

Posthumous 14

Double You Three in His Story

His Story? “The Maasai Creed invites us to go on safari with Jesus.”¹ I invite you to trek into Lonergan’s Jesus’ safari. I do so because I am interested – desperate is not the right word² – in us Christians reaching effectively the streets, including Wall Street,³ in this next millennium.

I know that some few Lonergan students are into this journey with me, in particular the journey I designated for 2013, a climb to *Posthumous* 21, where we intend to envisage the rewriting of *Method in Theology*’s chapter 4 on “Religion.” Some of those few have noted that I am rambling disconcertingly. What, for instance, of the questions raised by my *Posthumous* 12 title, “Clasping, Cherishing, Calling, Craving, Christing”?

I am being strategically un-logical, in this outreach to those interested in Lonergan’s work, and the issues raised by that title are deep and remote. The meaning of *Christing*, for instance, weaves densely into the fibre of the genetic symphony of *Comparison*.⁴ I would wish those who are on the trail with me to struggle ever-freshly – a struggle which is itself a slow painful contemplative

¹ I am quoting here Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion. The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening*, Harper, 2012, 134. In that page she quotes the 1960 Maasai revision of the creed, done with the aid of Catholic missionaries.

² My non-despair, my hope, reaches into the future in the manner suggested by two of my titles. There is the book *Method in Theology 101 AD 9011. The Road to Religious Reality* (Axial Publishing, 2012) and there is the lecture given in Puebla 2011, “Arriving in Cosmopolis” (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/archive8.pdf>) which gives that date – 9011 A.D. – as a plausible arrival time.

³ We need a push forward, by those interested in Lonergan’s economics, into the massive moral clash between the brutal commoditization of money and, on the other hand, the delicate and necessary concomitance of the promise of money with innovative promises. See the entries under *Concomitance* in the index to *For a New Political Economy* (CWL 21) and the last two paragraphs of the Preface to the Index on page 326. See also my *Sane Economics and Fusionism*, Axial Publishing, 2011, Part 1.

⁴ The central message of *The Road to Religious Reality* is the identification of the meaning of *Comparison* (*Method in Theology*, 250), with the complex genetically-structured sequence of theses on the mystical body of Christ that is to open us to being effective gardeners.

venture – towards the poise of contemplation that marrow-bones into one's molecular expectation of adult growth. And my general appeal remains an unchanged request to all⁵ for a serious reading and self-reading that goes against the grain of our culture, the ethos of the Big Red Bus.⁶ Sadly, it is from that ethos that we hear the cry of decent Christians, be they the Maasai tribe, or the tribes represented by Diana Butler Bass or by N.T. Wright,⁷ or the tribe that is my local concern: the Vancouver Downtown druggies and drunks that surround my wife's First United Church. Today, in Vancouver, happens to be the Wednesday in the month called, in the Downtown area, *check-Wednesday*. Crack-sales spike and the social security money vanishes into business as usual. Meantime it is business

⁵ I regularly make the point that all those interested in Lonergan's revolutionary work are not called to follow his climb, to trek his safari. There is a great deal to be done by commonsense Lonergan-following. There is, on the other hand, a great deal of damage being done by commonsense Lonergan-studies. But I would note that decent commonsense can battle that damage by pushing for an honesty in the general movement in regard to "the stage of meaning when the world of interiority has been made the explicit ground of the worlds of theory and of common sense" (*Method in Theology*, 107). You will recall my emphasis on this text in *Posthumous* 13, where Lonergan is quite blunt about this requirement for theology "to speak of the dynamic state of being in love with God" (*ibid.*).

⁶ I am referring back to the beginning of *Posthumous* 10 "'End here Mememormmee!': Come About or Comalya" (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/posthumous-10.pdf>), where I recalled C.S. Lewis' Screwtape letter regarding that insidious realism.

