

“Who, exactly, is an American?” John Jones

A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision has once again ignited debate over what, exactly, makes someone an American. Is it birthright? Is it an acceptance of American culture and customs or an identifiable support for this nation? The current cultural moment may help answer some of these questions, but a deeper study of Scripture clarifies that the “right answer” is not the primary concern for the Christian.

Over the past few months, visitors from all over the world have traveled to the United States for the FIFA World Cup. Social media has been abuzz with foreigners’ first encounters with American culture, customs, and cuisine. Particularly humorous were the Japanese fan discovering Texas BBQ, the Italian man amazed by free refills and ice in our soft drinks, and the Brit giggling with glee while driving a giant Ford truck. As enjoyable as these particulars of American life are, they are equally enjoyable to international travelers experiencing them for the first time. Thus, our culture (and sometimes our unashamed lack of it) does not an American make.

This past weekend, many Americans celebrated the two-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The independent spirit and self-determination of the founding fathers have been extolled in patriotic displays and sentiments. But are those ideals somehow unique to American citizens? I’m reminded of our time living in New Zealand during a particularly tyrannical COVID regime. The more the vaccine and mask mandates were enforced, the more my innate defiance and individualism welled up within me. “I can decide what is best for myself and my family. I won’t get in line just because I’m told to. I’m an American!” I told myself. Yet I saw many New Zealanders expressing the same sentiments, while several Americans in NZ did not. Perhaps the desire for personal freedom is not as uniquely American as I once thought.

Despite what I think may be the right answer to defining American citizenship, the reality is that throughout American history, the question “Who, exactly, is an American?” has been answered somewhat arbitrarily. Presidents, Supreme Court justices, and others wielding civil power have defined citizenship in inconsistent ways, often in ways modern Americans disagree with, especially regarding slavery, the treatment of indigenous Americans, and the permeability of American borders. As I open my Bible, however, I realize that American Christians may be asking the wrong question.

While the question of earthly citizenship is relevant only to this life, the question of spiritual citizenship, “Who, exactly, is a Christian?” is eternally significant: “Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20). If your eternal citizenship is not in heaven, what good will American citizenship do you? While the nature of earthly citizenship is somewhat arbitrary, decided by the powerful among the nations, spiritual citizenship is clearly established by Jesus Christ. It is a birthright citizenship, granted to all “born of water and spirit” (John 3:3–5). It is defined by a shared culture that “seeks the things that are above, where Christ is...” (Colossians 3:1) and is seen in our identifiable support for the “holy nation, a people for His own possession” (1 Peter 2:9).

By both birthright and shared culture, I am an American. I appreciate the temporal freedoms this country has afforded me. But first and foremost, I am a Christian, by choice and by the blood of Jesus Christ. Let us never forget the source of our eternal freedom. The ultimate sacrifice was made, once and for all, by the Son of God (Hebrews 10:10), hanging between heaven and earth on a Roman cross. “Lest we forget Gethsemane, lest we forget His agony, lest we forget His love for me. Lead me to Calvary.”

On Our Prayer List... *May we always be using God’s blessing & power of prayer for one another: Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them they should always pray & not give up. Luke 18:1.

<u>{Recent Medical concerns/updates/}</u> *Alneita Rye–fell & broke her hip, had surg on Sat.in Horizon Rm 154 *Allison Erskin-currently dealing with a herniated disc-prayers for healing *Archer Schindel-(newborn great grandson of Linda Ross) seriously ill in Vanderbilt –prayers		<u>{Upcoming Surgeries-Recovery/}</u> *Traci Adams-hip replacement on July 8th. *Clay Crafton-(Kathy Martin’s bro-in-law) serious hlt issues seriously ill in Vanderbilt –prayers	
<u>THOSE DEALING/BEING TREATED FOR CANCER/</u> *Jimmy Phy-CA *Lillian Childress-successful radiation treatment *Dale Street-(N. Buttrey grandfather)CA *Hudson Jones-{2yr old son of Dan & Catherine,Walnut St COC–Leukemia} *Robert Gardner (friend of Bill Williams) CA *Alan Jones-esophageal CA-treatments		*Marsha Patrick-radiation therapy *Casey Valles *Chris McCurley-Walnut St coC *Brian Gill-CA-treatments *Mack Winstead-CA-continued prayers *Houston Howell *David Nowlin-CA treatments-WcoC elder *Jackie Borders-Lauren Stuart’s mom *Maggie Wright -(friend of N. Buttrey) CA *Jerry Honea –cancer, prayers	

