

## **What Is America?**

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Shortly before the 2008 presidential election, candidate Barack Obama proclaimed before a cheering crowd of supporters, “We are five days away from fundamentally transforming America.” That statement raises several immediate questions. First, does America need to be “fundamentally transformed”? Next, why does America need to be “fundamentally transformed”? And thirdly, what does Obama want to transform America into? To answer those three questions one must first know the answer to the more basic question, “what is America?”

America has a relatively short history when compared to the longevity of other nations. Many nations have indeed been “fundamentally transformed” over the years. Coups and revolutions occur with frequency across the globe. In fact, the nation of the United States of America was created following a revolution. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century America was transformed from a colony of the British Empire into an independent democratic republic – an improbable, noble, and unique experiment in a government “under God”, a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people...” (see Gettysburg address). More than anything, America is an idea. America is an idea founded on the belief that man’s fundamental rights come from God – not from government. The rights bestowed upon man from God are many but the most fundamental of these rights, as clearly spelled out in the Declaration of Independence, are “...Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

When the Founding Fathers finally crafted the Constitution of the United States in 1787, Benjamin Franklin, one of those responsible for the document, was asked what had been created. His reply, “A republic, madam, if you can keep it.” Many of the Founders insisted that a Bill of Rights, ratified in 1791, be incorporated into the document so that there could be no question about the most fundamental rights of men. Over the years, many Americans have fought and died at home and on foreign soil to preserve the republic and make it strong. The idea that “all men are created equal”, put forth in 1776 when Thomas Jefferson authored the Declaration of Independence, has since spread across the globe as perhaps the most powerful moral and philosophical belief to ever serve as a foundation for the government of men.

Unfortunately, there are now too many in this country and around the world who no longer believe in this greatest experiment in human history. Rather, they believe that only government – not God - can bestow blessings upon the governed. Today, judges and politicians routinely overrule the Bill of Rights in order to impose a “progressive” agenda upon American citizens. Egalitarians want to redistribute wealth and replace individual responsibility and liberty with governmental largesse. More and more, politicians determine how we should live our lives – how much money we should make, what we should eat, what kind of cars we should drive. Individual liberties have been discarded for the “collective good”. President Obama and our political leaders want to grow the federal government and run our lives. This is the fundamental transformation of America they intend to impose upon us.

Our only hope is the find and elect representatives who will return America to the principles upon which the country was built – a return to the Bill of Rights. Rather than transforming America, we need representatives who will restore America. We need to reclaim our God-given rights and stop those who would steal them from us.

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