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A PATRIOT FOR TODAY

by Joseph Britton

Patriot, upon first hearing this word from a good friend, I was mildly confused. She had just returned from her participation in one of the national presidential conventions and was beaming with enthusiasm. God Bless America had brought many of her political colleagues to tears and she was the one who sang it. Now, on this late summer Seattle eve, she commenced to do the same before our group of dinner friends.

Her emotional outpouring of patriotism brought up mixed feelings within many of us: fanaticism, true purpose, the far right, idealism, intolerance of others' views, community sharing, war, courage, narrow-mindedness, openness, control, freedom, horror, joy, destruction, and brotherly and sisterly love. What is patriotism then?

Patriotism, "love and loyal support for one's country", World Book Encyclopedia. Taking a fresh look at patriotism there didn't seem to be anything inherently wrong, disturbing, or divisive within the standard definition. After all, to love is a gift from the universe, and loyal support for the soil that feeds you is only natural. In view of the Declaration of Rights, within the Declaration of Independence, it states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Surely our forefathers believed in an America where people would walk hand in hand in this beautiful land, in freedom, in peace, respecting, supporting, and loving one another while fulfilling their chosen destiny.

Later, I returned to my convention singing friend, Lela Smith. Lela's an astute woman, who stands proudly and gracefully on her own two feet, speaks with directness and straight from the heart, ardently supports the well-being of others and fervently sings about patriotism across America. "Why, God Bless America? Aren't you tugging at the emotional seams that in our country's near past have torn people apart?"

Lela, "God Bless America" was written by Irving Berlin during World War II to keep America together. Kate Smith, who popularized the song, sang it on the radio, in clubs, associations, in addition to wherever the U.S. troops were stationed. She mobilized the people. It was a rallying call to keep the country together. The song engenders a love and appreciation for the rich beauty and freedom of America and the spirit of God that has blessed it. Today the fabric of America is fraying. People have forgotten the God of creation that brought us

together in this wonderful land. Patriotism is not about war and killing. It's about supporting, bonding and holding one another together. This country is falling apart. In union there is strength. Together we can conquer anything: violence, racial/ethnic discrimination, drugs, poverty... In such patriotic songs as Oh Beautiful For Spacious Skies, Battle Hymn Of The Republic, and America The Beautiful we find important reminders of who we are and where we have come from."

Prior to the signing of the Declaration of Independence, our country's ancestors portrayed a sense of patriotism while defending and growing their families, farmsteads, and communities.

At the end of the 19th century, a powerful personal declaration, shining with the vision of a new social and spiritual order, came forth from this land. "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." * As a child, it was often uncomfortable to repeat, or mumble, this pledge everyday before class began, before sports games, before the principal spoke in the auditorium, and so on. I also don't remember anyone ever discussing it's relevance or significance.

What is today's flag that represents today's republic where liberty and justice prevails for all? To give meaning to this pledge a look at the word states might be helpful. Certainly the idea of a body politic, especially one constituting a nation comes to mind first. But a state is also 'a condition or mode of existence',

*As a note in history, the "pledge of allegiance" was written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy in its original and slightly different form as a 400 year commemoration of the discovery of America. In 1942, Congress combined the "pledge of allegiance" with the use of the flag. And finally, in 1954, the phrase "under God" was added, thereby, giving us its present form.

compliments of Daniel Webster. The state we mortals experience would necessarily include the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual condition; our whole being. A republic, in turn, is defined as a political order held together by elected representatives. To bring this back to the self, republic could symbolize our elected inner representatives, i.e., our conscious mind and its preferred ways of being. Our personal presentation is our flag, that which represents our choice of who we are to the world. The 'allegiance pledge' in this context would therefore be to thine own self; One nation - all of myself, under God, indivisible - whole, with liberty and justice for all - freedom and fairness towards all parts of myself. In turning inward, I accept who I am and vow to move towards wholeness.

