

Our ecological crisis spiritual problem

Means exist to help nature but not the will

There are some of us who believe the solutions to pollution, overpopulation, racial prejudice, and so on, lie not so much in improved technology, balanced budgets, or brief displays of military superiority, but rather in developing our own spiritual nature.

Father Charles Brandt recently noted in a letter that, "leading religious and environmental thinkers now believe the ecological crisis is pre-eminently a spiritual crisis of the greatest magnitude.

"It's resolution depends on a basic transformation of human hearts and minds — a profound spirit that deepens our kinship with life and creates a new vision of human within the earth community.

"To realize our unity with all beings — which is perhaps the most important step we can take towards

halting the environmental destruction that is taking place in the universe — we enter into silence and stillness, exposing our human consciousness to the glorified, human consciousness of Christ and through him are connected to the Father."

To this end, Father Brandt will be the facilitator of a special retreat entitled, "Christian Meditation Retreat, Spirituality of the Environment, A Silent Retreat."

The retreat will be held at the Bethlehem Retreat Centre in Nanaimo on March 6, at 7:30 p.m., and on March 8, at 1 p.m.

It is interesting that the Roman Catholic Church seems to be spearheading a great deal of the progressive Christianity today. Mathew Fox achieved the very pinnacle of liberality being interviewed in a recent edition of *Rolling Stone* magazine, while the work and writings of Thomas Berry are well read, and well known to all those interested and involved in the ecological movement.

Here in B.C. we certainly need not take a back seat in this much needed mythology (the "new"

Buck's Tales



By Rob Bell-Irving

mythology that Joseph Campbell once stated the world needs so badly).

In this essential new theological direction and initiative, Father Brandt — a recent winner of the Roderick Haig-Brown Conservation Award — is one of the greatest advocates and spokespersons.

Furthermore, Father Brandt, Mathew Fox and Thomas Berry all share a great respect and reverence for the Native National Peoples of North America. In Father Brandt's case, it's rather

like, "Dancing With Steelheads."

Anyway, this will be a retreat well worth attending.

There is absolutely no question in my mind that all the money and technology in the world won't help us out of this dilemma — for all the money we might earn is basically ecological "blood" money, and all new technology, regardless of how well intended it may be, sooner or later becomes tainted by the ever growing meanness of the world.

The truth is that right at this very moment we already have the money, materials and technology needed to put it all back together.

What is missing is the human will and desire to do so.

Speaking of meditation, this is an excellent point to meditate upon. For when we really stop to look at the fact that we have all the tools necessary to fix the "house," the question of why we are not doing so becomes even more alarming and obvious.

The answer, at the moment, is that we just don't care.

We drive our gas-guzzling cars even on short distances, consume astronomical amounts of hydro and

fossil fuels, throw away food domestically and commercially which would easily feed the world's hungry, and consume, consume, consume.

During a recent trip to Vancouver, it was interesting to note the unbelievable traffic during rush hour. About 90 per cent of the traffic was created by cars with just a single occupant.

The transit system in Vancouver is really very good. I used the Sea-Bus every day. It was quick and convenient.

There's another point to all of this. Please consider this — your children and your children's children.

What kind of world are they inheriting? A world where the only sounds they will hear will come from tape recorder headsets. The only life experiences they will ex-

perience will come from video screens.

They will have to wear special suits and glasses continuously outdoors due to ozone depletion. They will all be shuffled to and from work like sheep to supervise computers and "like-minded" technology.

They will watch completely impassionately the "biological culling" of millions of "third world" human beings, whose genocide will be "necessary" in order to keep the world going as we wish it today.

You may think all of this is nonsense, yet sadly, the beginnings of it are already occurring.

There are, of course, far happier and healthier alternatives.

These alternatives do require change, however, from the inside, and then out. Father Brandt's retreat would be a great place to start.