

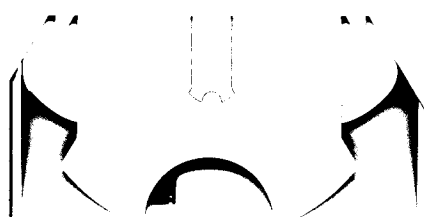
The Unified Field Structure for Systematic Theology: A Proposal

© Copyright by Robert M. Doran 2002

1 Contexts

I wish first to situate what I hope to do this evening in the context of this day's event. The idea for this event grew rather quickly in the course of several conversations internal to the Lonergan Research Institute last August. The major occasion for this event is the launching of the compact disc project, which most people agree is an exciting and very important development that will prove to be a lasting contribution to theology and philosophy and to the study of Bernard Lonergan's work. But when we thought of a launch, we realized that this would also be a perfect occasion to call attention to the Collected Works and to acknowledge the friendship and cooperation of the University of Toronto Press. And finally, the idea occurred to me also to use this occasion to inaugurate a collaborative project in systematic theology that we have been talking about for some time. The last of these occasions is the one that we are marking this evening, with the inaugural Bernard Lonergan Lecture in Systematic Theology.

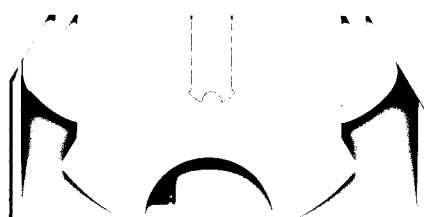
The greatest challenge that I feel at the moment comes from the fact that this day up to this point has been primarily a party, and I don't want to spoil the party with an insufferably boring or hopelessly abstruse presentation. Systematic theology is not at the top of everybody's agenda, and it is very, very hard work. Significant insights in systematic theology come only after a great deal of difficult work trying to understand the work of the greatest theologians in the history of the church and in our own time,



and they usually come very quietly, in the solitude of theological meditation and as a result of attempting to listen to what Eric Voegelin has called the silent voices of conscience and grace. I'm going to do the best I can this evening to communicate to you something of a vision of what that hard work is all about, something of the spirit and significance of what I hope we will be able to do over the years ahead at the Institute in the field of systematic theology. I am also going to do my best to be clear, forthright, honest, intelligible, concrete. That does not mean I will succeed. I often don't, as any of my students will probably gladly testify. If I should happen to lose you at any point along the way, the fault is mine, not yours, and rather than giving up on me or falling asleep, perhaps you might want to focus on a couple of other statements that are very closely linked to what I am saying. So let me begin by giving you those images.

The first is a story that Lonergan tells us about his own personal history. He had begun doing his theology studies in Montreal in 1934 when he was visited by the Jesuit director of studies and told that there was some thought that he should be reassigned to do his studies at the Gregorian University in Rome, where the Jesuits tended to send their more promising students. But, it seems, there was one lingering question that had to be settled before they would make the assignment. And so the director of studies, a man by the name of Fr. Hingston, asked him that lingering question, 'Are you orthodox?' and Lonergan's reply was, 'Yes, but I think a lot!' Then he goes on to say that he began to give poor Fr. Hingston some examples, and he was quickly interrupted and told that he had already answered the question to Fr. Hingston's satisfaction.

The second image that you might work with is a bit more serious. It is a quotation from Newman's Apologia pro vita sua that Lonergan cites

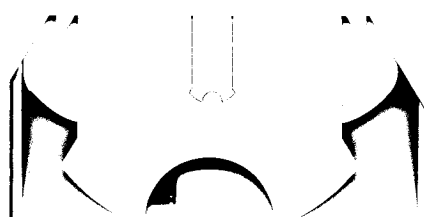


several times: 'Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.' Lonergan says, 'Newman's remark ... has served me in good stead. It encouraged me to look difficulties squarely in the eye, while not letting them interfere with my vocation or my faith.'

If nothing else stays with you from what I am saying this evening, let it be this: one can think a lot and still be orthodox; one can face ten thousand difficulties in the realm of understanding and still not entertain a single doubt that affects one's assent in faith. This is precisely what systematic theology is all about: facing the difficulties squarely so that one can understand what one already believes to be true. The central question of systematic theology is, How can this be? I believe it is true, but what in the world does it mean? How can it be true?

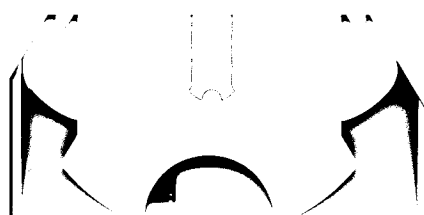
What, then, is this new project in systematic theology that I hope the present lecture is inaugurating?