<u>Listed below are those that are continuing to have on-going medical issues that are in need of our prayers.</u>					
*W. R. & Louise Long	*Hattie Tate	*Al & Vicki Peek	*Kathy Martin	*Jerry Martin	*Faye Featherstone
*Bonita Madewell	*Sherry Harvey	*Jim & Betty Suddeath		*Michelle Lashlee	*Becky Palk
*Rita Oliphant	*Jackie Harvey	*Chase Lewis	*Doug Simpson	*Joe Wright	*Mary Mullinicks
*Sue Edmission	*Alyssa Gold	*Scotty Palk	*Margie Gunn	*Josh Barnett	
*Frances Simpson	*Carlene Davis	*Daniel McCarson	*Marcia Simpson	*Nancy Daniel	
*Savannah Patrick-(Rhett’s syndrome-Marsha Patrick’s granddaughter) c/o Jaimie Patrick—111 McJury Lane, Lafayette, TN					

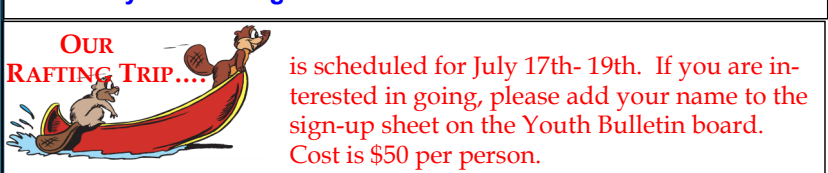
<u>{Assisted Living/Nursing Home/Rehab/}</u> <u>AHC Decatur County</u> -726 Kentucky Ave,Parsons,TN 38363Wyle Marshall-(Rm 726) (Traci Adams dad) <u>Magnolia Place</u> - 811 W. Main St, Waverly, TN 37185-Jimmy Tyler-(room 106) <u>Waverly Hills Post Acute</u> -895 Powers Blvd, Waverly, TN 37185-Bertha Bradford-rm 102A <u>Humphreys County NH</u> 104 Fort Hill Rd. Waverly,TN 37185– Gary Davis-in rehab there room 717 & June Dreaden-(Sonya Rachford’s mom) continued prayers for her & Sonya & family. Acension Saint Thomas-451 TN-13, Waverly, TN 37185- Wayne Jones		<u>At Home in McEwen</u> Jim & Jane Ridings-172 Indian Ck Rd. Robert Bradford-347 Brown Mill Rd. Jimmy Mullinicks-56 Mike Street <u>Outside McEwen</u> Joe & Betty James-keep in prayer 8516 Burseson Ln, Murfreesboro, TN 37129	
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ANNOUNCMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS



SUPPLY GIVEAWAY
FRIDAY, JULY 24TH
5:00PM TO 6:30 PM
PLEASE PUT BACKPACKS DOWNSTAIRS OR IN THE FOYER. MONEY DONATIONS MAY BE GIVEN TO DEREK BERRYMAN, TERRI OR TERESA.

*Red Cross will be here, on Monday, July 27th from 1:30-5:30.
*Our Summer Series will begin on Wednesday night, July 29th, then every Wed in August



Our sympathy & prayers to recent families who have lost loved ones:
*Connie Bauman – (Rhonda Suddeath’s) aunt

Thankful for Alex Carter’s baptism, along with Rachel Buttrey request for prayers, last week at church camp. Please keep both these precious young ladies in your prayers & the example they set for each of us.



IN E.O.C.U.S.

Faith, Obedience, Character, Unity, Salvation

What a week we just had!! Church camp is always one of my favorite weeks of the year. It was a hot one, but it didn’t seem to affect the kids at all. It was such an uplifting week full of blessings and lots of memories. We had 3 baptisms and several rededications. I am thankful to be back home where I can get some much-needed rest!

Our rafting trip is just a couple weeks away. If you are interested in going on the trip, please be sure to sign up. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board. The cost of the trip is \$50 per person. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

In Him, Keith

