

Spiritual-moral-social-scientific questions concerning Saskatchewan's energy choices not or poorly addressed in the UDP Report.

Presentation to:

Mr. Dan Perrins, Chair

Future of Uranium in Saskatchewan Public Consultation Process

By James V. Penna, Ph.D.

On Behalf of the Members of the Justice and Peace Committee of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

Saskatoon, May 28th , 2009

First Principle of Social Justice:

The Earth is sacred. All life is interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, the Earth's ecological diversity, beauty and health must be protected.

- *[This principle and the five below are taken from A Pastoral Letter on The Integrity of Creation and the Athabasca Oil Sands by †Luc Bouchard Bishop of St. Paul in Alberta, Canada January 25th, 2009 (See Appendix A)]*

What the Bishops of Saskatchewan say* (See Appendix B):

‘Christian churches affirm that God created the earth and that God continues to establish and preserve a just and ordered life for all creation. Human beings are part of the vast ecosystem of the planet. Choices made by human beings must respect God's creation in its careful interrelationship of earth, water, air and all living things. Exploiting the earth's resources without regard for the consequences is sinful against God and God's creation, according to Christian belief.’

Questions arising when applying the first principle to the nuclear chain:

1. Does the nuclear chain respect the interconnected and interdependent nature of all living things?
2. Does the nuclear chain protect the earth's ecological diversity, beauty and health?
3. Does the nuclear chain protect our water? “All nuclear power plants must be situated beside a major supply of cooling water. Because climate change has already begun to

leave a dramatic mark on the Canadian Rockies through recession of the Alberta Glacier, a recession of volume flows of water is occurring.” * How will a nuclear reactor along the North Saskatchewan River or any body of prairie water impact the volume and safety of water supplies of all communities upstream and downstream from a nuclear reactor?

*Doug Roache, *The Edmonton Journal*, May06, 2009 –p. A15

4. How does a nuclear plant nurture and safeguard all creatures which are gifts from God and with which we enjoy a type of kinship?
5. Does the nuclear chain encourage recycling, energy conservation, the prevention of indiscriminate destruction of plant and animal life, and the protection of waterways?
6. Does the nuclear chain respect creation and foster hope or does it abuse creation and instill despair or even blasphemy?
7. Does the UDP Report and the consultation process provide for an opportunity to examine the immense new potential of alternate sources of energy?

Second Principle of Social Justice:

The Earth’s resources must be shared by peaceful means in an equitable manner that allow current and future generations to meet their needs.

What the Bishops of Saskatchewan say:

They see the necessity for careful examination of the costs and benefits of a range of energy options.

Questions arising when applying the 2nd principle to the nuclear chain:

8. Given the availability and easy access to nuclear technology and the illegal movement of nuclear materials how do we guarantee that so-called “atoms for peace” will not be used for atoms for war?
9. Does the UDP Report address the staggering costs to taxpayers of nuclear power? What are the real costs and benefits of the nuclear chain? Is the public informed about the full cost of so-called value added uranium activities?
10. What costs will be passed on to the public purse both now and into the future? Will the provincial government and ultimately taxpayers be responsible for the enormous costs of nuclear installations, decommissioning, management of nuclear waste and radioactive pollution of land and water?
11. Why do insurance companies not provide insurance against nuclear accidents and radioactive contamination?

12. Does any financial gain justify the serious harm that will be done to people's health and to the environment by nuclear power?
13. Does the nuclear chain foster goodwill and truth telling, encourage careful stewardship, and promote cordial relations among peoples- neighbors with neighbors? communities with communities?
14. Does the nuclear chain facilitate the sharing of the earth's resources by peaceful means in an equitable manner that allow current and future generations to meet their needs or are we sentencing them to bear the yoke of nuclear waste and contamination?

Third Principle of Social Justice:

All peoples have the right to participate fully in and have control over decisions that affect their lives and communities.

What the Bishops of Saskatchewan say:

They ... encourage the Government to invite public participation in developing a new energy strategy for Saskatchewan.”

