

When the Bishops of Saskatchewan framed their letter to the provincial government calling for a critical reflection on uranium mining and a proposed nuclear power plant, they stated that “any recommendations be made only after full and open consultation with the people of this province.”

They also called for the government “to provide adequate opportunities for Saskatchewan citizens to engage in open, informed discussions based on unbiased and complete information.”

It is in keeping with both these opening statements that I make my presentation as a member of Kairos. This is a Canada wide organization of thirteen Christian church groups. Its task is in the realm of social development and social justice initiatives, both within this country and worldwide with whom we are in solidarity.

My presentation will be under the general heading of openness as seen in democracy, amorality and détente.

I began drafting this last week when a Polish friend visited me. He too came to this country about fifty years ago seeking a better life.

He reminded me it was the anniversary of the World War II battle of Monte Cassino in Italy, where so many of his countrymen with British and other forces were killed in capturing this monastery high on the hills south of Rome. My thoughts then turned to the part Canadians took on the east coast of Italy, memorable to many on the prairies and elsewhere with the battle for Ortona. All life is precious; no fewer than 6,000 Canadians died in the Italian campaign, never to return to their loved ones and their homeland.

Why was the war fought? To combat Nazi socialism and Italian fascism. Later the Western World has faced communism. I was reminded of a comment made by the late Robert Kennedy who said “Communism is where the government controls business activity, whereas fascism is business controlling government.” We have to be very careful that fascism is not occurring again in our world today.

Yet many are the signs. Few can deny the absence of minimum government controls has led to the near collapse of the financial system, but most importantly in the centre of financial activity, the United States.

Here in this province, we have to ask ourselves, if the composition of the Uranium Development Partnership is not an example of the trend of business controlling or leading government.

What is clear is that business generates its own story. In this one-newspaper city, we have to acknowledge that the Star Phoenix is a business with its owner and its writers having their own biases.

Democracy is a fragile way of life, slow to react until unfortunately war and death results. It is significant to recall that the last war fought with huge losses of soldiers' lives ended in 1919. All other wars since then have witnessed huge loss of civilian life, from atomic bombs to concentration camps – the result of scientific devices (from the Nagasaki atomic bomb to gas chambers). And today, many innocent people are dying or near death from poverty caused by financial neglect and mismanagement in democracies.

While this has been going on, our governments heeding the call of one segment of business has invested an inordinate amount of money in nuclear energy research and promotion. Granted there have been promises of funds in clean coal research, but if comparable monies were to be invested in much cheaper and cleaner renewable energies such as solar, wind and geo therm we would not be reading and hearing from people supposedly well versed in the adverse features of these renewable energies, but not up to date with so many recent developments. Two days ago I recall hearing from the member of the Panel, a representative of the IBEW who impressively gave out statistics relative to the need and costs of nuclear energy, while condemning alternative energies. In this fast moving search for alternative forms of energy both for home and travel, I was hearing statements that are no longer applicable.

Thus we have to be very careful that this UDP process is indeed democratic. That everyone's values are tolerated. That we are all indeed recognized as stakeholders, even though not all have been given a voice in these proceedings. We need to ensure that business is at harmony with the smallness of things, i.e. that small business is the keystone to legitimate activity. But also that economic activity is a small part of a way of life as are many others. The cost of oil translated into gas prices has already caused changes in life style as indeed has the financial collapse, already referred to, and its effect on employment. People and families have begun to find less expensive yet more profitable life styles.

It was the great Romanticist poet of the 1800s Wordsworth who wrote this highly applicable description of today

“The World is too much with us, late and soon;
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.
Little we see in Nature that is ours.
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon.

My second section deals with the ethics of science, in discovery and invention. My reading tells me that scientists are generally amoral. I repeat amoral, neither moral nor immoral. What does this mean?

Simply that their products are made or produced without considering the bad effects on the world and its people, not realizing the misuse and dangers when left to frail humans. The list of abuses is endless: Photography has led to pornography, cell phones have led to misuse on roads but worse today to sex texting. The following are not unsubstantiated but I may not enough time to point out backpacks, straight highways, drones, plastic, cluster bombs, cloning, bomb making made easy from the internet, illicit drugs, amplifiers, personal electronic devices, atomic bombs, terminator seeds, genetically modified foods, intellectual property rights, all can be misused to the detriment of the common good. Be assured I am no Luddite. Indeed I am here as an octogenarian, thanks to the wonders of a quadruple heart surgery and daily medication.

E-mails and the internet together have led to other abuses. The speed and breadth of communication have enhanced the ability of some to make exorbitant profits –that's big business versus small business. “Out of this world incomes” is not a misnomer.

