

Who Are the ‘Americans in Name Only’?

Considerable amounts of ink and pixels have been spilled in recent months over the question of who is an American, who is unAmerican, and who is anti-American. There is an easy way to tell: Use the Declaration of Independence as your guide.

The Declaration is the most quintessentially American document ever produced. It defines in unmistakable and unambiguous terms what America stands for. Simply put, someone who affirms the truth claims of the Declaration is a true American. Someone who is indifferent to its truth claims is un-American. And someone who is hostile to its truth claims is anti-American.

When I say it is the quintessentially American document, I mean to say that the Declaration created the United States of America. On July 3, 1776, the United States of America did not exist. On July 5, it did. When the Declaration concluded that “these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States,” the political heavens shook, and the earth was jolted with seismic tremors that are being felt around the world to this day. A new nation had come into being, and its distinctives were clearly articulated for all time through the scintillating prose of Thomas Jefferson.

The Declaration articulates the fundamental principles that precipitated our break from the crown. A certain set of values had, by 1776, come to animate and energize the colonies, values that were being trashed rather than respected by King George. The utter incompatibility of American values with the values of the British government led to the formation of a new nation among the nations of the world.

What, then, does it mean to be an “American?”

First, Americans believe in absolute truth. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, ... ” said the founders. There is such a thing as truth, an American would say, and we believe in it, and we defend it. An American believes, as did the founders, that certain things are true and other things are false. There is none of this business of everybody having his own truth. In fact, the founders observed that there are certain truths that are so obviously true on the very face of things that they do not even require proof; they are “self-evident.”

Thus someone who is indifferent to the question of truth is unAmerican because he does not care about this fundamental American ideal. And someone who is hostile to the idea of truth, or who is hostile to the self-evident truths the founders affirmed, is anti-American because he has pitted himself against a bedrock American principle.

Second, Americans believe man is a created being, not an evolved one. The very first self-evident truth the founders embraced is that “all men are *created* equal,” and that there is a “Creator” with a capital “C” who has granted them certain fundamental, non-negotiable rights. In other words, an American does not believe that man emerged from the primordial glop with some kind of ancestral connection to baboons and chimpanzees. No, an American believes, as the founders did, that man has been created in the image of God and is distinct and far above members of the animal kingdom in worth, value, and dignity. Man is not just a “trouserred ape” but is an entirely different order of being altogether—a being who has not just a soul but also a spirit.

Not a single one of our civil rights is safe in the hands of a politician who does not believe in a Creator who is the source of every one of our fundamental rights. If man has an ontological status that is no higher than a primate, and there is no God to answer to, then why not cage him and experiment on him as Hitler and Mengele did with the Jews? Why not

cannibalize the bodies of unborn babies and sell their organs to the highest bidder, as Planned Parenthood does? A true American recoils at that grotesque practice. An American in name only does not.

So an American believes man is a created being. Someone who is indifferent to the question of whether man is created or evolved is unAmerican. And someone who actively opposes the concept of a Creator and the concept of man as created in God's image is anti-American.

Third, an American believes our rights come to us from God, not from government. An American believes that such rights are "unalienable," which means that no earthly power has the moral authority to deprive us of any single one of these rights because they are a gift to us from God.

If, on the other hand, rights come to us from government, as anti-Americans believe, then not one of them is safe. They are not "unalienable" in any sense. What government gives, government can take away.

The whole point of the Declaration is that the government under which the founders chafed was systematically depriving the colonists of rights that were theirs by divine right, rights to life, to liberty and to property. An American believes that the purpose of government is not to grant rights but to *secure* the rights that have already been given to us by God. Any government that strips man of his God-given rights has forfeited its moral right to govern.

So an American believes that our rights come to us from a Creator God. An unAmerican is indifferent to the question. And an anti-American vigorously contests that idea and believes that rights are a gift to us from a beneficent government rather than the Creator.

Fourth, an American believes that babies have a right to be born. An American believes that no earthly power—not Congress,

not the Supreme Court, not Planned Parenthood, nor a hospital in England—has any moral or legal right whatsoever to deprive a baby in the womb or a disabled newborn of its right to live. An anti-American is someone who supports the killing of babies in the womb and tries to lock up the Americans who expose this evil. Thus they seek to deprive babies of their right to life and undercover investigators of their right to liberty.

Fifth, an American believes that bakers, florists and photographers have a God-given right to liberty, a God-given right to manage their business affairs according to the dictates of their own conscience. An American believes that he should not be required by government to do work against his will, which is slavery, or to do work that violates his own conscience, which is tyranny. An American in name only believes that such artisans should be punished, fined, put out of business or sued for everything they own. And someone who is indifferent to this issue is not a bad person; he is just an unAmerican one.

Sixth, an American believes that the right to private property is a sacred right, a gift from God, and that government is not allowed to deprive homeowners of their property or deny farmers and ranchers the use of their property (apart, of course, from the proper use of eminent domain or as a consequence of the commission of a crime). The founders would be appalled at the way in which the abuse of eminent domain and the use of environmental regulations have shredded this unalienable right. An American believes the right to private property is a gift from God. An anti-American despises this right and treats it as something that government can readily dispose of if it will serve the progressive agenda.

So there you have it, from the minds and hearts of the founders themselves. An American is someone who believes in truth, believes in the Creator, believes that our rights come from God and not government and wants to see government protect the right to life, liberty and property.

In contrast, an American in name only believes truth is relative, believes in evolution, believes our rights come from government, wants government to protect abortion, wants to suppress the free expression of Christianity and wants to usurp the right to private property for the greater good.

Republicans in name only (RINOs) give lip service to the Republican Party platform but abandon it at the first sign of criticism from the media. Christians in name only (ChINOs?) give lip service to the teachings of Scripture but abandon them at the first sign of pressure from the world. And Americans in name only give lip service to the Declaration of Independence on July 4 but abandon all pretense at dawn on July 5.

As Thomas Paine said, this is no time for the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot. It is a time for genuine Americans to grab the Declaration once again and hold it high as the banner that guides our nation's past, its present and its future. Beginning today.

Bryan Fischer *is host of the two-hour weekday "Focal Point" program on American Family Radio.*

This article was originally published at . Used with permission.