

Friendly Fire and Suicide: Two Tragedies

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This week the nation was saddened by Defence Minister Kenney's news release that Canada has lost a soldier in the war against ISIS. The announcement was made all the more tragic by the frank explanation that Sgt. Andrew Joseph Doiron was killed by "friendly fire" from troops which Canadian soldiers have gone into harm's way to protect and assist.

The tragedy of losing a loved one on the battlefield is never easy but that grief is compounded by the nagging thought that the loss was unnecessary...that it could have been prevented by people on our side. It occurs to me that there is a similarity between that grief and the helplessness and sorrow felt by those who have lost a loved one to suicide. Although Sgt. Doiron's death was unintended, the sadness of losing a valued member of our community due to carelessness reminds us all of the value we place on every human life.

I have experienced with others the heartache of losing friends to suicide. The often unanswered questions that trouble the family and friends of a suicide victim are not the kind of questions that go away quietly. They centre around: Why? Why now? Why him or her? Why didn't he or she talk about it? Why didn't I see this coming?

A friendly fire incident must raise similar questions: Why didn't they recognize their friends? Why didn't they confirm their identity before firing? Why weren't the protocols more stringent?

The CHP has had its share of friendly fire. We've had good social conservatives tell people not to vote for us. We've had good members pull their support because they've been convinced that we can never win. We've had close personal friends who have voted for another candidate (their second choice) instead of for us because they didn't want to take a chance that a candidate from one of the "other" parties might get in.

We've had close personal friends and supporters abandon the CHP because of one policy they don't like. They've tolerated (in other parties) poor moral choices and poor party policies on social issues while rejecting the CHP for a single issue with which they disagree — often a relatively minor issue.

Some members or outside critics claim the CHP is a "one-issue party" because we are the only federal party to talk about abortion. Really, the problem is that abortion is a one-party issue. None of the other parties will touch it. We thank God that there are still some courageous MPs in the Conservative Party who refuse to be silenced by the power brokers in the PMO and in the party machinery inner circle. Like us, those pro-life heroes in the Conservative Party who stand bravely to defend the pre-born face friendly fire from their own caucus, from those timid and politically-correct MPs and campaign strategists who assume the pro-life view is a liability and who place more value on votes than on lives.

Others say the CHP should focus only on the abortion issue and leave all other issues to the big parties. This also is friendly fire but it is a criticism we must respond to; while abortion and pro-life policy rank very high on our scale of values and deserve our diligent attention, Canadian law and culture is complex and any political candidate seeking public support must assure voters that we have an interest in and answers for the questions they have regarding the economy, healthcare, international trade, national defence, agriculture and transportation. The CHP does have policies on all these issues and we offer Canadians solutions based on unchanging Biblical truth.

Let us in the CHP reflect on our responsibility to recognize our friends and allies. Let's be sure that we are not guilty of friendly fire on those who are our allies, on those who labour in the pro-life trenches. We in the pro-life movement fail in building a sense of unity. We not only become guilty of friendly fire, but we engage in collective suicide; not the personal tragedy of ropes and guns and pills but a corporate tragedy that condemns the pro-life movement to failure.

Meanwhile the CHP is the only federal party that promotes the protection of innocent human life from conception to natural death. We oppose assisted suicide and euthanasia which—if accepted— will certainly lead to doctors deciding (based on efficiencies and budgets) when people will die. We think it tragic that the Supreme Court has placed the elderly and the disabled at risk of “friendly fire” from those they trust...their own doctors. We believe in the supremacy of God and the rule of law. If you share our principles and our concerns, we invite you to join us in the trenches¹.

We reflect on the tragic death of Sgt. Doiron and we honour his sacrifice, what Abraham Lincoln called, “the last full measure of devotion.” We pray that he will not have died in vain but his sacrifice will help establish the kind of free society where all human life is valued.

Footnotes

¹ www.chp.ca/get-involved