

## Posthumous 5

### Strategies of Starting Functional Collaboration

The first broad move is towards a change of ethos in Lonergan Studies –called here “Group L” – a change that gets us talking and thinking about getting out of the destructive rut (see *Posthumous* 1) that we are in. The talking and thinking should ferment towards a decent sub-group of us (Group FS: “big enough to be at home in the new” *CWL* 4, the concluding paragraph of the book) having a shot at moving from the rut to a fresh positive view of starting some collaboration - that functions better than present scattered efforts - towards changes in town and gown.

The collaboration needs [1] a direction; [2] a starting place [3] a shared content.

[1] the direction, the aim, is a renewal of Lonergan’s hope: wishing to change history. We want “to pick out the hundred and one good things” (*Method in Theology*, 250) that help towards that by meeting “obvious” needs.

[2] the “helps” tie in, “obviously”, with an attitude, a slogan involving a loose meaning of : “THIS DESERVES CYCLING”: (again, see *Posthumous* 1): here I think minimally of *Insight*’s rescuing “of timely and fruitful ideas” (*Insight*, 264).

[3] the shared content? Again, minimally, that Lonergan offers relevant stuff in timely ideas expressed descriptively in chapter five of *Method in Theology*.

This seems to me a relevant initial base, much smaller than what is shared by the very serious few who [a] think of CYCLING quite precisely as functional collaboration, [b] have a sense of content from their own version, image, (*CWL* 7, ‘Constitution of Christ’, 151) of the project which I symbolize incompletely as the  $\mathbf{W}_i$ , (See *Prehumus* 2) with present emphasis on  $\mathbf{W}_3$ , [c] have a roughly agreed short list of needs and solutions, beginning with the two broad needs of (i) explanatory moves and (ii) functional moves.

The problem is to operatively reduce the gap between Group FS and Group L in an effective manner.

You notice that my focus is on Lonergan students: others in Group FS may wish to reach further abroad, and that is great. We meet the need of history, of “directing it,” (*Insight*, 253) in our own context and with our own talents. Also you notice that I am being brief here, a brevity related to the strategy that slowly emerged for me as I wrote this.

What I would encourage as the core present move is an effort to make CYCLING a topic in these months moving into 2013, the sixtieth anniversary of *Insight*’s completion by Lonergan. That anniversary is a talking-point, just as this year the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Method* has been a failed talking-point. It is a matter of making “conversion a topic” (*Method in Theology*, 253), where you pick the small or large version of the conversion that would help in the context of the person to whom you talk. You may be speaking to someone beginning to write an article or a thesis, or someone just beginning a career of lecturing, or beginning a degree in some Lonergan context. It is evident that the conversion on my mind here is a simple conversion towards making functional collaboration a topic so as to ferment us all towards the difficult question, What is this X that is functional collaboration, and how do we begin it?

So: some effective resolve to talk after reading this. IF you are reading this, then you are surely interested enough to talk pro or con functional collaboration. Both are welcome.

Now: re my brevity and my suggestions. I worked out various lists and strategies, but cut them off now in favour of this brevity and in favour of each of us moving into local conversations simply about beginning collaboration. How to go about collaboration? THAT is the heavier ongoing quest to which the conversations would give rise. BUT what I see as communally possible even now is sharing suggestions by way of either [a] the Q. and A. on my Website or [b] through the **Lonerganforum** site. I favour **Lonerganforum** contributions since the discussion there reaches Group L. But positive suggestions can be debated and mature on the Q. and A. site (Website, p.1). I mentioned at the time of setting up the Q/A

site that it could expand to other formats. We don't need a great shift yet: anyone can just pose a good strategic question and elaborate an answer in it. E.g., "what if we wrote various popular versions of definite procedures - toss around some in the question - of functional collaboration or talk?" or "would it not be good to ..... whatever?" Send such suggestive questions to me: I am ready to converse by private exchanges, and perhaps thus improve the questions and suggestions: but up they go, whether pro or con!

What about the push of these Posthumous essays?

Certainly the first four Posthumous essays give a context pointing both to the rut and to hopeful, indeed prayerful, aspects of the search and the change, but it seems best not to push those immediately. Indeed, let us skip previous evidence of the rut, the need, "the road not taken". Find ways of opening mouths and minds about the turn for the better that would be functional collaboration, in as gentle and persuasive a manner as possible.

BUT I would emphasize that **a resolution of Group FS to talk is key**. Various interested sub-groups, like SGEME, might air that need. SO: I personally begin my conversations with a communication to senior members of Group L in these final days of September 2012: I wonder what progress we might make by the arrival of February 2013, in four months?

## Appendix.

I add here the communication mentioned in the conclusion of the previous paragraph.

Greetings All,

My communication regards "making conversion a topic" (*Method in Theology*, 253) where the conversion in question is functional collaboration. Were my communication formally methodical it would be in the flow of *Method in*

*Theology*, 250, lines 18-33, but nothing like that flow has been attempted in the past forty years.

I have been advocating functional collaboration as a global disciplinary and omnidisciplinary need since the Lonergan Florida Conference of 1970, where I noted the functional distress of musicology [the paper is chapter 2 of *The Shaping of the Foundations*, (1976), a book now available free on [www.philipmcshane.ca](http://www.philipmcshane.ca) .] My ongoing plea has had little effect. Since, in my ninth decade, I am on the way out and on, I feel compelled to make this final effort to stir people towards at least talking about the X, the unknown – and it is an unknown - that is to be global functional collaboration.

I am sending this out to blocks of ten e-mails that I happen to have, so it is not an adequate outreach. Feel free to pass on the note, and of course feel free to communicate with me directly with suggestions.

The effort is related to my final series *Posthumous*, five essays of which have now appeared on my website, with the link immediately on page 1 of the website. Reading those essays is not essential to opening the dialogue, which is just a matter of articulating concern about the problem that can be identified in *Insight* with implementation as essential to the efficient unity of metaphysics (see *Topics in Education* 260, line 16), and in *Method* (see there 355, line 17) with the failure of theology to mature.