The Lonergan Research Institute has been in existence in its present institutional form since April of 1985, as an outgrowth of and development on the Lonergan Center that Frederick Crowe founded in 1970 and that Michael Shields had been directing at Regis College. From the beginning our hopes for what we could do extended beyond the scope of what in fact we have managed to do up to the present time. Our way of expressing those hopes has gone through several phases, but the constant in those changes has been an intention to work in the two phases of intellectual activity and especially of theology that many of you will be familiar with from Method in Theology. There is a first phase concerned with investigating what others have said and done. For us, work in this first phase would be largely concerned with investigating what Bernard Lonergan himself said and did. In this phase people assemble data and prepare critical texts (what Lonergan



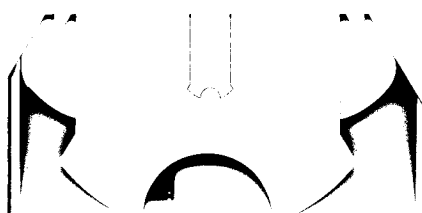
calls research), interpret the data (what he calls interpretation), narrate what was going forward (what he calls history), and evaluate the conflicts or at least determine the real issues at stake in the conflicts that people got themselves into and continue to get themselves into (what he calls dialectic). But there is also a second phase in which people are no longer so preoccupied with what others have said and done, but in which they try to figure out what they themselves are going to say and do. So in this phase people tell us where they are coming from, what the horizon is within which they think they should be operating, within which theological assertions make sense, the horizon established by religious, moral, intellectual, and psychic conversion (what Lonergan calls foundations); they tell us what they hold to be true (what he calls doctrines); they explain how they understand what they hold to be true (what he calls systematics); and they devise strategies for communicating with different groups (what he calls communications).

Now we are concerned with working in both phases. In the language that I use currently in literature about the Institute in order to express these two ideals or hopes, I speak of preserving, promoting, implementing, and developing the work of Bernard Lonergan. Preserving and promoting entail labor in the first phase: maintaining the archives, both papers and audio, making available relevant materials in a library collection, and publishing the Collected Works as a series of critical texts. We are doing research, interpretation, history, and dialectic regarding the work of Lonergan himself. But implementing and developing Lonergan's work is second-phase activity, where, even if we are standing on Lonergan's shoulders, we stand as well on our own two feet and say, not just what Lonergan said but what we say.



Even as we gather today to celebrate and display what the Institute has done to preserve and promote Lonergan's work, specifically the audio restoration and the Collected Works, we are also beginning to operate more deliberately and purposefully in the second phase. That is what tonight is all about. We have chosen to focus our implementing and developing around the task of collaborating to construct a systematic theology for our times.

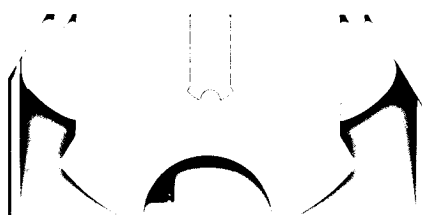
There are many other emphases that we could have chosen. Many people, no doubt would be much more interested if we were choosing some other path on which to exercise our own ingenuity and insight, such as economics or the theory of human rights or the dialogue of world religions or contemporary sexual ethics. Lonergan's work is pertinent to all of these, as various contributions from thinkers versed in his work have amply demonstrated. But the reason we have chosen systematics is not only that there is an urgent need for work in that area, but also that that is where the local talent lies. This is what we are able to do. Moreover, all of these other areas that I have mentioned will eventually figure in a systematic theology. But they are not the first or the central items to be attended to in systematics. One does not begin a systematic theology with what is 'first for us' but with what is first in another sense, namely, with that which, if it is understood, enables one to proceed to all the other tasks of understanding in the discipline, and if it is misunderstood or poorly understood will hinder one's attempts at understanding anything else. Systematics is about understanding. Systematics is primarily about understanding what I already hold to be true. If the discipline is theology, if the specialty is systematic work in theology, then one begins with what is first in the theological realm, and what is first in the theological realm is not economic theory or human rights or the dialogue of religions or sexual ethics but, to put it bluntly, God.



It is no accident that, after a fascinating opening question on the discipline of theology itself, Thomas Aquinas devotes questions 2 through 43 of the prima pars of the Summa theologiae to God.

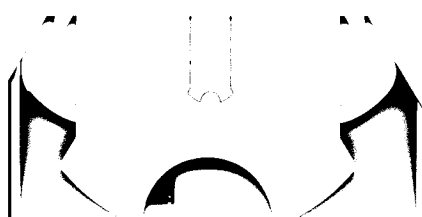
So I am viewing the paper that I am presenting this evening as the inauguration of a new project on the part of the Lonergan Research Institute. My hope is that a number of people steeped in Lonergan's work, some of us connected directly with the Institute and others working at other institutions, will collaborate under the auspices of the Institute in the years ahead to construct and develop a contemporary systematics. That is my dream. And it has already begun to be realized. The collaborative effort will be obvious even in the paper, since the paper arises out of a prolonged discussion that has occurred on and off over the past few years at the Institute, at Regis College, and at Boston College. And the word 'contemporary' is important. Such a theology, if we do it right, will stand in continuity with Thomas's Summa theologiae. It will also stand in continuity with earlier work of Lonergan's, with trinitarian, christological, soteriological, and anthropological treatises that Lonergan himself composed when he taught systematic theology at L'Immaculée Conception in Montreal, at the Jesuit Seminary in Toronto that later became Regis College, and at the Gregorian University in Rome. But, if we do it right, it will also embody a genetic development on these works, and it will leave itself open to an ongoing genetic sequence of systematic theologies.

