

The Eye on Abortion

July 2007



WHAT TO THE UNBORN IS THE **FOURTH OF JULY?**

Dear Partners,

If the unborn were able, at their young age, would they celebrate the Fourth of July?

The answer depends on *which* unborn children we are talking about. If we are referring to the 44 percent of unintended pregnancies ending in live births every year, then I think they *would* celebrate. However, if we are referring to the 42 percent of unintended pregnancies that end on an abortionist's table every year, then I am certain that there would be no celebration. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, there are 3.1 million unintended pregnancies in America each year, with slightly less than half facing the cruel death of abortion. (The other 14 percent of unintended pregnancies end in miscarriage.) The numbers are staggering! So, what to the unborn is the Fourth of July? Someone else once posed a similar question, but in regards to slavery.



Frederick
Douglass

Frederick Douglass was an amazing man, used by the Lord to help bring about great changes in his day. Douglass was born in 1818, into a life of slavery and servitude.

When he was eight, Douglass was sent to Baltimore to live as a houseboy with Hugh and Sophia Auld, relatives of his master. Although it was illegal to teach slaves how to read, young Douglass' mistress taught him the alphabet. When her husband found out, he forbade her from continuing to teach him. Frederick learned to read by himself from that point on. He exchanged his food for reading and writing lessons from neighborhood boys. At age thirteen, Douglass purchased a copy of *The Columbian Orator*, a popular schoolbook of his time, which greatly helped him to appreciate the power of the written and spoken word, and the positive changes they can bring.

At twenty, he gained his freedom by escaping, disguised a sailor. After his escape, Douglass began attending abolitionist meetings in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and in October 1841, he became a lecturer for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Douglass eventually published his own newspaper, *The North Star*, and became a trusted advisor to Abraham Lincoln, among several other great accomplishments. He is internationally recognized as a staunch abolitionist and a strong defender of women's rights.

Although slavery is very different from abortion, they are both horrific human rights violations. When reading speeches and writings concerning slavery, I often find myself not only thinking about slavery and all its terrors, but of abortion as well. One of his speeches stands out in my mind due to its sheer force, and because so much of it easily applies to *abortion* today.

In 1852, Douglass was asked by the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society to give a speech in honor of the Fourth of July. The speech, "**What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?**", is power-packed and, no doubt, surprised all in the crowd that day! As you read excerpts from that great speech below, notice how much Douglass' message, spoken so long ago, needs to be shouted from the rooftops today concerning *abortion* in America.

"This, for the purpose of this celebration, is the 4th of July. It is the birthday of your National Independence, and of your political freedom. This, to you, is what the Passover was to the emancipated people of God. It carries your minds back to the day, and to the act of your great deliverance; and to the signs, and to the wonders, associated with that act, and that day... I am glad this is so.

"...your fathers... went so far in their excitement as to pronounce the measures of government unjust, unreasonable, and oppressive, and altogether such as ought not to be quietly submitted to.

"To say now that America was right, and England wrong, is exceedingly easy. Everybody can say it; the dastard, not less than the noble brave, can flippantly discard on the tyranny of England towards the American Colonies. It is fashionable to do so; but there was a time when to pronounce against England, and in favor of the cause of the colonies, tried men's souls. **They who did so were accounted in their day, plotters of mischief, agitators and rebels, dangerous men. To side with the right, against the wrong, with the weak against the strong, and with the oppressed against the oppressor!** (Emphasis added.)

"They were peace men; but they preferred revolution to peaceful submission to bondage. They were quiet men; but they did not shrink from agitating against oppression. They showed forbearance; but that they knew its limits. They believed in order, but not in the order of tyranny. With them, nothing was "settled" that was not right. With them, justice, liberty and humanity were "final;" not slavery and oppression. You may well cherish the memory of such men. They were great in their day and generation. Their solid manhood stands out the more as we contrast it with these degenerate times.



"How circumspect, exact and proportionate were all their movements! How unlike the politicians of an hour! **Their statesmanship looked beyond the passing moment, and stretched away in strength into the distant future.** (Emphasis added.) They seized upon eternal principles, and set a glorious example in their defense. Mark them!"

Here, Douglass brilliantly began his speech by pointing out that (Caucasian) Americans struggled, against the odds, to gain *their* freedom from the tyranny of England. They wanted to live their lives free of unreasonable demands placed upon them for the benefit of others, such as taxation without representation.

Just as early Americans desired their freedom, so in Douglass' day, slaves longed for their God-given freedom. Today the unborn deserve the most basic human right of all...life, and this is *also* worth fighting for. But the unborn cannot speak for themselves, so others must fight for them.

As his speech continued, he powerfully pointed out the brutality of slavery. I have quoted quite a bit of text here, but it is *well* worth the read. I guarantee you will be moved!

"My business, if I have any here to-day, is with the present. The accepted time with God and his cause is the ever-living now...Your fathers have lived, died, and have done their work, and have done much of it well. You live and must die, and you must do your work.

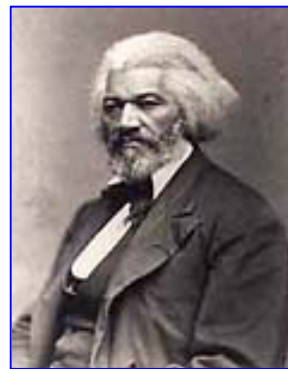
"Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here to-day? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us?

