

Q. 50 (May 15<sup>th</sup>). Your focus on functional collaboration makes some sense to me but I really cannot imagine it as a global science, or how it might begin and develop. Perhaps you have spelled it out somewhere, but a few leads would be helpful.

A. 50 “The great thing about the renewed theology is that such a process, with your help, is to exist: its emergence in any zone, perhaps in theology, will ferment into a global shift eventually, and it will weave into a renewal in theology.”

The quotation is from A. 48, at note 23. Your question nudges me, yes, to have a fresh shot at a few helpful leads. And yes indeed I have “spelled it out” in various ways and contexts, starting with the identification in 1969 of the desperate need in musicology for such collaboration and winding forward to the grand imagining of its effective operation by the year 9011 A.D. Yet I am now optimistic: over forty years of pointing and pleading look like ending in 2014. But it is to be a sad ending and beginning. My suspicion of the late 1950s – “this won’t take” – made pretty evident at the First International Lonergan Conference in Florida in 1970, has molassed forward into a settled flow of Lonerganism. Of course, I could be surprised: my recent appeals may well help some summer conference turn a corner towards the collaboration that Lonergan battled so hard to imagine. And note here how you share his difficulty. You are right on: “I really cannot imagine it.” Lonergan, at a sick sixty years, broke through the molecular clutches of past imaginings, but only in a basic initial sense. After he told me the tale in the summer of 1966, beginning laconically with “it’s easy: you just double the structure,” I began wandering fields and streets – the libraries really were not much help – trying to lift my neuromolecular patterns to a catalytic dynamic that would ferment the aesthetics of global minding.

First, then, I would ask you to brood over your claim, “I really cannot imagine it as a global science.” Might you modify it towards a real assent that states, “It is bloody hard to imagine but I’ll give it a shot.”<sup>1</sup> The WHAT of the science is no more available to us than Einstein’s Theory was to Galileo. But we have the strange achievement of that genius of anticipation, of heuristics, Lonergan, who powerfully opened the door of the imagination, making possible the alignment of your good will with lonely cosmic molecules through new schemes of recurrence.

But I too easily shift into broader creative heuristic reaching when what you need is “a few leads that would be helpful.”

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<sup>1</sup> I am recalling the remark on *Insight*, page 210: “Even with talent, knowledge makes a slow if not bloody entrance. To learn thoroughly is a vast undertaking that calls for relentless perseverance.” In forty years of Lonergan studies I have seen very little bloody effort to understand what Lonergan achieved in the thin air climb to a structure of Global minding. Perhaps here I have stumbled on a basic answer to the request for leads? Please, please, please bloody please, please have a fresh shot at reading that twenty-one page salute *Gregorianum* article of 1969 that got lost, as chapter five, in the book *Method in Theology*. “Functional Specialties,” *Gregorianum* 50 (1969), 485-505.

So I return to my imaginings in the immediate context, in 2013 as it leads into 2014.

Above I talked of the First International Lonergan Conference in Florida. There have been so-named international conferences since, but all of the same disappointing character, and especially all sliding past the issue of functional collaboration.<sup>2</sup> My present optimism pivots on the people fermenting a quite different International conference in Vancouver next year. I borrow from the notice sent to the Lonergan Newsletter for June 2013 by Bob Henman, secretary to SGEME.

**The 6th International Lonergan Conference: Functional Collaboration in the Academy:  
Advancing Bernard Lonergan's Central Achievement**

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

July 21 – 25, 2014

**ADVANCE NOTICE AND CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**

The conference gives a focus for a small group of people who are not content with the neglect of what is called in the notice "Lonergan's Central Achievement." That discontent has blossomed into a strategy of implementation that spans more than a year. Quinn and Henman have thought this out so that a group effort can generate a mutual self-mediation in the difficult climb to serious beginnings of the radically new culture of global, glocal, care. They have worked on a heuristics of the transition from Abstracts to performance that is to gradually emerge in the next 4 months. Now, I would have you, and us all, think of that work of theirs in creative parallel with the nudge that Boyer gave Lonergan regarding work to be done. Lonergan rose to the occasion of poor functional research and pushed into sixteen months of interpretation mixed with methodological reflections. Might we do the same for four months that grow into the fourteen month climb to July 2014, that mustard seed a tree?