As part of this new project, we hope to sponsor every year the Bernard Lonergan Lecture in Systematic Theology. But that lecture will be only part of the new venture, and in the ideal order it will arise out of the discussions of a team of people working closely with one another to compose and develop a systematic theology for our time. My hope is that what I have to



say this evening will help to orient that ongoing work, by providing its initial and to some extent at least part of its enduring framework. But if the framework is to endure, it will do so only by continually allowing itself to be refined, nuanced, stretched to expansions and even higher viewpoints and paradigm shifts by the emergence of new questions. As Lonergan himself says, in a theological application of Kurt Gödel's mathematical theorem that he expresses in his Latin notes De intellectu et methodo, no matter how comprehensive a framework one seems to have established, one must always expect that sooner or later a question or questions will arise from within the framework itself that cannot be answered unless the framework itself undergoes some kind of major transposition or transformation. May I suggest that this is what is happening on a more pedestrian level in the church itself in our time? Questions have arisen. They have arisen from within the framework of the dogmatic-theological context that we have inherited. And they cannot be answered from within that framework. Some of those questions are in precisely the areas that I mentioned earlier: economic theory, human rights, the dialogue of world religions, sexual ethics. The framework must be transposed and transformed, and the only limits on that transposition and transformation are provided by (1) what God has enabled the church to judge in dogmatic definitions are matters that cannot be gone back on, and (2) the inbuilt laws of the human spirit with its precepts calling us to be ever attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and by God's grace in love.

Still, we must begin somewhere, and that is what I am going to attempt to do in the remainder of my presentation. In fact, what I am going to attempt to do this evening is to lay out precisely where I think the whole project must begin.

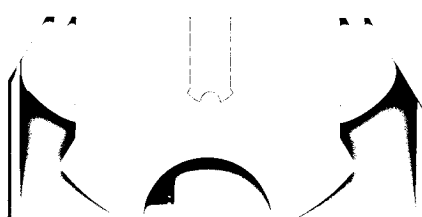


2 The Thesis

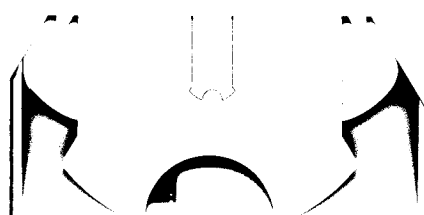
My fundamental thesis, then, is that there is at hand a unified field structure for the functional specialty or theological discipline ‘systematics.’

What is meant by a unified field structure? The expression ‘unified field structure’ is not mine, but Daniel Monsour’s.¹ However, I have developed, or at least am developing, my own way of expressing what I mean by speaking this way. The unified field structure would be some open set of conceptions that embraces the field of issues presently to be accounted for and presently foreseeable in that discipline or functional specialty of theology whose task it is to give a synthetic understanding of the realities that are and ought to be providing the meaning constitutive of the community called the church. The unified field structure would be a statement, perhaps a quite lengthy one, perhaps even one taking up several large volumes, capable of guiding for the present and the foreseeable future the ongoing genetic development of the entire synthetic understanding of the mysteries of faith and of the other elements that enter into systematic theology. It would guide all work at bringing these elements into a synthetic unity. It would stand in continuity with the implicit unified field structure of the Summa theologiae of Thomas Aquinas, which marks what we might call the first great plateau in the unfolding of systematic theology, and it will leave itself open to further enrichments, differentiations, and transformations analogous to those that it itself adds to the Thomist conception.

To draw on one of Daniel Monsour’s articulations, the unified field structure would stand to a contemporary systematics much as the periodic table stands to contemporary chemistry. Again, in a different articulation, it would be a summation and integration of what Lonergan once called the

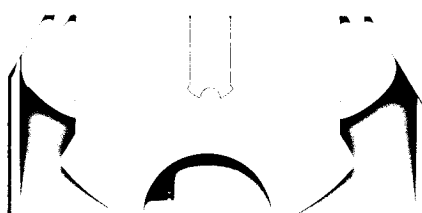


dogmatic-theological context² as that context stands at the present time, given both the development of theology to this point and an intelligent, faith-filled anticipation of where theology must go from here. Again, in yet another articulation, it would stand to a contemporary systematics as the theorem of the supernatural joined to Aristotle's metaphysics stood to the emergent systematics of the Middle Ages as it came to a synthesis in Aquinas, and in fact it will be a genetic development upon that unified field structure. The conjunction of the theorem of the supernatural with Aristotle's metaphysics provided perhaps the first great unified field structure for a systematic theology, and any future structure must build on that synthesis even as it shows itself capable of addressing issues which that framework could not handle. Thus, an adequate contemporary field structure would make systematics historically conscious and would place it in tune with modern scientific methods and achievements, with exegetical methods, and with historical scholarship. A contemporary systematics has to be able to address problems and relate to theological functional specialties that had not emerged at all at the time that Thomas did his work. Thomas knew nothing of what we have come to call scientific historical-critical exegesis, nothing of critical history, nothing of modern science whether natural or human. That is not to say that he has nothing to contribute to these, but only that the methods and results of these disciplines as we know them were simply beyond his horizon. A theology that mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion within that matrix cannot simply repeat even the permanent achievements of another age but must carry them forward in the same spirit as the one Lonergan embodied when he took as a central inspiration for so much of his work Pope Leo



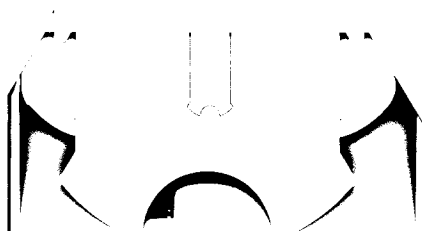
XIII's injunction vetera novis augere et perficere, to augment and complete the old with the new.

