

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 nose-y. 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.

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