

# The Seamless Web: *Minnesota's New Education System*

## 6 The Primary Principle of Freedom

Our free nation has been successful largely because it was founded on the principles described in the Declaration of Independence. Do we wish to remain a free nation? Then we must continue to adhere to these principles. This chapter consists of an explanation of the first and foremost principle of our free nation – natural law.

The Declaration refers to it as “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God.” It forms the philosophical beginning for its statement of freedom for our nation.

Natural law is the precept that there are genuine, universal moral standards and that these moral precepts apply to all people. Such moral principles include justice, equality, the golden rule, the importance of protecting innocent human life, honesty, the importance of marriage, and the right of private property. Natural law is the principle, for example, that murder is wrong regardless of the culture, the nation or the religion of the people involved. It is also the principle that protecting innocent human life is right regardless of culture, nation, religion etc. For every moral precept, there is a right side and wrong side; natural law recognizes both. This universal moral code can be summarized in the admonition of Emmanuel Kant who said we treat others as we would have them treat us.

The late Harvard psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg, spent his career studying this universal moral code. He concluded that all cultures share these same overall moral precepts, although some cultures and governments do better at following them than others. Kohlberg rejected the notion that moral precepts are primarily cultural and relative. These codes are basically the same for all people, he said.<sup>46</sup>

Notice that the Declaration of Independence says nothing about “Judeo-Christian” morality. If the moral code is universal, as natural law says, then followers of Christianity or Judaism or any other religion, simply recognize (hopefully) and advocate the universal moral code that exists for all people. If natural law is true, then no religion has a corner on the shared moral values. It is the common property of all religions and all people. Once again, some religions may do better than others in recognizing and articulating the universal moral code.

According to natural law, governmental law should be “discovered,” not made. That is, good government, as it relates to moral issues, consists of discovering the universal moral principles that relate to a particular issue and then formulating governmental laws accordingly. The founders of our nation consistently viewed law-making in this light.

The primary reason the far left went to great lengths in an attempt to stop the ratification of Justice Clarence Thomas to the U. S. Supreme Court was his stated adherence to natural law. The left cannot tolerate the concept of universal moral standards because it wants to redefine those standards to suit its preferred lifestyles and goals.

The Declaration of Independence begins by making a strong statement in recognition of natural law. Why is that? The reason is that natural law is the most fundamental principle of a free society. The primary purpose of government – protecting the fundamental, inherent, God-given rights of all people – can only be defended if universal principles of right and wrong undergird these fundamental rights.

The Nuremberg war trials were based on the principle of natural law. How else can it be judged that what people did, while following orders by their own government, was actually criminal activity? The Nuremberg war trials clarified that the highest law is not the law made by a particular government. The trials clarified that the universal principles of law, natural law, are to be followed by all governments and by all people.

It is not by accident that the core curriculum of Minnesota's revolution in education – cultural diversity – is a direct attack on natural law. The diversity belief-system holds that all notions of morality are culturally determined; that they are fundamentally irrational and are relative to culture.

If morality is strictly cultural, then murder, theft, prostitution, and slavery are wrong only if a particular culture doesn't approve of such things – an absurd position. People who subscribe to such a position are radicals in every sense of the word. Yet this is exactly the position that is embraced by the new education core curriculum.

Genuine education is dedicated to the pursuit of truth. Before a nation can be free, it must first know the truth. Our task is to teach our children the truth. The proposition that our nation was built on natural law is true. As we will see, the education reformers can tolerate anything – except the truth.

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<sup>46</sup> Lawrence Kohlberg, "The Cognitive-Developmental Approach to Moral Education," *Phi Delta Kappan*, June 1995.