✓ So the two principal components of the structure that I will suggest are sublations of the two components of Thomas's structure, that is, of the theorem of the supernatural and of Aristotle's metaphysics. Lonergan's notion of sublation (in German Aufhebung) is taken not from Hegel but from Karl Rahner. '... what sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.'³ Thus, like the medieval organizing conception, the unified field structure that I am going to suggest combines a specifically theological element with a more general set of categories. The theorem of the supernatural was discovered around the year 1230 by Philip the Chancellor of the University of Paris. And it is precisely a theorem: it no more changes the data on the experience of our spiritual life than the scientific notion of acceleration as d^2s/dt^2 changes our experience of going faster or slower. A theorem is a scientific elaboration of a common notion. As Lonergan says, the theorem of the supernatural 'completed a discovery that in the next forty years released a whole series of developments. The discovery was a distinction between two entitatively disproportionate orders: grace was above nature; faith was above reason; charity was above human good will; merit before God was above the good opinion of one's neighbors.' As these two orders are disproportionate, so they are related to one another in the most intimate fashion. And as Lonergan has shown in his great work Grace and Freedom, based on his own doctoral dissertation, the discovery, the distinction and organization that it



brought about, ‘made it possible (1) to discuss the nature of grace without discussing liberty, (2) to discuss the nature of liberty without discussing grace, and (3) to work out the relations between grace and liberty.’⁴ But, it may be argued, it did more than this. It grounded the specifically theological component of Thomas’s entire conception, while Aristotle’s metaphysics provided its general categories, the categories that dealt not with the supernatural but with nature.

The principal specifically theological element in the unified field structure now at hand is a four-point hypothesis proposed in Bernard Lonergan’s systematics of the Trinity. The hypothesis differentiates the theorem of the supernatural into a set of connections between the four real divine relations — what the tradition calls paternity, filiation, active spiration, and passive spiration — and created supernatural participations in those relations. Thus, the secondary act of existence of the Incarnation, the assumed humanity of the Incarnate Word, is a created participation in paternity. ‘Whoever has seen me has seen the Father’ (John 14.9). In the immanent trinitarian relations, the Word does not speak; the Word is spoken by the Father. The Incarnate Word speaks. But he speaks only what he has heard from the Father. Again, sanctifying grace as the dynamic state of being in love is a created participation in the active spiration *by* the Father and the Son *of* the Holy Spirit, so that as the Father and the Son together breathe the Holy Spirit as uncreated term, so sanctifying grace as created participation in the active spiration of Father and Son ‘breathes’ some created participation in the same Holy Spirit. The habit of charity is that created participation in the passive spiration that *is* the Holy Spirit, a created participation in the third person of the Blessed Trinity. And the light of glory that alone renders possible the beatific vision is a created participation

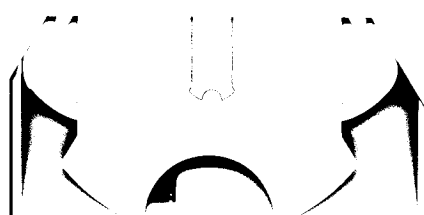


in the Sonship of the divine Word. And so the hypothesis enables a synthetic understanding of the four mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, grace, and the last things. The hypothesis itself is beyond anything explicit in Aquinas, even though it may be argued that the seeds of much of it are present in question 43 of the Prima pars of the Summa theologiae, where Thomas discusses the missions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. There is in Lonergan's hypothesis a coordination of the divine processions with the processions of word and love in authentic human performance that, in Lonergan's beautiful words, almost brings God too close to us. And this coordination, I believe, like many other things in Lonergan's work, remains potential in Aquinas and is spelled out perhaps for the first time in the hypothesis of Lonergan's from which I am taking my lead in the present paper.

The set of general categories that would represent a sublation of the Aristotelian metaphysics that provided Aquinas with his own general categories will be provided, I am arguing, by what Lonergan calls a 'basic and total science.' That basic and total science is to be found in the cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics of Lonergan's great book Insight and in the existential ethics of both Insight and Method in Theology, but principally as these are brought to bear on the development of a theory of history. And I hope that I have been able to provide some developments on that theory of history in my own work, Theology and the Dialectics of History.

3 The Hypothesis

The four-point hypothesis reads as follows.



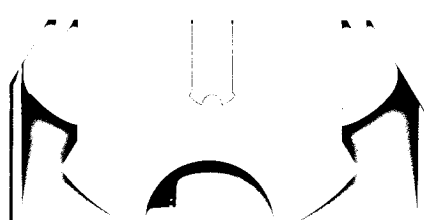
... there are four real divine relations, really identical with divine being, and so four special ways of grounding an imitation or participation ad extra of God's own life. And there are four absolutely supernatural created realities. They are never found in an unformed or indeterminate state. They are: the secondary act of existence of the Incarnation, sanctifying grace, the habit of charity, and the light of glory.