Questions arising when applying the 3rd principle to the nuclear chain:

15. Are the stakeholder groups that have been invited to participate in the consultation process representative of the total spectrum of Saskatchewan communities?
16. How fair and impartial is it that the very people, who have vested interest in nuclear development and who were members of the UDP Panel, have further input into a public consultation process allowing them to evaluate and support their very own recommendations found in the UDP report?
17. Does the consultation process allow for full public disclosure and study of the nature of the nuclear chain?
18. Was the full truth about the nuclear chain made available and accessible in an understandable way so that citizens were given full information and the time required to make an informed decision?
19. What lessons can be learned from Port Hope Ontario which since the mid 1930's has been at the nucleus of uranium refining in Canada? In 2003, Cameco, the world's largest publicly traded uranium company, proposed an expansion of its existing uranium refinery to begin producing slightly enriched uranium—a process that increases both the risk of a criticality accident and an environmental risk. People became alarmed. “Families Against Radiation Exposure,” a citizens' group, emerged in 2004 to provide citizens with an independent source of information, and also to ask some questions. This led to a divided community that pitted neighbors against neighbors. Is this the kind of division we want or need in Saskatchewan?

20. Also, Why are Port Hope Citizens confronted with:
- the removal of millions of tonnes of radioactive wastes at great public cost?
 - uranium and chemical leaching in Lake Ontario?
 - evidence of neutron radiation which should not have been present in Port Hope since it originates from spent fuel rods?
 - no willingness by the government to do scientific study of the community to assess local fears about greater cancers and illnesses?

Fourth Principle of Social Justice:

In the interests of solidarity and the common good, decisions made for the benefit of one community must not violate the rights of other communities.

What the Bishops of Saskatchewan say:

“It is critical that any recommendations be made only after full and open consultation with the people of this province. “

Questions arising when applying the 4th principle to the nuclear chain:

21. Does the current approach of the Saskatchewan Provincial Government respect the right of people to participate fully in and have control over decisions about nuclear issues that affect their lives and communities?
22. Why is a constricted consultation process thrust upon the public for such a short period in the spring time with out the public having adequate information about the nature of the nuclear chain and an opportunity to examine renewable energy alternatives? Is it fair that the small UDP Panel had access to 3 million dollars but the public with no resources or opportunity to become conversant with the issues is expected to respond in what appears to many to be a very contrived consultation process?
23. Is the Sask. Government approach to the implementation of its nuclear agenda democratic?
24. Why was the nuclear issue not openly discussed as an election issue in 2007? (Letter sent to the Leaders of the New Democratic, Sask. and Liberal Parties. See Appendix C below.)
25. Did the composition of the UDP Panel constitute an impartial representative body of all sectors of the Saskatchewan community?
26. Have the UDP Report and the proponents of nuclear power made their case in the light of growing doubts about the wisdom of further investment in nuclear power?
27. Even if SK people are divided on the issue, is it fair to impose uranium refining and nuclear power on Saskatchewan citizens without an open, informed public discussion of it and a thorough examination of renewable energy alternatives?

28. Does the UDP Report recognize that renewable energy shows signs of being able to surpass both fossil fuels and nuclear power in meeting the energy demands of a growing population?

Fifth Principle of Social Justice:

The importance of the Earth's resources to the common good takes priority over any possible commercial value.

What the Bishops of Saskatchewan say:

The Bishops recognize “the global need for urgent action on climate change and the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from coal-burning power plants in Saskatchewan.”

Questions arising when applying the 5th principle to the nuclear chain:

29. Does the consultation process allow for the more important debate over the ethics and practicality of introducing nuclear power into Saskatchewan, enabling the public to concentrate on the best ways to promote sustainable development that protects the environment?
30. Will the nuclear value chain fulfill the need to respect the earth by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to the common good of society?
31. Are the thousands of tons of wastes from mining and milling already generated safely contained so they will not contaminate the delicate northern Saskatchewan ecological system?
32. Although the Sask. Government has indicated that they are not interested in nuclear waste what will it do with the nuclear waste from a nuclear reactor in the province? What will it do with the depleted uranium waste generated in the enrichment process? Could generating our own nuclear waste make us a "nuclear backwater" where we end up as a national and perhaps international nuclear waste dump?
33. Given that each link of the nuclear value added chain generates large volumes of uniquely hard-to-manage wastes -- wastes that in many cases will require care for hundreds of thousands of years - is it wise to produce more waste despite the fact that there is **no proven safe long term plan** for the management of these wastes, the unproven NWMO approach notwithstanding?

