Journal Five

I would define a good citizen as someone who does what is right and doesn’t hurt others and stands up for what’s right. I think an example of a good citizen would be Henry David Thoreau, he started off as a school teacher but he left his job as a teacher because he refused to whip the children, he later went to work for his brothers pencil company. His brother had passed away and Thoreau has taken it pretty hard and later secluded himself to a reduced lifestyle in a cabin. He wrote an essay called The Civil Disobedience it was about the night he got put in jail for not supporting the government on slavery. This is similar to what happened to Martin Luther King, Jr., he wrote a letter while he was in jail as well. I believe that both Thoreau’s and Martin Luther King Jr. shared some of the same thoughts towards Government and the power the Government abused. Thoreau said he thinks of the men of military as machines just like they are wooden men they don’t think for themselves. Both men fought against slavery. Thoreau defines a good citizen as someone who is earnest, has virtue and morals he also goes on to say “a wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority” Thoreau wanted a legislative that understood the value of trades and of the freedom of our union. This is a man who definitely didn’t agree with our government but more importantly he was very frustrated how the people were followers and not educating themselves into bettering our government and to take a stand for what was wrong.
My personal philosophy regarding my individual rights would have to be that I feel very lucky for the life of freedom I have, especially after the past readings and studies we have just done. I am very fortunate to live in a country where I do feel like I’m free; I’m free to choose where I live, what religion I believe in. What I wear or eat. My family and I live in a country free of fear and that can easily be taken for granted sometimes how good we really do have it. There are many certain responsibilities that come with being free but for most of us on a day to day basis it’s as simple as just to obey the rules or the laws so no else gets hurt, the laws that are set in place so that everyone can enjoy their freedoms as well. Our responsibilities have been set in place by our government, law makers, legislatives and us as well when we vote. All responsibilities or laws require enforcement, that’s how we all remain safe. My Best friend is a police officer and her job is not easy but it’s an important job and it keeps us all safe whether it be on the road or in our homes. I do believe that the United States has certain responsibilities as a nation because we were founded on certain principles of freedom, justice, democracy, and tolerance. We said bring us your tired, your hungry you’re poor. We set up to have a country of diversity to make an equal world, not to turn them into slaves. We promote and protect our values on to the rest of the world. We made China set up a government and a Declaration of Independence similar to ours and we are doing it in the war we are fighting right now in Iraq, Do we have enough resources to keep the world safe is a very complicated question for me, I am a little torn. Sometimes when I see our own citizens without jobs or food or homeless and I hear all that we are doing for other countries it irritates me a little but then I will see a commercial on children in other countries starving so bad you can see their bones and then I’m glad we are doing what we can to help them. So yes I think it’s great we are always helping other countries around the world but maybe it’s time just for a moment to refocus on our country and pay down the deficit and make sure American citizens have jobs, food and shelter so that we can strengthen our economy and then become stronger too once again help other countries. I wonder if we are just helping them for selfish reasons for example gasoline. And what if we did use up all of our resources and had nothing left what would happen to our freedom? What if another country tried to take over and harm us? It would be great if we could make world peace and if another country asks us for help and we can help them of course why not, in a perfect world it would be nice if we could all come together and stop the hate and wars and prejudice, I just don’t see this happening anytime soon with all that’s gone on in history there are a lot of people that are still scorned by these horrible events, and this creates more hatred from generation to generation.

Questions:

. Using your reading from last week (Thoreau & King) as a jump off point, please think about what a “citizen” is. How would you define a “good citizen” of the United States? How does Thoreau define a good citizen? Would Martin Luther King agree with your definition or with Thoreau's?

2. Explain your personal philosophy regarding your individual rights, freedoms, morality and responsibilities, especially to the law, your community, and country. What responsibilities come with being free? Who decides what these responsibilities are? Do these responsibil
ities require enforcement? If so, by whom?

3. What is your belief with regard to the (U.S.) role in the world today and in the years to come? Do you believe that the U.S. has a responsibility, as a nation founded on the principles of freedom, justice, democracy and tolerance, to promote and protect these values around the world? Why or why not? Do we have enough resources to keep the world safe? Is it our responsibility to make every effort to bring peace to other countries? What if they ask us for help?