Thus it can appropriately be maintained that the secondary act of existence of the Incarnation is a created participation of paternity, and so that it has a special relation to the Son; that sanctifying grace is a [created] participation of active spiration, and so that it bears a special relation to the Holy Spirit; that the habit of charity is a [created] participation of passive spiration, and so that it has a special relation to the Father and the Son; and that the light of glory is a [created] participation of filiation that leads perfectly the children of adoption back to the Father.⁵

This passage, which is an astounding expression of a theological synthesis, explicitly embraces the doctrines of the triune God, of the Incarnate Word, of the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit, and of the last things, and it does so in such a way that the mysteries affirmed in these doctrines are related systematically or synthetically to one another. Thus it presents in a systematic order some of the principal realities named by the special categories, the categories peculiar to theology.

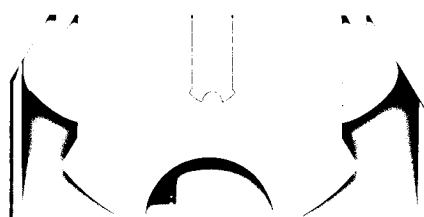
4 A Proposal

Now, over the past few years there has developed a discussion at the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, in some of the graduate seminars



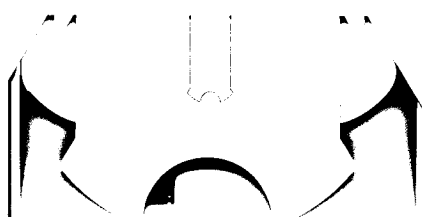
sponsored by the Institute, in some of the systematic courses at Regis College, and at the Lonergan Workshop at Boston College, as to whether this four-point hypothesis is adequate to function on its own as a unified field structure for systematics. The discussion is focused in two as yet unpublished papers by Daniel Monsour: 'The Categories "Gratia Increata et Creata" and the Functional Specialty Systematics,' presented for discussion at a Lonergan Research Institute seminar on 18 November 1999, and 'The Four-point Hypothesis and the Special Theological Categories,' delivered at the Lonergan Workshop at Boston College in 2001. The question that Monsour raises is, Is the four-point hypothesis sufficient to do for systematic theology something analogous to what the periodic table would do for chemistry? Is it enough to enable us to sum up and integrate the dogmatic-theological context of the church as that context has developed up to the present time? Does it suffice if we want something that will do for a contemporary systematics what the theorem of the supernatural combined with a transformed Aristotelian metaphysics did for the theology of the Summa theologiae? Monsour's argument is in favor of an antecedent likelihood that the hypothesis will provide the integrating principle. I propose, though, that, however synthetic the four-point hypothesis may be, and however much it may provide those core categories to which all other categories must be referred, still it does not stand on its own; it is not enough to unify a synthetic contemporary theological understanding. There are two reasons for this. One reason has to do with the special categories, those that are peculiar to theology, and the other has to do with the general categories, those that theology shares with other disciplines.

First, while the four-point hypothesis does provide a specifically theological element in the unified field structure, still there are other



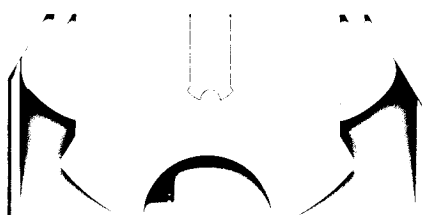
specifically theological realities, and so other special theological categories, that a unified field structure must integrate, and they cannot be mapped adequately onto the four-point hypothesis or reduced to it. They are related to it, and must be configured to it in some way, so that theological reflection that employs them must be enlivened and informed by the hypothesis. But they have a theological reality of their own that is not simply reducible to the realities named in the hypothesis. I have in mind categories regarding creation, revelation, redemption, the church, the sacraments, and Christian praxis in the world. While all of these are intimately related to the elements expressed in the four-point hypothesis, still they are not organized by that hypothesis alone. Part of the specifically theological reality is reality on the move, reality in development, reality as history, and that part is not accounted for by the hypothesis alone.

Secondly, and consequently, the integration of these further theological realities will locate the divine missions, which are at the heart of the four-point hypothesis, in creation and especially in the history whose dynamics of progress, decline, and redemption are part of the reason for the missions in the first place. If possible, the missions must be located in creation and in history, not vaguely but precisely. And I believe this can be done through the scale of values that Lonergan suggests in Method in Theology⁶ and that I have developed as fully as I could in Theology and the Dialectics of History.⁷ The latter work views the scale of values – vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious – as a key to the theory of history. As such, the scale will form an additional component in the unified field structure. But this means that these theological realities must be integrated not only with one another but also with the heuristic account of the order of the universe (what Lonergan calls emergent probability) and with other

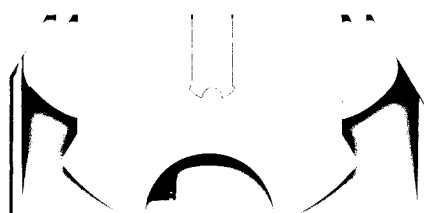


realities constitutive of human history, that is to say, with realities that are known by sciences and scholarly disciplines other than theology. An additional set of sets of categories beyond those rooted in the four-point hypothesis and beyond the other special categories is required for such a theological synthesis to take place. General theological categories are required even for the adequate theological understanding of specifically theological realities. As the medieval theorem of the supernatural needed a metaphysical system, in the theology of Thomas Aquinas, if it was to mediate religion and the cultural matrix influenced by Aristotle, so the four-point hypothesis requires general categories shared with other disciplines if the divine missions that are at the core of the hypothesis are to be located in relation to their historical occasions and effects. More precisely, a mission is for a purpose, and the divine missions are for the purpose of establishing and confirming interpersonal relations, first between God and us, and then among ourselves; and interpersonal relations are also the core element in the structure of the human good that is coincident with the immanent intelligibility of history. Thus understanding the divine missions entails understanding the history that the Word was sent to redeem from the alternating cycles of progress and decline and that the Holy Spirit is sent to renew with the outpouring of self-sacrificing love.

