

We hold these truths to be self-evident

Written by Timothy Houston
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There are some truths that are evident to all, and one of them is that all men are created equal. This week America celebrates a national holiday commemorating the drafting, signing, and approval of the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Independence is one of the most important documents in the history of America and the African American people. This document later became the catalyst for other key documents including the Emancipation Proclamation, 13th amendment abolishing slavery, and the 15th amendment prohibiting the denial of suffrage based on race or colour. The Declaration of Independence along with these other document reinforced the self-evident truth that all me are created equal.

First, the Declaration of Independence established the footing for equal rights. The Declaration of Independence was a statement adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, which announced that the thirteen American colonies, then at war with Great Britain, regarded themselves as independent states, and no longer a part of the British Empire. Having served its original purpose in announcing independence, the text of the Declaration was initially ignored after the American Revolution. Since then, it has come to be considered a major statement on human rights.

Secondly the Declaration of Independence established a baseline for moral rights. Although the United States was at the beginning of its existence, the passage came to represent a moral standard to which the United States should strive. This view was notably promoted by Abraham Lincoln, who considered the Declaration to be the foundation of his political philosophy, and argued that the Declaration is a statement of principles through which the United States Constitution should be interpreted. It has inspired work for the rights of oppressed people throughout the world, and it served as a key foundation in the Black civil rights movement here in the United States.

Finally, the Declaration of Independence established a hallmark for the celebration of freedom. The world now has a standard. The United States has come a long way in a short time in advancing human rights issue throughout the world. This is a very young nation only 236 years old compared to China, Egypt, and Japan who have existed between 5000 and 35,000 years. Although we are still in our infancy, using documents such as the Declaration of Independence, we were able to abolish slavery, elect a Black president, and continue the work on Dr King's dream of speeding up that day when all of God's children, Black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

The struggle is not over. This 4th of July, we continue the battle for equality here in the United States and throughout the world. We will not give up, we will not give out, and we will not give in. Our heads are bloodied but still unbowed because we believe that one day we will all be free. As we carry on in the fight for equal rights, we continue to hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

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