

Commentary on "WHAT TO THE AMERICAN SLAVE IS YOUR 4TH OF JULY?"
By Frederick Douglass

This is an amazing read. It takes us back to 1852 when the country was beginning to transform greatly due to the interpretation of the Constitution among the various states.

Fundamental individual rights cannot exist without values. They are one in the same; the right comes first, and then the value gives life to that right in social discourse.

Frederick Douglass calls the constitutional Framers and the church into question....he makes a solid argument that they supported slavery by omission. For example, in the final paragraph discussing the Constitution, Douglass agrees that there is nothing in the Bill of Rights that mentions nor condones slavery; rather, he finds that language gives freedom to all men. He argues that it is the interpretation of the Bill of Rights and the failure to recognize the horrendous actions of slavery that give the concept social credibility.

Douglass correctly points out the hypocrisy of laws at the time. There were strict laws against the international slave trade, yet internal slave trade is honored. Laws were applied differently to slaves and white men. Further, there were laws within state statutes that forbid teaching a slave to read or right.

Douglass's argument is one of omission. He respects the sacrifice of the Founding Fathers. He respects the country's Independence. He understands the importance of the church. However, slavery has been condoned in omission as those charged with facilitating society (legal and spiritual) have turned away from addressing the issue, thereby condoning and supporting the continuation of the slave trade.