"But, such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me.

"This Fourth [of] July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. (Emphasis added.) To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak to-day?

"Fellow-citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day... To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world.

"My subject, then fellow-citizens, is AMERICAN SLAVERY. Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this occasion, I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered, in the name of the constitution and the Bible, which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and to denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery-the great sin and shame of America! I will use the severest language I can command; and yet not one word shall escape me that any man, whose judgment is not blinded by prejudice, or who is not at heart a slaveholder, shall not confess to be right and just.



Frederick Douglass

"But I fancy I hear some one of my audience say, it is just in this circumstance that you and your brother abolitionists fail to make a favorable impression on the public mind. Would you argue more, and denounce less, would you persuade more, and rebuke less, your cause would be much more likely to succeed. But, I submit, where all is plain there is nothing to be argued. What point in the anti-slavery creed would you have me argue? On what branch of the subject do the people of this country need light?

"What, am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their masters? **Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood, and stained with pollution, is wrong?** (Emphasis added.) No! I will not. I have better employments for my time and strength than such arguments would imply.

"What, then, remains to be argued? Is it that slavery is not divine; that God did not establish it; that our doctors of divinity are mistaken? There is blasphemy in the thought. **That which is inhuman, cannot be divine!** (Emphasis added.) Who can reason on such a proposition? They that can, may; I cannot. The time for such argument is past.

"At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. O! had I the ability, and could I reach the nation's ear, I would, to-day, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not

light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. **The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced.** (Emphasis added.)

“What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. (Emphasis added.) To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy - a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages.

“Your broad republican domain is **hunting ground** for men. Not for thieves and robbers, enemies of society, merely, but **for men guilty of no crime.** (Emphasis added.) Your lawmakers have commanded all good citizens to engage in this hellish sport. Your President, your Secretary of State, your lords, nobles, and ecclesiastics, enforce, as a duty you owe to your free and glorious country, and to your God, that you do this accursed thing.

“Fellow-citizens! I will not enlarge further on your national inconsistencies. The existence of slavery in this country brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretence, and your Christianity as a lie. It destroys your moral power abroad; it corrupts your politicians at home. It saps the foundation of religion; it makes your name a hissing, and a by word to a mocking earth...it is a curse to the earth that supports it; and yet, you cling to it, as if it were the sheet anchor of all your hopes. Oh! be warned! be warned! A horrible reptile is coiled up in your nation’s bosom; the venomous creature is nursing at the tender breast of your youthful republic; for the love of God, tear away, and fling from you the hideous monster, and let the weight of twenty millions crush and destroy it forever!”



The above text is one of the most powerful I have ever read on the topic of slavery. Douglass pointed out the injustice of slavery with such force that it awakened the consciences of those who heard (or read it), and stirred them to action! We, as Christians today, need to use clear, concise, passionate language, as Douglass did, to convey to others the evil of abortion.

Douglass went on to address one of the justifications for slavery, which is also used today concerning abortion, and showed the obvious invalidity of the argument.

“But it is answered in reply to all this, that precisely what I have now denounced is, in fact, guaranteed and sanctioned by the Constitution of the United States; that the right to hold and to hunt slaves is a part of that Constitution framed by the illustrious Fathers of this Republic.

“But I differ from those who charge this baseness on the framers of the Constitution of the United States. It is a slander upon their memory, at least, so I believe.

“[L]et me ask, if it be not somewhat singular that, if the Constitution were intended to be, by its framers and adopters, a slave-holding instrument, why neither slavery, slaveholding, nor slave can anywhere be found in it.

"Now, take the constitution according to its plain reading, and I defy the presentation of a single pro-slavery clause in it. On the other hand it will be found to contain principles and purposes, entirely hostile to the existence of slavery."

In *Roe v. Wade*, and in the arguments of many abortion advocates, it is said that abortion is a constitutional right. This is surely not the case. As Justices Thomas and Scalia stated in the opinion concerning the recent Partial-Birth Abortion Ban, "[I] write separately to reiterate my view that the Court's abortion jurisprudence, including *Casey* and *Roe v. Wade*, has **no basis in the Constitution.**" (Emphasis added.)

LORD, MOVE US TO COMPASSIONATE ACTION!

As you can see, many things Douglass said in his speech can easily be reiterated in regards to abortion.

While Douglass' audience was free to live lives of freedom and liberty, and able to pursue their own happiness, there was another group of Americans who were not. In Douglass' day, it was African Americans who were slaves. Today, it is "unwanted" unborn babies who are being aborted by the millions.

Douglass could sympathize with the plight of American slaves, because *he* once was a slave. How much more should we sympathize with the plight of unborn babies, when we have all been blessed to survive the womb, yet nearly 4000 others do *not* survive it *every day*?

As we celebrate the Fourth of July, and our independence, may we also mourn the loss of 1.3 million babies each year who are deprived of theirs.

The fiery language Douglass used to convey the injustice of slavery is the same fire we need to rise from every church, and every Christians' heart and mouth today, in defense of the unborn! A grave evil is being legally foisted upon our unborn children, and we need to speak out on their behalf and fight as Douglass did. He is an excellent example to follow, and I pray many more "Douglasses" will arise in the coming days to defend unborn babies of *every* race.



For the unborn,

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