

Fortress of Freedom

By Leah Renner

As the infamous fortress was being crafted, the people awaited, anxiously, freedom and safety on the line. Knowing the army was approaching, the builders worked all day and all night to finish the fortress with indestructible walls. At last, the time had come. After blood, sweat, and tears, the structure was complete. Quickly, the people of the town gathered inside the fortress to shelter themselves from the army rushing at them in the distance. They bolted the stronghold tightly and awaited the pounding soldiers. Upon reaching the stronghold, the enemy used every last layer of ammunition in attempt to knock down the fortress. Unsuccessful, the army retreated and never returned. A sigh of relief fell over the crowd. After a moment of silence, they cheered and yelled. Finally, they were safe and free.

Like a fortress, the first seven articles of the Constitution were constructed by some of the most intelligent and most dedicated men in history. The articles outlined three strong pillars to use as support beams for our government and have protected the rights of citizens for two and a half centuries. Standing the test of time, the articles have been strong barriers against an arsenal of attacks. Without them, the division of power and protection of citizens' rights would be absent.

In a republic, a division of power is critical to cling to the ideals of the country. “The Constitution was written very precisely, to restrain the power and force of government and to protect the liberties of each and every one of us” (Dr. Ron Paul). The first three articles lay out these three pillars of government: Congressional, Presidential, and Judicial authority; therefore not one branch alone has full power, creating the idea of checks and balances. The Legislative

branch defines Congressional duty, while the Executive branch comprises the carrying out of the law, and the Judicial branch establishes court of law. The first three articles, the strong pillars of our government, have set an example for the rest of the world by holding to a standard of orderly freedom and ideals.

Overall, Article Four guards the rights and freedoms of the states and their people. New states can be admitted into the country and are entitled to a republican form of government. When writing, the builders of the Constitution had freedom on their minds and desired to avoid monarchy. For example, they strived to abolish any state from succumbing to any king or dictator. In addition to protecting the states, the article also mentions the subject of criminal activity. It holds criminals accountable for their actions regardless of what state they are in. Case and point, if a man commits murder in Indiana, and flees to my state of Illinois, this article still administers justice for his actions in that state. Therefore, the citizens of Illinois are also protected. Thankfully, this article keeps the people of the states safe.

The first four Articles of the Constitution shelter and protect the United States from inevitable storms. As seen all over the world, other countries face a dictatorship or anarchy. Their weak fortresses result in a broken democracy, in addition to complete chaos. In the U.S. Constitution however, the founders further protected us by adding additional framework found in Articles Five, Six and Seven. For instance, when amending the Constitution, two-thirds of both houses must agree before the amendment can be passed. James Madison and his comrades' were ingenious, in the way that they created a fence against a minority deciding for the entire country. To demonstrate further, the judges in each state must make decisions according to the Constitution, protecting us from their own subjective reasoning. Furthermore, even at the writing of the Constitution back in 1787, the Founding Fathers encompassed all six articles when they

called for the majority of the states to ratify the Constitution by adding Article Seven. The Articles have assisted in the building of strong military and strong state and local governments. They have entirely protected us from the changing times and the shifting sand of cultural ideologies. The walls that have been built allow the fortress to endure years of wear and tear. James Madison summed it up well when he stated, "The happy union of these states is a wonder; their Constitution is a miracle; their example the hope of liberty throughout the world." After over two and a half centuries of shifting political agendas, our ideals as a country have remained steadfast.

The Constitution has avoided the Trojan horse and withstood many attacks that have come against it. Fortunately, the Founding Fathers made our Constitution precisely to protect the rights of the people. Combining the three pillars of government, rights of individual states as well as rights of the people, the Constitution holds the country together. Although compromise is sometimes a necessity, the articles remain as a rule book for the entire nation.

After the fortress was complete, the town became a nation; a strong, stable, free and orderly nation. The fortress of freedom laid the foundation for the years to come.