On a larger order, beyond the self, 'Is the democratic and patriotic

theme of a republic congruent throughout our society, and in turn, our lives?' In probing this question, one must first ascertain, 'Where is the power held in our society? and who are our elected representatives?' At first glance, one might consider the government. Certainly there is power in prioritizing national budgetary programs, along with periodic demonstrations of the civil and military use of force. On the ground floor of society though, power is channeled through the flow of money and its brother information. The seats of these ruling siblings are found in the corporation. But who is controlling this power and who are the elected representatives?... the board of directors? board of trustees? stockholders? The corporation is, for the most part, a self-appointed monarchy run by selected officials who hire helpers to turn a profit. There is no one in this spacious skies country not affected by corporations either by way of services and products produced, or more directly through employment. The trade unions tend to be power limiters at the most. In the corporate order of life then, to what does one pledge allegiance to? and does liberty and justice prevail?

Certainly for liberty and justice, we find in America today as many employer/employee working conditions and relationships as there are states of awareness; from the shady sweatshop operations hidden in the shadows of the inner city to the breathes of fresh air of highly efficient, intuitively run companies like the Heritage Institute of Seattle that trains teachers how to create enriched learning environments within the schoolroom. Regarding allegiance to a company, for the employee, it's often an elusive, ever-changing flow that yearns to take form in heart and body. For the employee, this brings forth some important self-introspection, 'As working for this company is a major part of my Earthly experience, to what company ideal am I to wholeheartedly align with?'

What are some of the societal forms that are gathering power, coalescing energy, that the worker may choose from? There's an ancient Chinese proverb that states, "If things continue going in the same direction, they'll end up where they're heading." Or as the philosopher Theodor Schwenk has stated, "Flow wants to realize itself regardless of the surrounding medium." In ten years hence, the role of the government will have shifted towards providing three main services: 1. upholding the laws as guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, along with safety and environmental standards 2. defending the nation 3. providing advisory services for the social welfare of the country e.g. education, business, and health. Managing, selling and providing the services will be in the hands of the corporations. Corporate power flows will have increased, with a secondary effect of a stronger community tax base.

Moving in concert with this ever-increasing power build-up will be 3 primary corporate business forms creating work:

1. FREE AGENT CAPITALISM - In this system everyone, company owners and independent workers alike, are buyers and sellers of products and services. On a modern mythological level this would be like Luke Skywalker of Star Wars providing his services, for a good price, to Princess Leia to accomplish her mission of destroying the emperor's flagship. Once he clearly sees the true and worthy purpose of aligning with her mission, he becomes a super-human overcoming insurmountable odds to achieve his goal (i.e. their goal). That's the main idea.

This corporate form will be run by a small core of buyers/decision makers who contract with other agents to sell their products, which are also made by contracted free agents. The agent offers his product, i.e. him/herself, and agrees upon a price for an allotted amount of time, with the buyer/owner. No financial perquisites, such as insurance, vacation pay, maternity leave and a pension plan, in this agreement. Its appeal though, will be to the independent, solo, creative personalities who don't mind, and often prefer, changes in work environments. Their specialized skills will also attract slightly higher contract price offers thereby allowing for a little more freedom in personally directed financial investments. Even in the highly touted and culturally entrenched life-time employment environment of Japan, more than 20% of today's company employees are free lance contract workers and temps, A Bilingual Guide to the Japanese Economy, NHK Overseas Broadcasting Dept., 1995.

2. ENLIGHTENED MONARCHY CORPORATIONS - they produce your every day products and services for the public, but in-house, they are recognized as a full service financial management company that provides the monetary safeguards, and often social planning packages preferred by the employee. The benefits will include consulting services for the employee in which the agreed upon options are paid for by the employer, such as: health, home, life and auto insurance, vacation, retirement, fitness programs, and to a certain degree, investment opportunities. The person attracted to this corporate model prefers the security of longer term employment, is enriched by the process of growing together in solidarity and unity with his/her colleagues, or may feel emotionally or mentally burdened by making these life-direction financial and social decisions.

Of course there's a price to be paid for these services and security. As part of their employment covenant will be an acceptance by the employee to make, what may amount to at times, substantial financial sacrifices during, but not limited to, times of corporate profit downturns. Most noticeable though, will be a rather low salary base as the company will be covering both the costs of the perquisites and the in-house financial/social consulting services that are indirectly charged to the workers.

