

Symptoms - 9/12/2009

It's no secret Our Country is in trouble. We have so many problems, it's tough to know where to start. For me, one way to get my arms around them is to view them as symptoms – symptoms of an underlying disease. And it seems to me – as it no doubt has seemed to many of you – that where we're at now is the result of having drifted for a long long time away from our Constitution. Away from a government where responsibility was placed in the hands of its Citizens. At one time, WE THE PEOPLE really were the Government, and we relied upon ourselves to take initiative, to think independently, and to be responsible. But as we drifted, we accepted more and more dependency upon Government – less responsibility for ourselves – and independent thinking has been largely replaced by political correctness.

We've slipped so far and for such a long time, we can't possibly right this overnight. We can't possibly right this in a year. But to have any chance to right this at all, to avert total catastrophe, we must change the attitudes of our elected officials, both here and in Washington. Failing that, the ride we're on may well take us someplace from which there is no return.

But let's say enough politicians have witnessed this groundswell of concern across Our Country – at rallies like this, and the BIG ONE in Washington, at all the Tea Parties, the Town Hall Meetings, in letters to editors and talk-show appearances – let's say enough politicians have had their eyes peeled open sufficiently to realize just how badly they've overreached! Then even though the majority's leadership threatens the "Nuclear Option," maybe the votes on government-run Health Care and Cap & Trade, maybe those votes won't quite add up. Not that other issues aren't equally pressing, but let's say our efforts to date are successful enough that despite all the name-calling and bullying from places high and low, we momentarily halt this slide into Socialism – that we stop these two bills. How then do we claw our way back?

That will only be done by each of us and our leaders re-committing to the inspired principles enshrined in the original Founding Documents. To make such a thing happen, we must continue to dissect every bill our legislators would prefer to rubber stamp – to keep holding their feet to the fire at every opportunity! And some of us must consider seeking public office, if only to help spearhead debate.

We must endeavor to fight the good fight and seize the initiative in ALL of Life's struggles. To make the

best of them, and thus make the best of our selves. Circumstances be damned! That doesn't mean we should refuse help if we're kicked to the curb – because we won't always succeed. Nor should we refuse to help others. Help offered freely is a blessing. Help extorted is a curse.

And then we must educate. We must strive to set strong examples for our children. We must place programs in schools to re-ignite an interest, and a fervor, and a deep abiding respect for the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. And in places like Bristol, maybe parade committees could distribute these documents themselves – make doing so a tradition! And have “Town-Crier” floats with readings from the Declaration, or re-enactments of the Continental Congress as they hammered out the Constitution!

Because the Founding documents are brilliant. They are timeless – the very light that illuminates that “Shining City on a hill.” These documents are not, as some of our misguided brethren suggest, ancient runes of some bygone irrelevant era. They are perhaps more important today than they ever have been!

Renewing our commitment to the Founding Documents is the single greatest mission of our

generation, and the next generation, and the generation after them, and the generation after them, and after them, and after them. Vigilance, “Eternal vigilance, is the price of Liberty.” For too long we’ve slept, distracted by the vast entertainments offered up by technology – amongst other things – but now we really must Wake Up: Those who’ve awakened must Wake Up their neighbors; and they must Wake Up their neighbors – be they black, brown, yellow, red, or white. We must Wake Up to our imminent Jeopardy, and then we must dedicate the REST OF OUR LIVES to the vigilant tending of that Precious Light. A good dose of Vigilance – informed by our Founding Documents – is all the vaccine this Country needs!

The task ahead is immense, but we’re Americans, and surmounting difficult odds runs in our veins. And take heart in this: Our State did not immediately ratify the US Constitution. Our Rhode Island Forefathers waited until the “Bill of Rights” was assured, because they were wary of unbridled power in Washington. So let’s renew our rich heritage, and let’s stand tall like the Rhode Island Red and call out at the top of our lungs to our Countrymen: WAKE UP!