Sixth Principle of Social Justice:

In the extraction, management, and use of resources, human rights must be respected. Preference must be given to the rights of indigenous peoples and those who are marginalized by poverty or because of race and gender.

What the Bishops of Saskatchewan say:

"Exploiting the earth's resources without regard for the consequences is **sinful against God and God's creation**, according to Christian belief. Technology and economic development, including mining and power generation, must be subject to critical reflection in light of the impact that such actions have on people and the environment in the present and into the future."

Therefore, the bishops call on ... "the Government of Saskatchewan to provide adequate opportunities for Saskatchewan citizens to engage in open, informed discussion based on unbiased and complete information before the Government acts on recommendations from the nuclear industry or the government-appointed panel."

Questions arising when applying the 6th principle to the nuclear chain:

34. Do the extraction, management, and use of uranium respect human rights of indigenous people, and the diversity and integrity of urban, rural, agricultural and recreational communities?
35. Have First Nations, Metis, farming, rural and urban communities received adequate opportunities to examine the full impact of nuclear projects on their traditional way of life?
36. How does the nuclear chain help those who are marginalized by poverty, race and gender?

In conclusion, a close look at each link of the nuclear chain in view of the above questions shows that :

The entire nuclear chain has already caused harm to human health or the environment.

All levels of ionizing radiation and radioactive emissions from each link of the nuclear chain are harmful.

There are differing scientific-technical international opinions about the levels and the causes of the dangers associated with the nuclear chain,

The development of the UDP Report has not been open, it has not allowed for access to unbiased nuclear information by the public and it has not involved an examination of the full range of energy alternatives.

Therefore:

Faced with demonstrable harm from every link of the nuclear chain, the precautionary approach urges a full evaluation of available energy alternatives for the purpose of preventing or minimizing harm. A precautionary approach, which obliges us to take action to prevent harm, should be pursued.

What actions must be taken?

1. Examine all the energy alternatives for achieving electrical needs and climate control targets, intending to adopt the least-harmful way.
2. Shift the burden of proof -- when consequences are uncertain, give the benefit of the doubt to nature, public health and community harmony and well-being.
3. Expect responsible parties to bear the burden of producing needed information. Expect reasonable assurances of safety for products or industrial projects before marketing or development. The Precautionary Principle trumps the so-called ALARA principle which is a utilitarian calculation based simply upon economic factors and not upon the intrinsic nature and consequences of what is proposed.
4. The process of applying a precautionary approach must be open, informed and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. The concept of host communities for nuclear installations, be it waste or otherwise, is a red herring since nuclear installations are not just local matters. They will impact entire regions, the province and the country as a whole and ultimately mother earth itself !
5. Throughout the decision-making process, we must honor the intelligence of all Saskatchewan citizens who will be affected by the decisions, and they must be given the opportunity to have unbiased information so that they are able have a real "say" in the outcome. This approach naturally allows issues of ethics, right-and-wrong, history, cultural appropriateness, and justice to become important in the decision.

This conclusion is an adaptation of “THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE IN THE REAL WORLD”

By Peter Montague [http://www.precaution.org/lib/prn_pp_def.htm]

Appendix A

2009 January 25 - The Integrity of Creation and the Athabasca Oil Sands

A Pastoral Letter on The Integrity of Creation and the Athabasca Oil Sands to The Faithful of the diocese of St. Paul on The Occasion of the Jubilee Year in Honour of St. Paul by †Luc Bouchard Bishop of St. Paul in Alberta, Canada January 25th, 2009

The Integrity of Creation and the Athabasca Oil Sands

“Faced with the widespread destruction of the environment people everywhere are coming to understand that we cannot continue to use the goods of the earth as we have in the past. . . a new ecological awareness is beginning to emerge the ecological crisis is a moral issue.” Pope John Paul II, Jan. 1, 1990, Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation (par. #'s 1 & 15)

“Alongside the ecology of nature there exists what can be called a “human” ecology, which in turn demands a “social”

ecology. All this means that humanity, if it truly desires peace, must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology. Experience shows that disregard for the environment always harms human coexistence and vice versa." Pope Benedict XVI, Jan. 1, 2007, *The Human Person, the Heart of Peace* (par. #8)

Introduction

Dear faithful of the Diocese of St. Paul, the ecological crisis, described above by Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II, is evident in many parts of Canada. Our wasteful consumerist lifestyle, combined with political and industrial short-sightedness and neglect, are damaging our air, land, and water. Personal, social, and political change will be necessary to meet this national challenge.

