

October 25th, 2010

Dear Friends

There are times when I confess that my exercise and dietary regime doesn't quite satisfy the CHIP threshold, the more so when twinges of age and substantive upholstery result in nagging symptoms. Indeed, I have had to confront my own eschatology even to the extent of attending A&E, and more recently, demanding the attention of my GP. It seems that if you can fake enough paranoia our beloved Health Service becomes obliged to pay attention.



I was mortified to discover that the first Doctor considered me to be the healthiest person she had seen all day. The second Quack decided that my ECG stats were no worse than those of ten years back and duly declared me to be suffering stress, anxiety or overwork, just short of going bonkers! Being sent to the touch line for a week is the penalty imposed for my inability to control my outrage when the world doesn't quite operate to my expectation. I must have been barmy to believe otherwise! A dose of Desirada: 'God help me to accept the things I cannot change' would be an appropriate medicine.

Over the years I learned that sharing concerns with my parents results in the 'mother of all' lectures! Curiously, mother heard of my plight through the inauspicious chatter of church folk and decided that her son had a "hush hush" syndrome! Oh dear, for some reason our society is comfortable confessing physical fatigue, but emotional and mental fatigue echo around the sinister whispering gallery of taboos.

The reason for disclosing this drivel is not a search for sympathy rather, in the spirit of openness, a confession that burnout happens even to the most garrulous of treasurers. Imagine!

Given the £83bn economic consequence of our times, I suspect that the hearts of many will 'fail them for fear'. Living within and without means will become the suppressed concern of coming years. How do we respond? Will we be the voices of foresight, courage and hope? Will we have the compassion to listen and understand pain? Will we have the strength to inspire purposefulness? Will we be generous?

Included in the therapy was a trawl through my favourite reading zone in Blackwell, Oxford. Ah the calm! How I wish that wisdom were diffusible. A few years back shelves were stuffed with 'success and get rich quick' biographies, today moral accounts of 'where we went wrong' abound.

In *The Economics of Integrity*, Anna Bernasek traces the value of personal qualities with examples from the production and delivery of milk, to the manufacture of Toyota's. In the end she lands on **long term thinking and decision making as a moral key to prosperity**. I had never thought of it this way before. Who would have thought that 'living in the face of eternity' would make an economic difference?

Do we not have a message for angry nations?

May the Good Lord continue to give you grace to inspire confidence in his word, in whose name both current and eternal salvation abound. Thank you for your courage and resilience.

Best regards

Victor