3. NON-PROFIT CORPORATIONS will form a stabilizing third leg of society's corporate power triad. The non-profits will be non-taxable companies whose work-force will be mostly volunteers. The form will look much like what you see today but the primary function of all non-profits will move specifically and noticeably towards helping the needy - society's mentally, emotionally, physically and financially underprivileged.

A major portion of the non-profit's resources, i.e. people, money, and services, will go into programs that directly provide support for those in our society who sincerely need a helping hand that they may live in dignity. The function and purpose of the non-profits... to take care of the social welfare needs of our communities, will be demanded, and in turn, supported by society. Initially, many of the lucrative government welfare and entitlement programs bid out to the private sector will be quickly taken by the free agent and enlightened monarchy corporations as their ability to efficiently process commodities (in this case people) will already be in place. All non-profits will eventually become involved, including religious, media, educational and service institutions of every persuasion. Engaged spirituality, a form of social activism, will become the norm. Church and State will remain separate but Church and society will join hands. Within schools, humanitarian work will be taught and carried out by students as part of their educational and life preparation and maturing process. This humanitarian work of the non-profits will symbolize a reclaiming of responsibility, and in turn, power that will be placed in the hands of the citizens and their respective communities. It will release people from, what at times has been, an unhealthy dependency on the government and thereby require a heightened social awareness and involvement by the populace. Democracy will be strengthened in the process.

How will these necessary, yet often expensive projects, be funded, especially with the shrinking of the U.S. Government's budget?

The non-profits will become highly sophisticated marketing and fund-raising machines. The media will play a major role as the carrier through which power, in the form of information and money, will travel. The non-profits will have their own products; Cyber-Bibles that come alive with 3-D Hi-Vision interactive parables...talk with Paul and ask him about his conversion. Worldwide tele-conferenced peace-prayer meetings in your home...anti-violence, relaxation and enhanced communication product headers will flash periodically across your flat screen cyber-wall. Cyber-Tours of America's best Organic City Gardens of the Homeless...followed by a call of support for their environmentally friendly wares, all brought to you on Cyber-Green Channel.

The non-profits will find their product niche, exploit it, and rechannel

the money into their social programs. Those that are attracted to this corporate model will be society's helpers: monks, social workers, teachers, barterers, and the idealistic. Many of the workers will be part-timers and the wages, for most, will be minimal or non-existent. The non-profits though, will be major players in the harnessing of power.

Within this three-some of free agent, enlightened monarchy and non-profit corporations, there will, of course, be variations and hybrids... but who will succeed?

We may find a glimpse of successful strategies that are forming by referring to some recent comments made by Moses Joseph, president of B-Tree Company, "Open books, open doors, business organizations that will have instincts of a karate champion (note: of which Moses Joseph is), with each component reacting instinctively, swiftly, autonomously, accurately and dependably to whatever exigency might arise," INC, Sept 96. To further this model, the worker's hara sense will be highly developed. Hara is a Japanese term referring to the power center of the body located in the stomach area. To possess a hara sense is to have a highly developed intuitive ability to know what is the present state of affairs, what needs to be done, how to do it, and what others are feeling about it with a minimum amount of speaking and wasteful action...an efficiency within knowing.

This will require a bit of training and fine tuning, but the techniques to develop these abilities have been around for millennia and are now in a form readily accessible to innovative business leaders.*

Blending the inner and outer work environment

There's another element in this equation of success of which, if ignored, will fragment, dilute and weaken the energetic thrust of the company. Refinement. Personal refinement of the worker, and company policy refinement towards all sellers, buyers, and providers, of which includes: employees, customers, and all natural resources of the earth.....such as you might find in a taxi company.

