



“From Where I Sit ...”

The Rationality of the 2nd Amendment

Last Sunday, at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland, TX, 26 parishioners, including children, were gunned down in a senseless criminal incident. Because it is recent, the enormity of this loss lives in our memories. And yet, it is only one of so many occasions (terrorist, criminal incidents, etc.) where innocent, unarmed civilians including

parishioners, have been killed often with weapons that a “rational” person would think ought to be restricted or outlawed for non-military use. Yet our Representatives in Congress have failed to bring about any “reasonable or rational” gun laws or adequate background checks that would limit the availability of weapons that contribute to such extreme and unnecessary loss of life. Congress cites their inactivity based on their interpretation of the “2nd Amendment”. In the meantime, the deaths continue to rise! One study notes the following of the most recent three years:



<u>Year</u>	<u>Incidents</u>	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Injuries</u>
2015	7	47	49
2016	13	66	136
2017 (10 mos.)	8	103	607

Often cited but seldom stated, the 2nd Amendment [to the US Constitution] states *“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”*

Before I continue, let me share that I grew up on a farm where we had and used a “22 caliber” single shot rifle. I was a Boy Scout and later an Explorer where advancement required you to learn how to shoot a rifle. During my first two years of college, I enrolled in Air Force ROTC where again I had to handle and shoot a [more military-type] rifle. I say this to affirm that I am not opposed to reasonable weaponry.

In seminary, we were taught that biblical and textual context is important for effective preaching. In like manner, the context of the 2nd Amendment is equally important. On this notion, I offer two points:

- 1) At the time this amendment was passed, weaponry available to the “people” was primarily a muzzle loading single shot rifle. With limited ability to manufacture weapons to arm a Militia, the privately-owned rifles of the citizenry were needed to support the Continental Army. Such is not the case today.
- 2) Additionally, the amendment clearly infers that the right of the people to keep and bear arms was to insure a free State through the maintenance of a well-regulated Militia. A militia is a temporary army; however, the United States has a “standing” Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps which far surpasses the notion of a “Militia”. Hence – the need for keeping and bearing “military type” arms in the presence of a fully developed “military” [not militia] to defend the State does not appear necessary or needed.

I'm sure there are other sufficient points that would also support this position. The bottom line, proven by the increase in fatalities and injuries, clearly indicates that the failure to limit military type weapons through prudent gun laws along with adequate background checks is not rational nor reasonable. Too many people have died and are dying needlessly because of our government's failure to act with "rationality".

It may seem foolish of me but, at some point in the not-to-distant future, I believe that reason will prevail; and that the measure of a life, regardless of its age, sex, creed or color, will be valued for its intended worth by God, its creator, and thus be fully entitled to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Or at least that's the way it looks to me...

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