Where, then, are the general categories to be located, or at least grounded? My thesis is that the set of sets of general categories will be based in the cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics of Insight, in the existential ethics of Insight and Method in Theology, and in the theory of history proposed by Lonergan over the span of his writings and complemented by the contributions that I have tried to offer in Theology and the Dialectics of History. My thesis, then, is that, taken together, these two



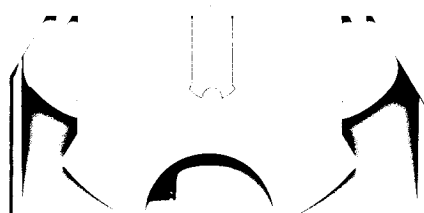
elements — a four-point theological hypothesis and what Lonergan calls the basic and total science, the Grund- und Gesamtwissenschaft, especially as the latter issues in a theory of history — provide the basic framework, the set of terms and relations, of a unified field structure for systematic theology. The combination of the four-point hypothesis with the grounding base of the general categories will be required even for the discussion of the other special theological realities: creation, revelation, redemption, church, sacraments, and Christian praxis. None of these can be understood solely in the terms provided by the special categories. But with the four-point hypothesis and the philosophical positions that are for the most part already in place in Insight and that are complemented where necessary by later developments, we have everything we need to begin constructing a systematic theology. And that ‘everything we need to begin constructing a systematic theology’ is precisely what I mean by a unified field structure. It is true that no systematic theology will ever be complete until we enjoy the systematic theology that is coincident with the beatific vision. There is no possibility of a closed system in theology any more than there is in mathematics or empirical science. Eventually, every system will give rise to questions that cannot be answered on the basis of the resources provided by that system. Every system is an open system, that is, one in which it is anticipated that questions will arise from within the system itself that the system is not able to answer, that will demand the move to a higher viewpoint, perhaps a paradigm shift, before satisfactory hypotheses can be provided. Any system that claims not to be open in this way is an idol. Still, we must begin somewhere, and we must begin with the anticipation that the further categories that emerge will be validated by their connection with the categories that frame this unified field structure. Lonergan says as much, I



believe, in section 3.121 of his response to a 'Questionnaire on Philosophy' sent to him in preparation for a symposium on philosophical studies for Jesuits. In brief, '... the Christian religion as lived is the sublation of the whole of human living. It follows at once that to thematize the sublation of the whole of human living is a task beyond the competence of theology as a particular science or particular discipline, that theology can perform that task only by broadening its horizon by uniting itself with philosophy as the basic and total science.' Moreover, 'theology is the sublation of philosophy. For philosophy is the basic and total science of human living. The Christian religion as lived is the sublation of the whole of human living. Hence the Christian religion as thematized is the sublation of the basic and total science of human living.'⁸ At one point that sublation yields a theologically transformed theory of history, and here is where the principal though not the sole general categories of systematics will be applied.

5 History and the Special Categories

If I am going to back up my proposal with an argument that meets the exigences of the conversation in which the proposal arose, I must turn to a test that Daniel Monsour proposed. In the chapter on Foundations in Method in Theology, Lonergan spells out five sets of special theological categories. The test lies in the question, can these five sets be mapped without remainder onto the four-point hypothesis? I will argue that the four-point hypothesis will not be able to integrate the second, fourth, and fifth of these sets into an overall systematic exposition unless there is added to it a theory of history.



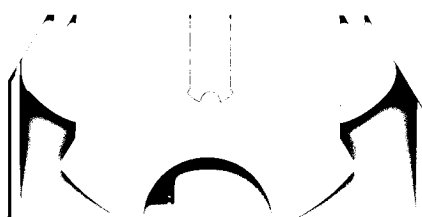
The first set of special categories, then, is derived from religious experience. These categories will emerge from 'studies of religious interiority: historical, phenomenological, psychological, sociological. There is needed in the theologian the spiritual development that will enable [one] both to enter into the experience of others and to frame the terms and relations that will express that experience.'⁹

A second set has to do, not with the subject but with 'subjects, their togetherness in community, service, and witness, the history of the salvation that is rooted in a being-in-love, and the function of this history in promoting' the reign of God in the world.¹⁰

A third set 'moves from our loving to the loving source of our love. The Christian tradition makes explicit our implicit intending of God in all our intending by speaking of the Spirit that is given to us, of the Son who redeemed us, of the Father who sent the Son and with the Son sends the Spirit, and of our future destiny when we shall know, not as in a glass darkly, but face to face.'¹¹

