

## How to Move Forward?

This is a question that has been raised in many forms during the past years by those few who find something wrong in Lonergan's goings-on in these past decades. The answer to the question is to come, perhaps slowly and painfully, in these next decades. But it cannot remain the search of those few. The June 25<sup>th</sup> gathering of Lonergan leaders in Boston may or may not give serious hope of a widening of the search.<sup>1</sup> We aimed at shaking up that meeting through the outreach of the series of eighteen essays, *Lonergan Gatherings*.<sup>2</sup> There were few signs of any attention being paid to those essays by the majority of Lonergan students, so the appeal for questions and discussions there went unheard. This follow-up series may well only involve the small group that were already interested in the new culture of collaboration suggested by Lonergan. So be it. But some few others may have been nudged towards taking an interest. So, the next two **HOW** essays will stay broad in their reach, the first secular and focused on physics, the second focused on Jesus and thus sacred.

But here I tackle the question of moving forward in an initial way here by blunt antagonism, an antagonism that might succeed in "forcing attention."<sup>3</sup> I had thought

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<sup>1</sup> Some consideration of the results of that meeting will be given in HOW 7.

<sup>2</sup> Apart from the two essays by Duffy and Brown, mentioned below, the series was written by me, but with collaboration of others.

<sup>3</sup> *Insight* 425, line 4. Note how this forcing is massively refined by the strategy embedded in what I call *The 1833 Overture*, those end lines of *Method in Theology* 250. If my adversaries complain about my antagonism, they are in fact complaining about the powerful strategy of foundational dialogue that he built into the final twirl of *Dialectic*. Of course, he has more to say in his blunt description of a new standard model: he ends his list of the new theological character's stand with a hilarious nudge: "From such a broaden basis one can go on to a developed account of the human good, values, beliefs, to the carriers, elements, functions, realms, and stages of meaning, to the question of God, of religious experience, its expressions, its dialectic development" (*Method in Theology*, 287). Thus, indeed, he weaved a decent answer to the puzzle he presented to me in 1966: "I can't put all of *Insight* into chapter 1 of *Method*." "One can go on": are you the one?

of homing in on chapter 14 of *Method in Theology* in some detail to reveal the betrayal of Lonergan's hopes by Lonerganism. But I have written enough. In the first sentence of that chapter Lonergan writes of theology "as a highly differentiated and specialized reflection." Indeed, it is, or was, for Lonergan at 66 years of age. My doctrinal claim here—meant not just to embarrass<sup>4</sup> but to annoy into opposing spoken or written claims—is that theology has not thus been conceived by the present Lonerganist leadership, and that that leadership is betraying the next generation and indeed history.<sup>5</sup> I add—again annoyingly and embarrassingly—the report I received from a trusted colleague who attended the Rome Conference of November 2014, who received, to his question "Why is McShane not here?" the answer that "McShane has gone against Lonergan." Perhaps I should nail a plethora of theses on some door in Rome, revealing how Lonerganism has gone against Lonergan?

"What is to be done?" ask my collaborative colleagues. My initial answer, in this first **HOW** essay, is, that we must force the opposition to "lay their cards on the table."<sup>6</sup> Please tell us, where has McShane gone astray?

My colleagues do not wish to meet me in the zone proper for such a clash: the last sixteen lines of page 250 of *Method in Theology*. Might we meet, then, through websites or forums? We can't meet, of course, at conferences, because I am not

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<sup>4</sup> "Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company." *Method in Theology*, 299.

<sup>5</sup> See *Method in Theology*, 80, the top six lines.

<sup>6</sup> The remark is made in Lonergan's discussion of historical method: *Method in Theology*, 193. Recall note 3 above. I would note that in a relatively mature theology, self-luminosity is swept round the cycle of operations in the advances of its refinements. The researcher in theology is to be no different from the researcher in physics or neuropsychology. But then also one has to take note of physics being lifted into the new horizon of science as functional. On physics see Terrance Quinn, *The (Pre-) Dawning of Functional Collaboration in Physics* (Hackensack, New Jersey and Singapore: World Scientific Press, forthcoming); on the new neuropsychology, see Robert Henman, *Global Collaboration: Neuroscience as Paradigmatic* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2016).

invited, and my colleagues seem quite assiduous in avoiding conferences where I do appear.

I am not alone of course, and indeed there may be many silent students who smell the rot but need the degree or the thesis. My recommendation, an echo of Lonergan's advice to me in the Oxford of 1968, is continued silence till you get the union card. But then—or even now silently—pause, either in the quite existential way recommended by James Duffy in [Lonergan Gathering 7](#), “Words, Diagrams, Heuristics,” or with solid leadership ambition through the adventure Pat Brown talks of in [Lonergan Gathering 10](#), “Some Notes on the Development of *Method*, page 250.”

At any rate, this is a beginning: a simple blunt answer. I am now out and about, with some companions, hoping—but effectively<sup>7</sup>—that “the situation becomes still messier to provoke still sharper differences in diagnosis and policy, more radical criticism of one another's actions, and an ever deeper crisis in the situation.”<sup>8</sup> It must be a heated existential crisis, a piece of *Completion*,<sup>9</sup> an “aesthetic apprehension of the group's origin and story ... operative ... especially in a crisis.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> I have no intention of letting this “become effete.” Lonerganism's students are “closed in upon themselves with no task proportionate to their training.” (*Method in Theology*, 99). “They are lost in some no man's land between the world of theory and the world of common sense.” (CWL 6, “Time and Meaning”, 121): indeed the vast majority of them were “never bitten by theory” (*Ibid.*, “Exegesis and Dogma,” 155).

<sup>8</sup> *Method in Theology*, 358.

<sup>9</sup> See lines 3-6 of *Method in Theology*, 250. My aim is to get us all to some version of the “completed” of the fourth last line of this page, where Lonergan's suggested method leads towards a shocking lucidity of exposure and self-exposure.

<sup>10</sup> *Topics in Education*, CWL 10, 230.