Taxi company?!! Surely the public image of taxi drivers in the U.S. is a bunch of crude, disrespectful, ill-mannered, over-worked, low wage

*In her well documented article, "Intuition in Business", Intuition Magazine, issue 5, Barbara Schultz, a researcher, trainer and business consultant from the San Francisco Bay area, has provided us with an update of how intuition training is effectively being used in several of our nation's top companies.

earners, who are often late in reporting to the job. The same has been true in Japan...until Mr. Sadao Aoki, then Chairman of MK Taxi of Kyoto, came along. Back in the 1960's, when contemplating this problem for his new company, he realized that first, for most drivers, their living environment was sub-standard. He proceeded to build some inexpensive apartment buildings for company singles and families. The next stage was to counsel them in how to buy a house, along with increasing their wages to make this possible. Once their physical environment was secure the drivers were taught how to be polite, friendly and poised. This included such conscious actions as stopping to pick up people who were trying to catch a taxi while in a wheel-chair, once considered too time consuming, or serving in medical emergencies as many of the drivers are First Aid certified. Mr. Aoki then realized that something even more fundamental needed to be taught...respect for your parents and your family. As he knew, when respect was graciously given to the other family members and the home hearth was warm, it would improve the drivers' performance and increase their personal happiness. Along with this, a wives' and a children's association were created to teach family values, and to develop their own personal self-esteem. This family relationship growth process uplifted the driver/provider and created a foundation of support from which he could better perform his work duties. Next, was the issue of self-respect.

The Empress Michiko of Japan is known for her tasteful, elegant, yet simple, clothing styles. Mr. Aoki approached her personal designer. "Would you kindly create a fashionable uniform appropriate for my taxi drivers?" The response was basically, 'You're kidding, I want no part of this.' He approached her again and again receiving the same, 'No way!' Finally she said, 'Okay', and soon Mr. Aoki would have his designer uniforms...with jackets, pants, shoes, socks, belt, shirt and tie. Tourists began having their picture taken with the drivers. Next, many of the drivers were taught English to cater to the international tourist that was now coming in large numbers to Kyoto. For the driver, completing the English training also meant an increase in his wages; more value-added skills to complement the enhanced image. As an upgrade in company image, specially covered MK Taxi stands were constructed to protect the waiting passengers from the changing weather. At the Osaka bullet train platform, an MK VIP waiting and service room was built as a refuge of peace and calm from the onslaught of train passengers. Personal image and company image had now been synergistically combined. Today, MK Taxi has a proud fleet of drivers and their 650 taxis. In response to his great success, Mr. Aoki has stated that, "It is not technique that is so important, but an attitude of gratitude and appreciation."*

Coming back across the ocean, innovation has been taken to another level through the work of Gifford Pinchot and Libba Pinchot, authors of the book, *The Intelligent Organization*. In the corporate world Gifford Pinchot brings together highly creative, yet often quite

disparate, abilities and personalities of entrepreneurial employees to further the cause of innovation through team-work. As Libba Pinchot pointed out, "Due to the complexity of projects and global marketing, no one person can pay attention to all the variables."

Team-work dynamics is, of course, good for the company, but also for the employee. High level innovation requires the development of personal intuitive abilities to access, download and interpret new ideas and concepts from, and upload back into, a powerful, creative collective team psyche.

A very Jungian concept indeed, but Pinchot's work implies the stretching of this envelope further yet by encouraging teams working together as intuitive neural networks. These synergistic networks provide a deep well from which to draw the untold treasures of their collective unconscious. As computers are being networked for ever-increasing information processing, humans too are being networked to draw from the unlimited source of old proven ways and yet to be activated thoughts...the collective unconscious of humanity.

As these pathways to innovation may well be standard in ten years a new dynamic between employer and employee that responds quickly to change in a mutually supportive way is needed is needed now.

*Mr. Sadao Aoki has recently stepped down to allow his brother, Hideo Aoki to assume the position of Vice-Chairman along with Mr. Maegawa becoming the new Chairman.

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, rights we demand for ourselves and our future generations... will our power brokers, our corporations, who are devoid of our elected representatives, secure them?

A corporation is inherently part of a larger community, physically based on a parcel of earth, though some have found their home in cyber-space, is responsible for contributing to, and supporting, the well-being of the environment from which it feeds. This is more than writing an enlightened mission statement or providing a consumer desired product or service, but an active, conscious process of sustaining and embracing everything in its field of influence. There's an old country saying, 'The poor farmer makes weeds, the mediocre one makes crops, but the skilled farmer makes soil.' Rooted in the American earth is the tradition of the Iroquois people of America's past; all policies and programs were enacted only after considering their impact for the next seven generations.

