

"Snakes and Ladders" and the Obedience of One MP

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Life—most of us know—has its ups and downs. Some writers have characterized it as “three steps forward and two steps back.” Whether it’s health, finances, career or relationships, almost everyone has experienced setbacks and obstacles on the road to success. Occasionally, we may find ourselves going through an “open door” of Providence in the form of an opportunity or a promotion.

In politics, history is riddled with stunning examples of powerful personalities who have struggled for years with disappointments and repeated failures before their historic moment in the spotlight on the world stage. Abraham Lincoln was defeated in many elections before winning the one that sealed his name in history and put him in the centre of a divided nation. Winston Churchill lurched through an extended period of agonizing obscurity before being called on by his nation and by God to defend Western civilization from the Nazi scourge that nearly overwhelmed it in WWII. Sometimes a relatively minor event can change the course of history.

Nations and their rulers rise and fall; men and women—both the powerful and the seemingly insignificant—come on the stage, play out their roles, and return to the earth. Some are remembered with gratitude. Some are remembered with horror. Most are remembered for but a short time, except by their families and friends. Circumstances, personalities, and timing all intersect under the sovereign hand of God. History as a whole (including our bit-parts in it) unfolds before us, marked and influenced by our responses to the actions of others and our acts of obedience or disobedience to the call of God.

What does all this have to do with “Snakes and Ladders?” And what does a game of chance have to do with the deliberate and courageous actions of one MP? The MP referred to is, of course, Mark Warawa, MP for Langley, relatively unknown until recently. And the analogy of “Snakes and Ladders” brings to mind the corporate ladder, the social-political ladder that so many politicians have climbed, rung after rung, desperately seeking the pinnacle of power, or at least a place close to the top. In the board game by that name, landing on a ladder takes you up in a hurry; but landing on a snake takes you back down to a lower station and you have to start all over again.

Last week, Mr. Warawa stepped on a snake; at least it appeared that he did. But then he turned a disappointing setback into a “teachable moment” for Canada. He was expecting to be able to debate and vote on his Motion-408, calling on the House to condemn sex-selective abortion, otherwise known as “gendercide.” On Thursday, March 21, he received a shock when the Subcommittee on Private Members’ Business ruled—contrary to fact and reason—that his motion was “non-votable,” effectively blocking it from debate in the House. A member with less courage and determination might have accepted this setback and quietly said to himself, “At least I tried.” But not Mr. Warawa. Mr. Warawa looked at the ruling, examined the facts, and determined that he had been unfairly silenced and that his motion should

have been deemed votable. Mr. Warawa declared his intention to seek a remedy through appealing the decision to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Then he got yet another surprise.

He planned to speak about the issue during the one minute allotted to him to deliver an S.O. 31, a privilege all members have. However, his speaking slot was cancelled 15 minutes before his speech was to be given because of the “topic.” Mr. Warawa once again rose to the occasion. Without waiting for a ladder of chance or a blessing from the PM, Mr. Warawa and several colleagues went toe-to-toe with the Party Whip, asking the Speaker to rule in favour of free speech for elected MPs.

The situation has continued to unfold, with closed caucus sessions, committee meetings in camera and various opinions being offered by members of other parties seated in the House, none of whom want to debate sex-selective abortion, yet concerned about the loss of freedom of speech. A confluence of events, personalities, and circumstances have created a special moment in Canadian political history and the obedience of one brave MP has made Canadians aware of the “democracy deficit” in Ottawa and more aware of the issue of gendercide.

Mr. Warawa did not do any of this to draw attention to himself. Nobody enjoys being muzzled, isolated, and rejected. Mr. Warawa took a stand on principles and he refused to budge, regardless of personal cost. In doing so, he was given a ladder right to the top. His obedience and determination have earned him a place in history. Leader of the Christian Heritage Party of Canada, Mr. Jim Hnatiuk, has offered a salute to the Hon. Mark Warawa², with gratitude for the courage of his convictions. Mr. Hnatiuk assured future CHP MPs that they will never experience the type of muzzling in the CHP that Mr. Warawa has gone through but will always have the freedom to represent their constituents and to express their conscience-guided concerns.

After all, political integrity is not a game of chance but the result of faithful obedience to principles. May we see much more of that in Ottawa than we have in the past. Perhaps Mr. Warawa has set an example many other MPs will want to follow. Let us hope so. Our nation hangs in the balance.

If you’re concerned about the concentration of power in the Prime Minister’s Office and the bullying of MPs through partisan conformity and “whipped votes,” be sure to join CHP Canada³, the only federal party promising free votes to its MPs and the only federal party supporting the “protection of innocent human life from conception to natural death.”

Footnotes

¹ <http://christiangovernance.com/snakes-and-ladders-and-the-obedience-of-one-mp-rod-taylor/>

² www.youtube.com/watch?v=InqDUfEObBI

³ www.chp.ca/get-involved