

Loss of virtue explains the mess at the VA Department

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by [Randy Bright](#)



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Before I began my company in 1988, I worked for an architectural firm as a project architect. During my tenure there, a project that had been completed by one of the other project architects was handed over to me to “fix.”

We learned about the problem as workers laid out the building footprint for the foundation. The building had an irregular shape, and they began laying out the perimeter from corner to corner. But when they made their way back to the beginning point, they discovered that the corners, which should have met at exactly the same, were several feet apart.

That was the early days of using CAD (computer aided drafting), and dimensions were calculated by the computer instead of being calculated manually, so it seemed odd that the dimensions were so far off.

As I began to dig into the drawings on the computer, I finally discovered what had happened. Dimensions that should have been automatically calculated had been purposely edited by the original project architect. That person had been promised a huge bonus if the drawings were completed by a certain date, but during the time that the drawings were being done, the building size had been revised.

With CAD, lines can be “stretched,” and any dimension that is attached to the line will automatically recalculate. The same system works equally well for irregular shapes, it just takes a little more time to do the procedure. To save time and to receive the bonus, the project architect edited the dimensions manually, “completed” the project, collected the bonus, and immediately left the firm, claiming later that it was the architectural firm that had done a poor job on the drawings.

As the Veterans Administration debacle has been unfolding this week, we are seeing a similar lack of integrity.

It is becoming more and more clear that many veterans lives have been placed at risk, and many have already lost their lives, simply because VA workers could not collect their bonus without falsifying their records.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with offering bonuses for a job well done and for a job done on time. It is only one of the market forces that works well and has accelerated technological progress and contributed to a growing economy and an increasing GDP.

When it doesn't work is when there is a lack of virtue and morals, and this is exactly what our Founders warned us about in regard to our Constitution and our Republic.

As Skousen wrote in the book *The 5000 Year Leap*, "George Washington later praised the American Constitution as the "palladium of human rights," but pointed out that it could survive only "so long as there shall remain any virtue in the body of the people."

He also quoted an historian with this statement: "In a Republic, however, each man must somehow be persuaded to submerge his personal wants into the greater good of the whole. This willingness of the individual to sacrifice his private interest for the good of the community – such as patriotism or love of country – the ...eighteenth century mind was thoroughly convinced that a popularly based government "cannot be supported without virtue."

Modern governments and urban planners often speak about creating "community," promoting affordable housing, mass transit, walkability, sustainability and an abundance of other terms, all of which depend on government subsidies. The sacrifice that generally they seek is one made to bend to the will of those who believe in improving the lives of the masses through wealth redistribution in the form of taxation and regulation.

In and of themselves, many of the projects these people seek would be worthy projects if they did not involve the confiscation of property, overregulation of property, confiscation of wealth in the form of high taxes, fees, expenditures toward unnecessary studies, or outright violation of property rights. But for those without virtue or morals, these things seem right when they are clearly wrong.

In the case of the VA, these transgressions were outrageously performed by people who no longer had a conscience, and when their acts were discovered, the nation rose up in outrage.

But other wrongs, like the ones I just mentioned, are somehow not considered as outrageous, at least not until certain individuals feel victimized. This is because we as a nation are slowly losing our virtues and morals, and that is because we are systemically rejecting God and the church in our communities. For that reason, why should we be surprised when we see corruption in our government and elsewhere?

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