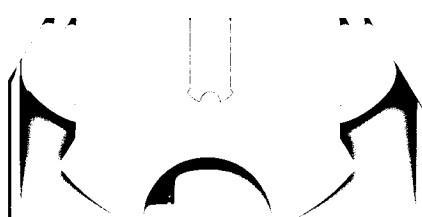
A fourth set differentiates authentic and inauthentic humanity and authentic and inauthentic Christianity. '... to the unauthentic [person] or Christian, what appears authentic is the unauthentic. Here, then, is the root of division, opposition, controversy, denunciation, bitterness, hatred, violence.'¹²

And a fifth set 'regards progress, decline, and redemption. As human authenticity promotes progress, and human unauthenticity generates decline, so Christian authenticity — which is a love of others that does not shrink from self-sacrifice and suffering — is the sovereign means for overcoming evil. Christians bring about the kingdom of God in the world not only by doing good but also by overcoming evil with good ... Not only is there the



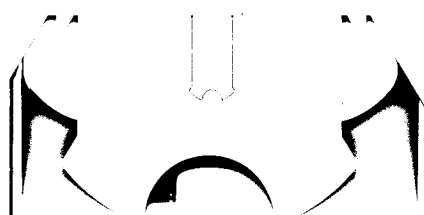
progress of [humankind] but also there is development and progress within Christianity itself; and as there is development, so too there is decline; and as there is decline, there also is the problem of undoing it, of overcoming evil with good not only in the world but also in the church.’¹³

In my view only the third set of special categories can be adequately mapped onto the four-point hypothesis. Any attempt to map the other sets onto the four-point hypothesis is really an attempt to reduce the other sets to the third set. And if the other sets cannot be mapped without remainder onto the four-point hypothesis, then clearly more is needed if we are to arrive at a unified field structure for the functional specialty ‘systematics.’ Not even all the special categories can be adequately mapped onto the four-point hypothesis. Now, obviously the third set matches the four-point hypothesis almost point by point, so that it can safely be said that this set can be mapped without remainder onto the hypothesis. Moreover, I believe the hypothesis provides a key to clarifying religious experience in its twofold dimensions of receiving the love of God and being in love with precisely that love, and so is relevant to elements of the first set of special categories. But mapping the other three sets onto the hypothesis is not only more difficult; in the last analysis, it is, I believe, impossible. One can relate the other three sets to the third set, and so to the hypothesis, but any attempt to go further would be an attempt to reduce the other three sets to the third. The other three sets demand a framework that locates within, or in relation to, the dialectical dynamics of history the four created supernatural realities that are the created consequent conditions either of the divine missions (the esse secundarium of the Incarnation, sanctifying grace, and the habit of charity) or of the beatific vision (the light of glory). The categories that detail the relation of these created supernatural realities to history are required if we



are to have a systematics of creation, revelation (which, as Lonergan says, introduces a new meaning into history), redemption, the church, the sacraments, and Christian praxis.

The four-point hypothesis, then, has to be placed in history. Speaking as it does of the divine missions certainly does locate it in history, but it has to function within a conception of history that will enable the integration of the second, fourth, and fifth sets of special categories into the overall systematic conception. The created contingent external terms that make possible that there are divine missions are not enough to allow for this integration. The divine missions have to be related in a thematic and explicit manner to the dynamics of history, and the dynamics of history have to be configured in a thematic and explicit manner to the divine missions. That can be done only by developing a theological theory of history. The four-point hypothesis does not in itself tell us anything about what the Incarnation and the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit have to do with historical progress and decline, whereas creation, revelation, redemption, the church, the sacraments, and Christian praxis cannot be understood theologically apart from historical progress and decline.¹⁴ As Lonergan himself wrote at the time of his breakthrough to the notion of functional specialization, a contemporary systematic theology in its entirety must be a theological theory of history; or again, the mediated object of systematics is Geschichte. We may conclude, then, that the basic organizing systematic conception must contain, in addition to the four-point hypothesis, the fundamental elements of a theological theory of history. And I would propose that those fundamental elements are provided at least in an incipient fashion in Lonergan's analysis of the dialectic of history in terms of progress, decline, and redemption and in the complementary suggestions that I offer in

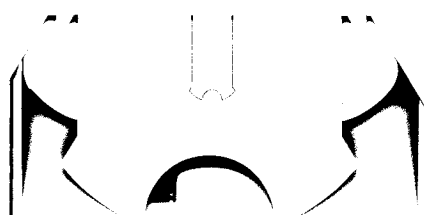


Theology and the Dialectics of History. While there is no doubt that further work (for example, in social theory and economics) will uncover other elements and so other categories, these give us enough to get started and provide the basic map or grid for locating the elements that further work will discover, just as the periodic table provides the basic grid for locating further atomic elements.

6 Glimpsing Some Implications

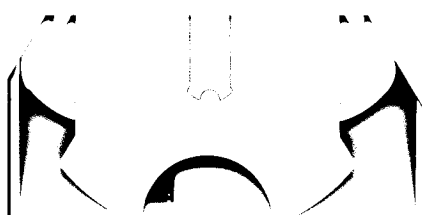
I would like to begin this section with another image. We commissioned the great iconographer William Hart McNichols to write an icon of Bernard Lonergan in connection with our preparations for 2004. As a matter of fact, the icon is likely to be completed within the next few weeks.¹⁵ Bill has already described it for me, and his description will help to orient this section of my remarks.