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<sup>2</sup> Perhaps one can forgive the people at the 1970 Easter Conference for not grappling with the new metascientific context. Only Rahner and I had anything to say about it, and Rahner – as I remember – missed, in Spain, his flight-connection to the Conference. His goodly effort appeared in *Gregorianum* of 1971 (Karl Rahner, "Kritische Bemerkungen zu B.J.F. Lonergan's Aufsatz: 'Functional Specialties in Theology'," *Gregorianum* 51 (1970): 537-540), and he expressed there no doubt of its broader value. His problem regarding theology was his failure to conceive of focusing the mystery of Jesus as Lonergan did (CWL 11, thesis 5). What of later Conferences? Simply disgraceful, both scientifically and humanly: is there a difference? Yes, indeed and verily, shit happens! I cannot help repeating here a true story that I heard this morning of Liam Neeson being interviewed in Dublin when he spoke of walking in Central Park after a play performance. As he passed one of the horse-cabs the driver shouted to him in a Dublin accent: "How aya Liam? I saw ya in dat play last night. It was shite." Why is it that I find the Irish "shite happens" altogether more adequate to the Lonerganism situation? "The actors in the drama of living become stagehands; the setting is magnificent; the lighting superb; the costumes gorgeous; but there is no play." *Insight*, 262.

I am not saying that it is a matter of joining the conference, though such a joining would make manifest a clear stand regarding the need and the project as against the ramblings of present Lonerganism. I am turning the effort of Quinn and Henman into an answer to the present question. Might you not think of tackling, indeed tackle, a smaller parallel project. Indeed, might you not behave like the solitary Lonergan to my shabby Boyish advice. Boyer picked up an article from Thomas's *Collected Works* and nudged Lonergan. I pick up a chapter of Lonergan's *Collected Works* and nudge you. Is that not "a few leads that would be helpful"? Indeed, a single discomfiting lead.

I am, of course, serious about this, and even willing to play the role of Charles Boyer as your director. Or you can reach out to a local friend or group for critical back-up. Might you, any reader, take a fresh look at that strange, almost crazy, article on "The Effective Division of Global Care", disguised as chapter 5 of *Method*, and come up with an Abstract that is very concrete?

Further, I would invite you to spread your imaginative wings and possibly fly far away from current goings-on in theology.<sup>3</sup> Take Global Care into some zone close to your own heart or work. Muse over how that work would fit into the eight-fold pattern in an effective manner.

Obviously I am turning your question back to yourself and other interested selves: "I really cannot imagine it as a global science, or how it might begin and develop". Well, sez I with James Joyce, "Just try it on!"<sup>4</sup>

A week has passed in my puzzling over the question "how might it begin and develop?" But it appears to me now best to leave you with the question just so, turned back to you both broadly and in the discomfiting detail of reading that 21-gone salute mentioned in note 1.<sup>5</sup> None of us can afford to be spectators.<sup>6</sup> Let us putter forward then in grubby hopefilled details. What, for instance, would it be like to write one single functionally proper sentence in any one specialty? Or indeed, we could go crazy in trying for a paragraph!

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<sup>3</sup> Chapter One of my Website book, *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations* (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/method.html>), points to the possible genesis of functional collaboration outside the usual basis or "Grounds for the Division" (*Method*, chapter 5, section 3) in a variety of zones and disciplines.

<sup>4</sup>The conclusion of "Oxen of the Sun" in James Joyce's *Ulysses*: a background music sniffing out the road to *Finnegans Wake* and to *Method in Theology*.

<sup>5</sup> Yes, here surely is an obvious choice for re-cycling. It is a 21-page salute in both the *Gregorianum* article and in *Method* 125-45 that has not gone, that won't go away.

<sup>6</sup> I regularly note that one can drop out of the Tower enterprise and thus give a lift to one's participation in lifting culture in a variety of serious manners.

And I would note finally that this is not closing your question but opening it. The detailed struggle will carry us through a flow of functionally effective questions and answers. But first there is the next question that relates to the strange novel religious question that haunts our cosmic and neural skin. I title Q/A 51, "You Make My Skin Caul." The 'You' has the advantage in English of also being plural. They make our skins caul, if we but tune ourselves thinkingly. But I would like to think that what I write here, in tingling resonance, also makes your skin caul.