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Iris Skeoch

Editor-in-Chief

Harper Collins Publishers Ltd

Hazelton Lanes

55 Avenue Road

Suite 2900

Tonorto, Ontario

M5R 3L2

Dear Iris,

It was good to speak with you yesterday about - as you suggested - writing a book about "my life and work". Also, I have your letter of March 27 in which you first suggest this. Thank you for the copy of IN THE EYE OF THE CATHOLIC STORM.

In our telephone conversation you suggested that I send you an outline of the proposed book. I told you that I am not a writer, although I am always writing something for a local paper, a church paper, or a conservation journal. What I am sending you is sort of an outline if you look at the mass of materials en masse. Perhaps when you have waded through it all you will have some suggestions.

Perhaps you could begin by reading the clipping "A New Consciousness". This is really the heart of it all. The world as you know is hungry for meditation either in the eastern or western form, and they are surprisingly similar and related. I am committed to a life of contemplation. This goes way back, perhaps to my early childhood. As I say in the clipping - contemplation leads one to discover the Ground of Love in all reality and leads one to one's sisters and brothers: it creates a social consciousness; it leads to a deeper unity and love with and for the earth.

I am deeply concerned with the earth, its conservation. I look at the earth as Gaia and that humans are integral with the earth. We are the earth celebrating itself in conscious self-reflection, a great celebratory event. To realize that we are integral with the earth requires more than a conceptual commitment. We have to experience this relationship, so that we can make the return, make the sacrifice. The small self sacrifices for the larger self out of love. I see meditation, contemplation (experiential awareness of communion with ultimate reality) as a way to discovering this oneness with all beings and hence the way for loving all beings.

When I was 13 I had an experience that set me on the journey. I was called into the trip of Mic-O-Say at the Osceola Boy Scout Camp in the Ozarks of Missouri. The initiation was as to spend a night in the forest, alone, make medicine, choose a name, and

make vows of love for my mother, God, and country. To me country meant the earth. This event opened me to the journey, gave me a deep love for the earth, and gave me this hunger for the living water of ultimate reality.

About that time I had a dream (vision) of standing in a council ring. On the far side of the fire mound were several figures, bearded and seemingly with great wisdom. I was cut off from them by the fire mound. There was this tremendous desire to be with them, part of them. It was my first experience of dualism. I wanted to be part of their wisdom and life. It was something, I believe, like entering into the collective unconscious, and returning with a symbol of interpersonal love or communion. This vision is as real now as it was then.

I can remember about that period of my life of expressing to my Aunt Hildred, a literary person who reviewed books for the Kansas City Star, how I would like to go the woods, as Thoreau did, to see what life was all about. Emerson and Walt Whitman ("Stop this day, and I shall teach you the hidden meaning of all things.") played a great part in my reading at this time.

Bob Jones, a local writer did a profile on me which appeared in Jan. B.C.OUTDDOORS, pp 24-26, which I include. This was written more from an environmental point of view, awards, etc. To prepare for this article he sat down with me and made a 3 hour

cassette recording and then put it on his computer. I include this, all 20 single spaced pages entitled BRANDT/DRAFT. This is a fair outline of my life, without editing. The only thing I ask you to return of all the material I am sending is the copy of B.C. OUTDOORS. Thank you.

Also, something that might be helpful is my VITAE, which I include. From 1974 to 1984 I was away from my hermitage working as a professional paper conservator for the National Museums of Canada, in Moncton, Ottawa and then Winnipeg. Parts of each summer I was back at my hermitage. During these years, although I worked professionally, my life was still that of a hermit even though living in a large city. Perhaps more solitude there than in the woods and along a river in B.C. In the material you have received is an article that I did for THE BEAVER, Audubon Prints: The Conservation of Rare and Valuable Art. Also, an article, A GOOD BOOK LASTS FOREVER, published in the Museum Roundup of B.C., describing my work in restoring the Bowron Bible.

Going back a bit: After my Airforce career as a navigator, I entered Cornell University to study ornithology. The BRANDT\DRAFT covers this period well: my entrance into the Anglican Church, studying for the Anglican priesthood, the desire for the contemplative life, entering a community in England and ordination there to the Anglican priesthood; returning to the U.S. and living as Anglican hermit, then entering the Anglican

Benedictine Community at Three Rivers Michigan and from there to the Catholic Church. Then followed becoming a monk at New Mellary Abbey (Cistercian) in Dubuque and leaving there to become a hermit on Vancouver Island in Dom Winandy's pia unio. This led to ordination as hermit-priest by Remi de Roo. We were then given permission to find individual hermitages on Vancouver Island.

Enclosed is an article by Fergus Cronin about my life which includes paper conservation and environmental considerations. Another article THE ENVIRONMENT IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS again from the RoundUp, the B.C. Museums publication. Also something (extensive) from the Island Catholic News, FATHER CHARLES BRANDT: 25 YEARS AS AN ISLAND HERMIT which includes an article from the CATHOLIC DIGEST, 1967, on Island Hermits. Remi is quoted extensively there.

Finally two articles on Christian Meditation which I wrote. I think these are important as I teach meditation in the diocese. Two years I led a retreat in Lumsden for Retreats International, comprising all of the religious houses in western Canada. Spirituality and Environment.

Included as well is a copy of letter from Thomas Merton. He helped me find my way.

Two years ago I spent two months at Dom Bede Griffiths Ashram in India. I am an oblate of his community, Shantivanam (Forest of Peace). Several years there was a memo from Cardinal Ratzinger to the Bishops of the Church on the dangers of eastern forms of meditation. Remi sent this out for our response. At the time I wrote to the important teachers of Meditation in the Catholic Church. All agree that Dom Bede's response was the finest. This was published in the National Catholic Reporter. This approach to meditation should surely be included in the book.

What should we call it? ENVIRONMENT AND SPIRITUALITY, A River Monk's Journey into God. I guess titles are not important.

I believe that mankind is moving to a new level of consciousness, what Hugo Lasalle calls fourth dimensional consciousness. This is a contemplative, mystical consciousness, and what Teilhard calls the Omega Point. I think it is happening whether we like it or not. It is part of the Dream of the Earth which is unfolding. We didn't choose to move from archaic consciousness to rational consciousness.

It is a wonderful time to be alive, to be born at this time, and in a sense to be chosen to be born at this time. We have a tremendous responsibility. The earth calls us to this, and the universe. We have to make the return, to make the sacrifice, just as the first stars made the sacrifice to bring forth the

universe some 15 billions years ago, so too we are called.
Please retrun the enclosed video, from On the Road Again.

Sincerely yours,

Father Charles A.E. Brandt (Yde)

R.R. 1, Site 22, Black Creek, B.C. VOR 1CO 604 337-8525