The icon is based on a classic Russian icon, and is entitled ‘Holy Theologian Bernard Lonergan in the Mystery of the Eternal Processions of the Most Holy Trinity.’ In the icon Lonergan is kneeling on the ground in adoration of three angels who have come to visit him. The angels represent, as they do in so many Russian icons, the three persons of the Trinity. One of Lonergan’s writings is on the ground, and the angel who represents the Holy Spirit has taken one of Lonergan’s hands in one of his own hands, and with his other hand the angel is pointing to the writing in a sign of divine acceptance of Lonergan’s work. The Son is standing next to the Spirit, and the Father is behind them both, in the center. The landscape is distinctly Canadian, with reminders of the work of the the great Canadian painter Lawren Harris.



Perhaps we can utilize this image to help us glimpse the enormous theological implications of what I have been saying. I will summarize several of them very quickly.

The theory of history based on the interrelations of the levels of value — from above, religious, personal, cultural, social, vital — proposes that the recurrent intelligent emanation of the word of authentic value judgments and of acts of love in human consciousness (personal value) is due to the grace of the mission of the Holy Spirit (religious value) and is also the source of the making of history, of historical progress through schemes of recurrence in the realms of cultural, social, and vital values. But the mission of the Holy Spirit is the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit joined to a created, contingent external term that is the consequent condition of the procession being also a mission, or of the proceeding Holy Spirit also being sent. Thus the intelligent emanation in God of the Holy Spirit, the eternal procession in God of the Holy Spirit, joined to the created, contingent, consequent external terms that are sanctifying grace and the habit of charity (as well as to the operative movements that are known as auxilium divinum or actual grace), the eternal intelligent emanation of the Spirit in God as also Gift in history, is the ultimate condition of possibility of any consistent or recurrent intelligent emanation of authentic judgments of value and schemes of recurrence rooted in acts of love in human beings. This collaboration of intelligent processions, divine and human, is, then, the condition of the possibility of the consistent authentic performance of what Lonergan calls the normative source of meaning in history.¹⁶ And if such personal value conditions the possibility of functioning schemes of recurrence in the realms of cultural, and then social, and then vital values, if that normative source, functioning communally, is the origin of progress in history, then the

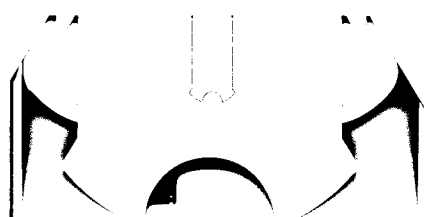


mission of the Holy Spirit, which is identical with the eternal procession of the Spirit joined to the created, contingent, consequent term of charity, and so the Spirit as Gift, is the very source of progress in history. Conversely, wherever genuine progress (measured by fidelity to the scale of values) takes place, the Spirit is present and active. The combination of the four-point hypothesis with the theory of history thus enables us to relate trinitarian theology, and even the theology of the immanent Trinity, directly to the processes not only of individual sanctification but also of human historical unfolding. The discernment of the mission of the Holy Spirit thus becomes the most important ingredient in humankind's taking responsibility for the guidance of history.

-
- 1 In section 4 below, I will provide reference to two papers by my colleague at the Lonergan Research Institute, Daniel Monsour. These two papers instigated a great deal of the inquiry that goes forward in this article.
 - 2 The most complete discussion of the dogmatic-theological context occurs in the 1962 lectures on 'The Method of Theology' delivered at Regis College, Toronto. These lectures are presently available in audio form on compact disc from the Lonergan Research Institute. A written transcription will form part of volume 22 of Lonergan's Collected Works, Early Works on Theological Method I.
 - 3 Lonergan, Method in Theology (latest printing, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) 241.
 - 4 Ibid. 310.
 - 5 Translated from Lonergan, De Deo trino: Pars systematica (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964) 234-35.



-
- 6 Lonergan, Method in Theology 31-32.
 - 7 Robert M. Doran, Theology and the Dialectics of History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990, 2001).
 - 8 Bernard Lonergan, 'Questionnaire on Philosophy: Responses by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.,' ed. Frederick E. Crowe, METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies 2/2 (October, 1984) 7-8.
 - 9 Lonergan, Method in Theology 290.
 - 10 Ibid. 291, emphasis added.
 - 11 Ibid.
 - 12 Ibid.
 - 13 Ibid.
 - 14 In a discussion period at the 1962 Institute at Regis College, Toronto, on 'The Method of Theology,' Lonergan expressed a conviction that the sacraments and the church are two areas in systematic theology in which an enormous amount of work needs to be done. In fact, he said, there is needed even doctrinal development in these areas. 'The fundamental developments are: the trinitarian doctrine in which the key element is the consubstantial; christological doctrine: one person and two natures; the idea of the supernatural, habit and act. There is then the field in which the categories are not yet fully developed. For example, categories as to the instrumental causality of the sacraments; they have to be developed more fully. There is also everything regarding history and the mystical body, and the church; all these need further development.' (Emphasis added)
 - 15 The icon was completed in January. It can be viewed online at [www:puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/andre](http://www.puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/andre).



16 See Bernard Lonergan, 'Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,' A Third Collection, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985) 169-83.