In connecting ethics to democracy, let me remind you that it was Margaret Thatcher who invented the phrase “there is no such thing as society.” It led to “me too” ism, to being selfish, to being greedy, to being avaricious, and to the grave. Margaret Thatcher is not there yet, but she is no longer in this world, suffering from dementia. Her friend Ronald Reagan and his family suffered in the same way. A priest once made the salutary remark that you never see a hearse being followed by a U haul.

More to the point of being ethical, people question the honesty of accredited intellectuals who have been paid to produce tainted studies. Companies are equally guilty, either in funding such studies or in distorting findings. To the same degree, Patrick Moore, a member of the panel, of Green Peace fame, has moved over to being a professional lobbyist in the States on various matters for different organizations, certainly not in favour of the principles of his founding organization. In summary he has moved from Greenpeace to Greenbacks.

Is it intellectual honesty, when following the dictum, that Phds (Professor Jim Farthing and some others excluded) know less and less about more and more? On Tuesday I heard a presenter talk of one of the key components of the UDP proposal as social development, but then later he went beyond his field of competence to refer to the corn and its use in Mexico.

Over five years ago the matter of farm subsidies became paramount in world trade negotiations. Heavily subsidized Midwest farmers flooded the Mexican markets with the result that Mexican farmer peasants could not compete. They have become of the increasing number of urban poor. Hardly social development.

It is interesting that the word urban and urbane have the same root, with the suggestion that a city dweller has a more rounded view of the world. The specialization in knowledge can lead to the contrary. People’s studies can shut themselves off from the pros and cons of such a divisive issue as what is so detrimental to our well being as being proposed by the UDP.

Listening to the presentations and opinions on Tuesday I was quite depressed to hear the misuse of the word Renaissance in describing the nuclear energy industry.

Two pro nuclear speakers used this word. Renaissance has been a word used to describe a period in History associated with the revival of what is good in the arts and literature. By any stretch of the imagination can it be applied to the nuclear energy?. This industry has always been associated with bad not good. Let me remind you of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, atolls of the Pacific, Chernobyl, Sellafield, the reactor with a name change, operated by fellow associates of Bruce Power, presumably to escape the odium of nuclear waste emissions into the waters surrounding the British Isles.

Donations to symphony orchestras and to a myriad of cultural groups count little in the search for a positive assessment. Nor do medical isotopes especially as our university in on the edge of developing other non nuclear methods. This is not renaissance.

All need to be reminded that over the years, a group of children from the Ukraine in the vicinity of Chernobyl had been brought here each summer to be aided in their long term

recuperation. Even if the nuclear industry were to be involved in this great humanitarian activity, it would be rightly seen as an act of remorse and penitence.

We also need to be reminded that inventions are not always mechanical or chemical, to be detrimental to the common good. Recently I read that graduates of MBA studies have some responsibilities for the manipulations of the financial markets, such as hedge funds and derivatives. And others with advanced education such as accountants should accept responsibility for collapses such as Enron (32, 000 employees out of a job, many destitute because they had been convinced to invest, and a significant number dead with their loved ones from suicide and family murdered) The founder is languishing in prison, but doing what?. We have to recall that Adolf Hitler also languished in prison but used his time to write Mein Kampf.

But let's us look to the future. This \$3 million dollar study placed on us by this government without it being part of its election promises can do much to arouse an informed populace.

More and more people are now aware that there are far better alternatives to fossil fuels in terms of cost, effectiveness, cleanliness, health, safety, and care of the environment. One alternative is definitely not nuclear as it being proposed in the glossy public relations crafted word-smithed material. Especially with its atrocious astronomical construction and decommissioning costs and all this is in an uninsurable industry. "Billions of government money" are operative words.

I have referred to literature which contains so many truths and truisms. Busy making money means no time to read Greek myths and legends? One I recommend is Pandora's Box.

Secondly All those interested in the power of political leaders should include Machiavelli's "The Prince", a medieval writing which people in politics today may compare with their own actions. Here is one of his quotations

None the less contemporary experience shows that princes who have achieved great things have been those who have given their word lightly and who have know how to trick men with their learning."

Finally Shakespeare in his play Julius Caesar had Anthony say of his dead leader:

"The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones".

All these show that democracy cannot and will not die. But détente, the need for coming together for a common cause, there has to be. It will not come while this ill conceived, inadequately studied, undemocratically presented proposition remains forefront in our government's beliefs and policies..

In my faith and that of the over 250,000 people in Saskatchewan in the Christian faith that come with Kairos, our belief comes from the Bible's opening chapter, where the recurring phrase is

"And God saw that it was Good." "And God saw that it was Good." I pray that God will continue to see this in the Saskatchewan environment - its people and its land, despite what the UDP would want to do.