· The first section, "Theological Reflection on Creation," presents the reasons why safeguarding the natural environment is a religious obligation.

Theological Reflection on Creation

"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." (Gen. 1,31.)

The environmental movement has been steadily gaining in public support and awareness since the publication in 1962 of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*. This movement has functioned for the Church as a prophetic "sign of the times," causing the Church to re-examine her traditions and theology in the light of documented ecological distress. Since 1965, from all parts of the world, Catholic bishops have written over forty individual pastoral letters addressing the deteriorating quality of the world's air, water, climate, and food. Additionally many joint pastoral letters written by regional and national conferences of bishops as well as several papal documents on the ecological crisis have also been written. As a result of this international theological reflection, a global Catholic moral consensus now exists: the environmental crisis is real and it requires a religious and moral response. In the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, published by the Vatican in 2005, a very significant portion of the text, chapter 10, is dedicated to "Safeguarding the Environment."⁽²⁾

Environmental ethics is no longer of interest only to the specialist or to an elite group of theologians, but is now of great significance for mainstream Catholic life. I will briefly summarize the major themes presented in the *Compendium*, in papal encyclicals, in the pastoral letters of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Bishops of Alberta and in the many pastoral letters provided by Catholic bishops throughout the world and then apply these principles to the current development of the oil sands:

Foundational Catholic Theological Principles Supporting Environmental Ethics

- Biblical faith proclaims that creation is good. The earth is presented in the book of Genesis as being like a garden that is to be tended so as to sustain all of life.⁽³⁾ God's covenant with Noah includes all earth's creatures that are later depicted in the psalms as joining with humanity in a common chorus of praise to God.⁽⁴⁾ **All creatures, therefore, are gifts from God to be nurtured and safeguarded with which we enjoy a type of kinship.**⁽⁵⁾ The earth is humanity's home given as a gift from God. The earth, therefore, is to be treasured, loved and safeguarded.⁽⁶⁾
- The earth has intrinsic value. Its future is still unfolding and has been part of the universe from the beginning in the form of a promise; one that Catholics believe will be completed when all of creation shares in the fulfillment of Christ's redemption. That is what we pray for when we say, "thy kingdom come." **To abuse creation, therefore, constitutes a lack of faith, a type of despair, or even a blasphemy.**⁽⁷⁾
- Jesus' many references to flowers, birds, crops, seasons, weather, etc. reveal that nature has for him a revelatory significance.⁽⁸⁾ Christians learn God's ways primarily by reflecting on the Word of God but also by closely observing creation which in a sacramental like manner, make visible the power and beauty of God.⁽⁹⁾ Spiritual growth results when Christians nurture a sense of "solidarity and companionship with all creation." **Therefore, when people destroy or damage creation they are limiting their ability to know and love God.** ⁽¹¹⁾
- Creation has limits, and constitutes in itself an objective order that requires respect.⁽¹²⁾ When creation is threatened with violent disrespect, it is only a matter of time before this violence spreads resulting in a breakdown of civil peace. ⁽¹³⁾ **Therefore, when we allow creation to be damaged and degraded we risk losing our sense of God's natural order and even our**

sense of God's existence.(14)

- Pope John XXIII in his 1963 encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*, was the first Pope to extend the concept of the common good to a global, international dimension. Pope John Paul II extended it further to include the common good of creation when he stated that government is required to work toward a healthy environment, adequate and safe water, and effective regulation to limit hazardous pollution, and to insure clean air and safe food. He specifically noted that these goods cannot be sacrificed simply for the sake of financial gain.(15) The Canadian Catholic bishops further refined this concept by noting: the "Common good should be conceived as the sustenance and flourishing of life for all beings and for future generations." (16) **Therefore even great financial gain does not justify serious harm to the environment.**(17)

