

MVA Pre-Election Assembly

Tuesday, April 4, 2017

My name is Greg Mohr. I serve as bishop for the British Columbia Synod of our Lutheran Church.

The measure of a society lies not in its economic prowess.

Rather, the measure of a society is in how it treats the most vulnerable among us;
how it treats the less fortunate,
the most at risk,
the ones who have little,
those who, as some would describe, are “the least” among us.

For they are not the least.
They are brothers and sisters;
they are human beings.
How do we, as a society, accompany those in need?
How do we care for each other?

It is the responsibility of our municipal, provincial and national governments to care for its citizens.
Yet far too many are left behind.

Yes, we have some measure of success with redistributive income tax policies.
But what does it say about us here in BC if we do not even have a provincial
poverty reduction plan?
Why do people have to work two jobs?
Why do thousands of children — CHILDREN — go to school hungry every day?

All kinds of reports indicate that if we look just at the basic economic returns, it makes tremendous economic sense to increase minimum wage, disability payments, and social assistance rates, among others.

But beyond the pure economic argument is a more important one: whom do we value in our society?

Is every person a person of worth?

The scriptures from my faith tradition consistently speak of the obligation of government and of landowners to pay particular attention to “the widow and the orphan” in their midst —
those in their society who had no other way to survive day to day than to glean grain from a field already harvested.

They had no status, no rights.
They were easily ignored.
Yet it is to these that God turns God’s attention.

Who are the “widows and orphans” among us today?

The list is long.

But the economic capabilities and capacities of our province are great.
Surely we can do better.
We must do better.

The question before us truly is: What kind of civil society do we want?