



What Would Our Forefathers Think of America Today?

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I have a fantasy.

It's fascinating. It's futuristic. It's foretelling.

My fantasy is that our country's forefathers would miraculously appear today in America. I see them walking among us, dressed in velvet coats and knee pants, hair in a pony tails, hats in hand. Thomas Jefferson in Virginia. Alexander Hamilton on Wall Street. John Adams in Boston. Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia. And, George Washington in Washington.

I envision it theatrically, of course, with cameras. A panoramic sweep as they turn full circle in awe. What would they think? Would they be proud? Would they be shocked? I, for one, want them desperately to be pleased.

This is an idea that has fascinated me for decades. I can remember asking my father about it when I was nine: "Dad, what would our forefathers think of America if they returned today? About what would they be most disappointed?"

My father, who is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and a man of few words, thought for a moment and simply said, "taxes."

What would our forefathers think of us today? I yearn for their wisdom. I believe, if they roamed the halls of Congress together and eavesdropped on the conversations, heard the rancor, felt the division,

they would say, or at least Thomas Jefferson would say, "Ah, democracy at work." However, upon further investigation their impressions would sour. They would accurately perceive that the tenor has changed.

During their day, they too differed and fought. They were, at times, wickedly vicious -- but it was for Americans. They believed that God wove an innate promise in human beings and they envisioned the infinite possibilities of the mind and soul if freed from tyrannical government. They ardently loved America. Their purpose was for America to be born, to blossom and to be the hope of mankind. They took pride in their remarkable achievements. They believed that their victory over the British and the success in uniting their fledgling country's passionate diversities as they constructed and ratified the Constitution, were the works of "Divine Providence."

Brilliant and well read as they were, they would quickly surmise the threats to America. Alarmed by the bitter greed, they would stand at the pulpit of Congress and pound the gavel and say, "Awaken Patriots. Awaken your sense of unity! A Congress divided, for the sake of pride, will most certainly fall. A Congress that betrays its constituents, for the sake of party line, will most assuredly falter. A Congress that bloats bills to the point of obscene obscurity will be condemned." They would be astounded by a Congress that does not read its own works and warn, "A Congress that cannot or will not read the bills before they vote, before they represent the American people, will, without fail, lead their country and its people to doom."

When they realize C-SPAN is there, and they would adeptly figure this out, they would look into the camera and warn the American people. They would warn parents that by neglecting to teach their children their rights as embodied in the Constitution as well as the inherent responsibilities of citizenship, they will let America simply slip away. Thomas Jefferson would recount his own words, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." They would warn, "It won't be sudden. It will be insidious. Those who devalue freedom, who underestimate human

genius, integrity and industriousness, will cunningly dominate the debate."

Benjamin Franklin would recount his own words, "Think what you do when you run in debt; you give to another power over your liberty." They would say, "By letting Congress bankrupt your country, you most assuredly will lose your freedom, your free will. By letting Congress take away your right to own a gun, you will let a dictator seize your country and your home, because he will encounter no resistance." They would quote Samuel Adams' wisdom, "Be forewarned, the pooling of property and the redistributing of wealth are despotic and unconstitutional."

They would close with biting truths saying, "Without moral values, which should begin in Congress, America will lose her roots, her basis, her thesis." They would echo Paul Revere and cry out, "Stand up, Americans. The challenge is coming! The challenge is coming! Let freedom continue to ring!" They would exit Congress and they would not be downtrodden. A smile would emanate from their faces, for they know the heart of Americans.

Janine Turner is an actress and writer.