To call forth a vision of this magnitude would most certainly demand a revolution in consciousness, a sacred engagement between the producers, sellers and buyers of this world game.

To uphold the sanctity of this wedding would require a new covenant that deals with the human relationship factor; an agreement that goes beyond the standard financial arrangement and job assignments. A written and spoken public declaration of sincerity in commitment is paramount.

VOW ?!!

In these challenging times within the corporate culture vows would be most appropriate. A vow...what a word for arousing strong opinions in people, yet it's definition is very straightforward, ' a solemn promise or pledge that commits one to act or behave in a particular way.'

This requires asking a bigger question beyond 'what benefits shall I receive?', but 'what are the broader implications of my work?' As so aptly stated by Kosho Uchiyama in Opening the Hand of Thought, "To act in accordance with the entire earth and with all living beings is my whole life course and simultaneously is my direction here and now. This life direction becomes my vow."

Vow is nothing other than one's or a collective group's conscious life in action; so we see all encounters with things, situations, people, society, as nothing but our own life and we function solely with a spirit of looking after our own life...like a mother's caring for her child.

It is not to profit personally or collectively or to become famous that we take good care of things, devote ourselves to our work, love those whom we encounter, or demonstrate our concern for social problems. We take care of our own life - I take care of the world, including the company to which I am engaged, as my own life; the company takes care of the world, myself included, as its own life - moment by moment - and in each situation we enable the wisdom of our actions, the flowers of our lives, to bloom into spiritual and financial prosperity.

The following reciprocal vows may serve as a model where contractual relationships are established between individuals or collective groups and companies.

PERSONAL PLEDGE

"I, Jacqueline Patriot, pledge allegiance to Hearth & Home Company and to the mission for which it stands my spirit united with Hearth & Home's to attain the highest degree of business success benefiting the environment, our society, the owners and all of my co-employees, to flourish together in attaining health, prosperity and happiness, to honorably uphold the tenets agreed upon with Hearth & Home, and to strive for never-ending improvement in my work performance and my supportive relationships with co-workers."

COMPANY PLEDGE

"We, the owners (or Board of Trustees, Senior Directors), of Hearth & Home Company pledge allegiance to you, Jacqueline Patriot, and to the mission for which you stand our company, one in spirit, united with you in striving to provide an enriched working environment conducive to creative thought and efficient implementation of tasks, to attaining your worthy goals, to honorably upholding the tenets agreed upon with you, and to supporting your wholeness and well-being."

My present relationship with my work and its relationship with all people and the affairs of the earth, all appear before me as my present circumstances, as the scenery of my life, as the content of my little ego-centered self and my big self that supports all of life as myself.

To create a workplace atmosphere that allows and encourages cooperation and the fulfilling of our highest dreams, whereby collectively we may all thrive, will require a refining of one's personal mission statement and the corporate mission vision. This can be facilitated by third party specialists, such as Chapel Stowell Company in Seattle, a leading player in re-defining workplace relationships.

Periodically, the employees can be asked by a company leader about the significance of his/her vow, and the progress or problems encountered, in likewise manner, the employees can question the directors about the company's vows in relationship to him/herself and how it fits in with the company's present course. On a regular basis, it will be empowering for the employee and owners to renew and proclaim their vows to one another. With attention given to these vows their content and significance will grow in richness through time and experience.

With the intention to forge honest, trusting, kind and supportive working relationships the employees will mentally and physically

function better. Work will be an integral part of their creative and spiritual process of living on Earth.

Yes, God Bless America is a song that symbolizes the rare freedoms that we enjoy in America, the responsibility to uphold the principles of the Bill of Rights and an opportunity, through our work, to further the realization of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all. Realizing congruency in all levels of our life is a movement towards wholeness...A patriot in heart is the ground of our reality; a corporate patriot in action is the way of earth; and a universal patriot in spirit is the field of love in which we play.

A universal patriot is born with the seed of consciousness, rooted in the soil of the Earth, grown in the light of the sun, and honoring all of creation as oneself, the body and breath of God.