⁷ Wright's recent works were a topic in *Posthumous* 7 (notes #3 and #7), 8 and 9. Like the Maasai, both Wright and Bass want to tune into the concrete story, His Story. I regularly meet young people who have the same reach, and, for instance, find seminary studies disconcertingly alien. They genuinely wish to vibe with the Maasai creed, "We believe that God made good His promise by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, a man in the flesh, Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home and was always on safari doing good" (See note 1 above). I note here that, while I find writers like N.T. Wright inspirational and moving on the right track, there is obviously, for me, a massive gap in heuristic, represented, e.g., by W₃. For a glimpse of the full challenge of religious studies see note 31 of *Posthumous* 21. The climb to that world will be arduous, needing strenuous fantasy. Brood, for a start, over two versions of hope, the one given by Wright (*Surprised by Hope. Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*, Harper, 2008), and the one given by Lonergan when he writes – still expecting a solution to the problem of Cosmopolis – "the antecedent willingness of hope has to advance from a generic reinforcement of the pure desire to know to an adapted and specialized auxiliary ever ready to offset any interference" (*Insight*, 747). Lonergan's later failed expression of the ever-readiness (think of chapter 14 in *Method*) challenges deeply our fantasy. See, on that challenge, chapters 12, 13 and 14 of *The Road to Religious Reality*.

as usual in Wall Street, in the faulty governing of the Americas, in religions' devotion to the Red Bus. How am I to convince the pseudo-intellectual religious people interested in Lonergan that we must leave the Red Bus in favour of the towering Tower challenge of "loving God, who dwells in unapproachable light"?⁸

This brings you back startlingly to that piece of the question of re-writing chapter 4 of *Method* that I suggested to be worth clasping and cherishing. What do you mean by being in love with God? "It is constituted through the state of grace,"⁹ writes Lonergan in the text that is this essay's focus, and the editors put, in the related footnote, what to me is a sad and, I suppose, necessary comment, "Lonergan has a meaning for the phrase 'state of grace' that is different from common usage."¹⁰ Indeed!

This *Posthumous* essay and the seven to follow are a further help in grappling with that question, that quest, in its personal and collaborative dimensions. But now I must pause, and indeed have paused for some months. What further help? An interlude was and is needed before we return to that text of *CWL* 12. So I share¹¹ now, with brutal brevity, some slow broad musings.

The prayer of the title of this essay is, of course, a prayer of all Christians, each of us having their own meaning. The doubling aspiration is there in shabby and subtle forms of the hope of the New Testament that, one and all, move towards being temples of the Spirit, images of the Son, like the Father.

My problem in these final eight *Posthumous* essays is to add to previous efforts of mine at persuading some among the Lonergan Christian group to seed contemplatively the venture of collaboration that is sketched in my metaword, **W₃**, the metaword that I have called "A Heuristic of Lonergan's Perspective."¹²

⁸ *The Triune God: Systematics*, *CWL* 12, 523 (hereafter *CWL* 12). The companion volume is *The Triune God: Doctrines*, *CWL* 11 (hereafter *CWL* 11).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ This is a key problematic work of the axial period, especially in its relation to adult growth. Note 19 below and the text that follows there add more grist for the mind.

¹² Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan. His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publishing, 2010, 161 (hereafter in *Posthumous essays Axial Lonergan*).

My previous efforts have failed, and I shall have some little more to say about those efforts and their failure in these essays. I have puzzled over what more to say in the few months since I wrote *Posthumous* 13, “Rewriting Method in Theology, chapter 4: ‘Religion’.” Now, as I venture towards my 82nd year, it seems to me that it would be counterproductive to push towards any seriously lengthy elaboration of my previous or present stand on the need and the character of the collaboration in Christian theology.¹³ It is, of course, a relief for me to come to that sad conclusion. It is a sad conclusion, for I have now enormously more to communicate than I had when I wrote *Posthumous* 13. Such is the character of the adult growth that is to be the norm in the Tower of Able and it adds a deep subtle strangeness to our common reach for the doubling of God. Should I not carry on spelling out climbing strategies for elders of a later age? First, the spelling would necessarily be compact: I do not have a graduate class in elderhood with which to share details of the darkness and light. Secondly, it is now more helpful to speak to such potential graduates in the rounded finished manner that I aim at with these essays. Thirdly, that speaking is all the more helpful in that its roundedness is intrinsically, heuristically, open. My pointers regarding the duplication of G_{jk}^i are far less closed than Einstein’s efforts with his version of G_{jk}^i .¹⁴ The ‘far less’ has the infinite depth of an obediential bending of “critical method, method with respect to the ultimate.”¹⁵