- When there is uncertainty as to whether a development project seriously endangers the environment, a pre-cautionary principle utilizing prudence and caution should guide the decision making process which itself must be administratively transparent.(18) **Therefore, massive projects that clearly endanger the environment must be approached in a deliberate, open, and consultative manner.**

- "The relationship of indigenous peoples to their land and resources deserves particular attention, since it is a fundamental expression of their identity."(19) **Therefore industrial projects that directly affect the traditional way of life for First Nations and Metis people must receive their support and approval.**

Appendix B

Saskatchewan Bishops call for critical reflection on uranium mining and a proposed nuclear power plant in Saskatchewan

Ash Wednesday, February 25, 2009, Regina

The Bishops of the Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Ukrainian Catholic churches in Saskatchewan call on their members and all Saskatchewan citizens to consider with care the issues surrounding the proposed expansion of the uranium industry in Saskatchewan and make their views known to the Government of Saskatchewan.

The Government of Saskatchewan is exploring "value-added" initiatives to expand the uranium industry in our province, including the possibility of a nuclear power plant being built in Saskatchewan. Bruce Power, the country's

only private nuclear generating company, has deemed an area of Saskatchewan (roughly from Lloydminster to Prince Albert) to be a potentially suitable site for such a development. In March 2009 a government-appointed panel is expected to make recommendations regarding such initiatives. It is critical that any recommendations be made only after full and open consultation with the people of this province.

Christian churches affirm that God created the earth and that God continues to establish and preserve a just and ordered life for all creation. Human beings are part of the vast ecosystem of the planet. Choices made by human beings must respect God's creation in its careful interrelationship of earth, water, air and all living things. Exploiting the earth's resources without regard for the consequences is sinful against God and God's creation, according to Christian belief. Technology and economic development, including mining and power generation, must be subject to critical reflection in light of the impact that such actions have on people and the environment in the present and into the future.

The Bishops recognize the global need for urgent action on climate change and the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from coal-burning power plants in Saskatchewan. They appreciate the intention of the Government in proposing nuclear power to reduce emissions. At the same time, they see the necessity for careful examination of the costs and benefits of a range of energy options and encourage the Government to invite public participation in developing a new energy strategy for Saskatchewan.

The Bishops call on Premier Brad Wall, Crown Corporations Minister Ken Cheveldayoff, Environment Minister Nancy Heppner, Energy and Resources Minister Bill Boyd, First Nations Minister June Draude, Enterprise Saskatchewan Minister Lyle Stewart, and the Government of Saskatchewan to provide adequate opportunities for Saskatchewan citizens to engage in open, informed discussion based on unbiased and complete information before the Government acts on recommendations from the nuclear industry or the government-appointed panel.

+Rodney Andrews, Anglican Bishop of Saskatoon

+Bryan Bayda, CSSR, Ukrainian Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon

+Cynthia G Halmarson, Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

+Daniel Bohan, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Regina

+Gregory Kerr-Wilson, Anglican Bishop of Qu'Appelle

+Albert Legatt, Roman Catholic Bishop of Saskatoon

+Albert Thévenot, M.Afr., Roman Catholic Bishop of Prince Albert

Appendix C

OPEN LETTER TO THE LEADERS OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC, SASK AND LIBERAL PARTIES OF SASKATCHEWAN

Why Are You Ducking The Nuclear Question?

There is something surreal about this election, for none of you has had to fundamentally justify your pronuclear policies. Saskatchewan is now the major front-end uranium supplier of the global nuclear system, and this issue demands public scrutiny.

Last year Premier Calvert travelled to France to get support from Areva to build a uranium refinery here. Saskatchewan exports all its uranium, and some argue a refinery would add value before export, and strengthen the provincial economy. Meanwhile, Calvert is on record as opposing nuclear power here, and in this election has highlighted a commitment to expand non-polluting renewable energy use *at home*. What's good for the goose (us) is, apparently, not good for the gander (those who import uranium from us).

David Karwacki and Brad Wall haven't pointed out this huge disconnect, perhaps because they wish to hide their own. In the televised leader's debate about the future political direction of the province there was not one mention of "uranium" or "nuclear", even when directly asked a question about global warming.

