the saving of the soul from sin and its consequences. "Salvation" distinguishes a notion common to men and women of a wide range of cultural traditions.

Sanctity --- Usually devoted to a service or use, worthy of veneration and entitled to reverence and respect, in this reflection the term will focus on something unassailable, inviolable --- highly valued and important.

Strength --- Possessing the quality of being strong --- having the power to resist attack --- impregnability; and/or the power to resist strain or stress --- durability; or the ability to maintain a moral or intellectual position firmly.

Trust --- Assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something --- one in which confidence is/can be placed.

Trustworthiness --- a charge or duty imposed in faith or confidence or as a condition of some relationship; something committed or entrusted to one to be used or cared for in the interest of another.

Truth --- Conformity with fact or reality; verity --- the truth of a statement; a verified or indisputable fact, proposition, principle, or the like, such as mathematical truths; and actuality or actual existence.

Wrong --- Not in accordance with what is morally right or good; deviating from truth or fact; or not correct in action, judgment, opinion, method.



Nancy and John Roth w/Guardian Angel

About the Author

John's careers have included both a military component and a business leader/owner component as outlined in this book. He started his military career as a young Private and retired 45 years later as a General Officer.

In 'retirement' he continues to be active in the work of 'loving one's neighbors' and 'spoiling grandchildren'. His two greatest loves are his family (sharing time and memories with his Nancy) and country -- - both America and Poland.

All are guided and strengthened through his faith in both God and His Country --- the people he has and is privileged to know and serve.