My rounding off, if it is to have some effectiveness, has to look back compactly on what I consider key pointers of mine, and it has to do so with bluntness regarding what I consider the abysmal failure of those pointers to get people to take the difficult road towards going beyond the level of the times. Fourthly and finally, and perhaps principally, my rounding off frees me to be actively strategic about a

¹³ In my winter pause I returned to the *FuSe* series, especially *FuSes* 21 and 31. They twine round the present topic. (These essays are available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/fuse.html>)

¹⁴ This symbolic venture is no doubt stressful. Surely talking of God and Christ needs to be plain? This is a tower-battle that has to be slowly spiraled into sense. The Christoffel tensor (see Lindsay and Margenau, *Foundations of Physics*, 362) is not a disputed need. What of a “Christoffer” tension of symbols in serious theology?

¹⁵ *Insight*, 708.

moral awakening in Lonergan studies. The question posed by *Posthumous* 1 “The Gross immorality of Lonerganism?” is now being answered by me with deep positivity: the deviation of Lonerganism from Lonergan is now for me not a matter of invincible ignorance but – at least in abstract objectively – of dedicated turpitude. My challenge of these past months, indeed of forty years, has been greeted by silence. That shameful silence needs to be challenged, with some sort of mix of brutal humour, light delight, discomforting nudges, directed aggressiveness.

Realistically, the rounding off shifts my effort from the intention to move through 2013 to the December appearance of *Posthumous* 21, to the intention of compacting the 8 essays in a manner that releases me, at 81, to undertake a Spring Campaign of 2013.¹⁶ So, for instance, *Posthumous* 18-20 might have been my re-write of chapters 1-3 of *Method*. But now they become brief comments on select pieces in those chapters and related zones.¹⁷ The compact rounding off meeting the need for this Campaign may seem of doubtful help. But, as I peruse previous efforts, both lengthy and compact, both types of efforts seem to be of doubtful help. I recall the Epilogue of the five *Verbum* articles: it can be taken as a context here. The deeper issue is the problem of the emergence of a seriously contemplative culture that is patient and luminously kataphatic. Lonergan’s five *Verbum* article’s pages asked for five years of inner climbing. Lonergan’s five pages of text that I might have commented on at great length here ask for the like five years of inner climb. Who has the time or the patience for such inner climbing in the midst of our uncouth sophistications? Have you? Have some of your students or your children? At least let you, but especially them, be entertained by the strange invitation.

¹⁶ I look back on a previous Spring Campaign, which began with the first *Cantower* on April First, All Fools Day 2002: which happened to be Easter Monday, fittingly remembering thus the quaint Irish rising against an Empire on that day of 1916 (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/cantowers.html>). The campaign was, however, my own climbing campaign through a topic a month, though I had hoped for fellow-climbers. This next campaign is to be different. See further note 2 of *Posthumous* 15, note 3 of *Posthumous* 17, and note 18 of *Posthumous* 21.

¹⁷ I weave in a network of connected zones slowly so that, at the beginning of *Posthumous* 19, they are expressed coherently. The strategy, as you will find, combats *haute vulgarization*.

We return now to those pages 513, 515, 517, 519, 521 of *CWL* 12. I can only raise here some few points regarding these great inklings, inklinks, of Lonergan.

First I bring together, for our consideration, parts of the beginning and the end of the text of 513-521. Of course, it is better to keep the consideration in context, e.g. the immediate context of the full page 513 and the text running from the tenth last line of page 519. Indeed, *Posthumous* 16 will bring in the challenge of cherishing the context of the first 17 assertions that lead to the ASSERTION 18 of page 513. That challenge is one that I identify as a Tower Challenge in contrast to what I have in mind here, and indeed in the next *Posthumous* essay. This is worth a pause.

I puzzled a great deal over my audience as I moved around in the creation of these last 8 essays of the series. My concern is with the emergence of what is named 'The Tower of Able' but the concern has to reach out to what I call *plane plain meaning*. The Tower is concerned with such meaning, but there is the reverse issue of plain plane meaning being concerned about the Tower and its emergence and support. So, in my reflections here I home in on the problem of what I could call *plain plane contemplation*. In the essay that follows I continue my reaching for that broader audience, a reach that seeks to create an ethos and a common concern for the shift of theology out of its present ruts.