Sask Party literature quotes the Suzuki Foundation that Saskatchewan has the highest per capita greenhouse gases (GHGs) in Canada. Yet Mr. Wall won't come out and say whether or not he supports nuclear power replacing coal plants here. And Mr. Wall doesn't quote Suzuki on how heavy oil development in the tar sands (which all of you want to further develop in Saskatchewan) is soon to become the world's largest single source of GHGs?

As the leaders of your parties you are letting each other off the hook on nuclear and energy policy. This is patently irresponsible in view of the Saskatchewan economy becoming more dependent on the production of non-renewable energy that contributes to radioactive contamination and global warming. That the media has not asked you the hard questions is disconcerting. So let us ask you a few.

Is Nuclear Sustainable?

Any short-term economic spin-offs from a uranium refinery would depend on the continuation of billions in public subsidies that have kept the nuclear industry afloat. Without these subsidies the market cost of nuclear would likely triple. Despite this help nuclear is quickly losing ground to renewable energy sources, which already produce more electricity globally than nuclear. Aren't you concerned that our growing dependency on a non-renewable energy economy will cripple our future?

All of you acknowledge the need for a sustainable economy, yet seem unwilling to evaluate your pronuclear policies in those terms. The IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) estimates at today's low usage, where nuclear provides only 16% of electricity and 3% of primary energy worldwide, uranium reserves would run out in 85 years. Each job from nuclear costs one million or more dollars in capital.

How do you justify diverting scarce capital into a costly uranium refinery, or nuclear power plant, when there is such urgency to create truly sustainable, non-polluting, renewable energy systems to avert catastrophic climate change? Especially when these sustainable alternatives are cheaper, create far more and much safer employment, and can get on-stream quickly enough to make a difference?

We are not picking on Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is not alone in having a huge economic dilemma over sustainability. Even though asbestos has proven to be highly carcinogenic, and is continuing to kill thousands of people exposed to it, the world's largest asbestos mine in Quebec has not yet been shut down. Short-term economics there, too, dwarf human health, the environment and morality. The consequences of spreading radioactivity from

uranium and nuclear across the planet are, of course, far more devastating, and include the added dangers of catastrophic nuclear reactor accidents and the spread of radiation weaponry.

Is Nuclear Environmentally Healthy?

You all seem to have accepted some version of the nuclear industry propaganda that it provides the “clean” magic bullet for global warming. But the nuclear fuel system contributes to GHGs. Saskatchewan uranium is enriched at two dirty coal plants in Kentucky, and let’s not forget the huge energy used in uranium mining. The *Globe and Mail* reports that the Cigar Lake mine requires the largest cement plant in Saskatchewan to try to stabilize its underground tunnels.

The private nuclear plants proposed for Alberta will be used to enhance the production of heavy oil, the dirtiest of all fossil fuels. The Battleford area is most likely being targeted for a uranium refinery because of potential demand in the tar sands. We ask you in all sincerity: what does this proposed twinning of nuclear and heavy oil say about the nuclear industry’s “environmental ticket”?

The new Candu design proposed for Alberta would use reprocessed spent reactor fuel (nuclear waste). This would increase the pressure to make Northern Saskatchewan and/or Alberta an international nuclear waste dump. Again, as with uranium mining, it would primarily be Indigenous land that would be sacrificed for this military-industrial venture. What is your position on Saskatchewan becoming a nuclear waste dump?

We hope each of you has reflected on the more-than-disturbing fact that the plutonium in nuclear wastes is toxic for at least 800 generations – which is five times the period it took humans to migrate from North Africa around the whole planet? Don’t you think the continued production of nuclear wastes in return for small economic payoffs today places unjustified burdens on future generations? Please tell us: in what sense can expansion of this industry be considered the moral, let alone sustainable path to follow?

How is promoting nuclear as “clean” more credible than the tobacco industry’s claims that its product was benign? The Canadian Nuclear Association (CNA) has publicly stated that harm from low-level radiation has not been proven; meanwhile the U.S. Surgeon General now considers low-level radiation from radon gas to be the second cause of cancer after smoking. Uranium mine tailings will release radon into the larger environment for millennia. Is appeasing the corporate community blinding you to these vital matters of worker and public health?

