

Q. 32 Restructuring Conferences towards Effective Collaboration

Q32 (James Duffy, continued) “I am part of the organizing committee for the Mexico City gathering, and my question regards what we might do in those couple of June days”. [p.2, of Q.31]

“Since the theme of the Mexico City workshop is “The Human Good,” I assume that we are about interpreting what that chapter is about, a matter not just of understanding the object or the words, for example the six words “what is good, always is concrete” (27) or the spread of eighteen words in the scheme on page 48, but of “understanding the author himself, his nation, language, time, culture, way of life, cast of mind” (160).[p.3, Q.31]

A32 My answers, or rather my contributions to James Duffy’s good suggestions, run through from here to Q/A 37.

The present answer is short and practical, although lurking here is the seeding of the project Lonergan Overture 1833, and the other answers 33-37 weave around that seeding, showing, especially in 35 and 36, an unavoidable discomforting.

So I bring up a single telling commonsense question for each participant. it would be best to require an answer from each. [A] distant progress, to be aimed for; [B] roughly, always the same; [C] uncommitted, but I’m interested in e.g. Girard.

Do you view humanity as possibly maturing – in some serious way - or just messing along between good and evil, whatever you think they are?

Jesus and Lonergan give the impression that we could become one [John 17: 21 and thereabouts / *Insight* 20: 31st place and thereabouts]. Most Christian thinkers and apostles implicitly stand for [B] or [C]. You might think generally of N.G.O.s in the Christian tradition or various other missionary traditions. I think here, as a good illustration for your consideration, of that solid scholar and pastor, N.T.Wright, whose books I have recommended: a [B] man.

Lonergeran shows his seriousness, his [A] stand, by pushing *Insight* Chapter 7 to a conclusion about an X called *Cosmopolis*. He lived his seriousness by pushing on in the twelve years to find a practical answer to What is X? : “A good start is to break up the task of Global Thinking, and I suggest making it functionally collaborative”.

If your own answer is [A] then a bit of thinking brings you to see that there must be an X, and it must be some form of division of work that follows Lonergan’s pointing.

If your answer is [B] or [C] then there seems little point in mucking round with Girard or Gadamer or Global issues: focus on local concerns and see what might be done to ease the pain or help the Pope, and drop the mental titillations.

If the answer is [A] then we need to take Lonergan’s seriousness seriously.

If the meeting is honest and serious, then it needs to break up into two groups, one willing to do serious thinking, the other settling for patching an unseemly garment.