Here, then, I avoid subtly subtleties regarding position and poosition. The astute advanced reader will notice that these issues haunt the entire musing, but let us get on with that musing in what I might call a readable way. So, one may read comfortably that "the Word is in us in order that in knowing and loving a visible human being we may arrive at knowing and loving God"¹⁸ without even noticing the massive tangle surrounding the meaning of the word *visible*.

So, let us pause now over our selected piece of text:

"For the divine persons are sent in accordance with their eternal processions, to encounter us and dwell in us in accordance with similar processions in us through grace. Those who proceed from and are sent by the Father do not come without

¹⁸ *CWL* 12, 513.

the Father, to whom be all glory through the Son in the Spirit”; “in the fullness of time he [the Father] sent his incarnate Son in truth so that in believing the Word we might speak true inner word and understand.”¹⁹

What is to be the character of our pause? A twist of the question helps here: what is the pause of our character?

The end of page 517 gives a lead: “what the nature of this state or situation is shines forth all the more clearly in so far as the habits and acts star-gazed are more perfect.” My ‘star-gazed’ surely prompts you to check the original translation. There you find that that *considerantur* is translated by “are examined,” and there are other changes in my translation of the Latin sentence.

Star-gazed? Constellation-cherished? Light to be reached from his feast of print? “We have seen his star in the feast and have clung to our door in.” It is a feast of inadequate print and a door-in of crippled self-cherishing.

How might I intimate the massive cultural change we are faced with here? Lonergan invited us, in the conclusion of the previous volume,²⁰ to cling to our door in. The issue there is scripture’s manifestations of the divine processions, but the challenge again is entry into a door of star-gazing “*ipse te consideres necesse est.*”²¹ Lonergan is talking about a new reading of scripture, as I am, a lift to the new culture of the search N.T. Wright wrote of in *How God Became King*. But now I would have you be more explicit and self-luminous regarding that culture. I would have you find your way so so slowly into kataphatic contemplation, a contemplation focused on “what is the nature of this state or situation.” I would ask you, in your own little corner, to begin the shift into a new culture that is supportive of a third stage of meaning. The central question is “who are you three that love me?”, but it needs a range of psychic shifts in you to bring you, in character, to where God is king, where the Christed temple is clasped in a cherished realm. It asks for a change of personality from a tone of

¹⁹ CWL 12: quoting from the beginning and end of the selected pages, 513- 521.

²⁰ CWL 11: 639-85.

²¹ Ibid., 642. Again the translation given is “to examine yourself” (643) which does quite hit the tone of astute constellated star-studied self- and God- appreciation.

churchy piety to an open shabbiness of confident friendship.²² It requires an ever-increasing luminosity to yourself as self-tasted subject and to God as Subjects, Subjects each of whom is quite uniquely alert to your layered infinities, a galaxy in finitude, considered by Them – clasping, cherishing, calling – in ways quite beyond your pilgrim or eschatological imagination.

²² I have already written briefly (Posthumous 4, “Conversing with Divine Friends”, in the text between note 21 and note 30 [available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/posthumous-04.pdf>]) about the existential use of analogy [the balance of affirmation, negation and eminentizing] in relating to the Three Divine Persons. It is a huge future concern, fermenting forward from the first section of *Insight* chapter 17. Its broader facets might be mused over in terms of the word *secular*. Such concerns have to reach, self-concernedly, for deviant, present, prevalent personae that are the cultural mirror of un-de-mythologized scriptures. The tensions of genuineness talked about both in *Insight* chapter 15 and in the conclusion of *Insight* chapter 20, need to be lifted into a later, new explanatory dynamic of molecular attunement with the divine, especially as that divine is an absolutely super nature, Atman pirouetting in Brahman beyond Hindu dreams. What is this new secular Christianity to be like? It is way beyond the good intentions of Phyllis Tickle and other advocates of new emergences. It needs a mediation beyond that of José Ortega y Gasset’s “Faculty of Culture.” See further, note 15 of *Posthumous* 15.