The August 13th *MacLean’s* reported a study that found that children 9 and under, living near nuclear facilities were 24% more likely to die of leukemia. (This study, reviewing 17 studies, covering 136 nuclear sites in 7 countries, including Canada, was published in the *European Journal of Cancer Care*.) The *International Society of Doctors for the Environment* (ISDE), representing 100,000 doctors from 40 countries, recently endorsed a non-nuclear energy policy in part due to the risks that nuclear presents for human health. The doctors are, of course, concerned about the prospects of huge radiation releases from future nuclear meltdowns like Chernobyl and the risks from nuclear proliferation that come with any expansion of the nuclear industry.

You are so willing to debate the pros and cons of a universal drug plan. Why are you not willing to debate the implications of nuclear expansion for the life or death of children? With all your talk of health promotion averting rising healthcare costs, how do you justify supporting what is clearly a cancer causing industry?

Is Nuclear Peaceful?

Lastly, why is it that you never discuss nuclear weapons when you support uranium mining and nuclear expansion? Each of you may prefer to hide behind the outdated notion that uranium from Saskatchewan is only used for

“peaceful purposes.” Can we consider such a toxic cancer-causing substance as uranium to be “peaceful” in any sense?

About 85% of the uranium exported to the U.S. remains available for use in weapons after the enrichment process that creates reactor fuel. This depleted uranium (DU) is used to produce nuclear bombs and other DU weapons that are presently killing civilians in the Middle East. Each of the 300,000 **uranium bullets** fired during the U.S. “Shock and Awe” invasion of Iraq likely had *a bit of Saskatchewan within it*. The extremely carcinogenic uranium aerosols from these exploding bullets are now in the air and on the land virtually forever, and are already responsible for vast increases in birth deformations and childhood cancers in the region. How does this violence of the so-called peaceful atom truly make you feel?

All of you, we are sure, would endorse human rights. Are you aware that it is a war crime and a crime against humanity to make and use weapons that indiscriminately kill civilians? It is no longer possible to hide behind the reassuring rhetoric of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, so, we ask: what is your position on Saskatchewan uranium being a major source for these horrendous uranium weapons? Be honest. Do you believe that *the end justifies the means*: that short-term economic benefits of uranium here justify spreading radiation and cancer across other people’s homelands?

Can you turn your heart and head away from such suffering, and from our complicity in it? Do you really support *economic growth at any cost*? Do you place short-term benefits and votes here, above concerns for global impacts and future effects? Surely if the labour movement is willing to make the sacrifices to make the conversion to sustainable jobs, business should also be willing to come on side. But where is the political leadership on the necessity for such conversion? Why are you not raising these vital questions? Do you think the continuation of political amnesia is really good for our wellbeing and for our democracy? Or for our grandchildren, who will reap the burdens of inaction on preventing radioactive contamination and climate change?

We are looking for some sign that those of you wanting to lead our Province actually care about what the nuclear and uranium industry is doing to people and the planet, and about getting serious about averting cataclysmic climate change. This is too big an issue for you to duck during this election. So, why the general silence on these vital issues of sustainable energy, environmental and human health, and the travesties of radioactive war? Have we so lost our way, and become so amorally parochial, that such considerations no longer matter enough to be raised and debated during an election in our province?

We are sure many others would like a detailed and heartfelt response.

Yours truly,

Bill Adamson, retired Professor of Pastoral Theology, past President of *St. Andrews College*, University of Saskatchewan, member of the Saskatchewan Conference of the United Church.

Dale Dewar, Associate Professor, College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan; Past President, *Physicians for Global Survival*.

Jim Harding, retired Professor of Environmental and Justice studies; author of “*Canada’s Deadly Secret*”, past Councillor, City of Regina.

Jim Penna, retired Professor of Philosophy, *Saint Thomas More College*, University of Saskatchewan; past Trustee, Saskatoon Separate School Board.

Dick Peters, Regional Coordinator for *KAIROS* Prairies North Region, Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives.

Michael Poellet, Ph.D., for Inter-Church Uranium Committee Educational Co-operative (*ICUCEC*).

Sylvia Thompson, retired United Church of Canada Diaconal Minister, for Saskatchewan Non-Nuclear Clearing House (*SNNCH*).

Graham Simpson, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan; past Board member, Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation (*SCIC*).

Karen Weingeist, for *Coalition for a Clean Green Saskatchewan*.

Dave Weir, for *Regina Non-Nuclear Network*.

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