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REV: The last class saw us trying to understand the three conversions: religious, moral, and intellectual, and the relationships between them. This is all part of an attempt to build an understanding of the structure of a modern empirical theology. The task of such a theology is to mediate to modern culture the truth of the Christian faith. The first phase of such a theology is historical: a study of what Christians have done, said, thought, meant, intended throughout the course of history. The theological purpose of this historical study is to discover just what is to be mediated to modern culture. The issue of the three conversions arose because the historical study will have differing results depending on the assumptions ~~on~~ and options of the investigators. These differences can be

- a) understood only by going to their core in these assumptions and options,
- and b) reconciled only by changes in assumptions and options that amount to conversion or breakdown in the being of the investigators.

Finally, we saw that generally religious ~~and~~ conversion precedes moral conversion and both religious and moral conversion precede intellectual conversion. [This must be spelled out for Sec. 1].

The final item to be covered in this course is the second phase of a modern empirical theology. In the first phase, the theologian has restricted himself to ascertaining what others have thought and said and done in their cultural environments. In the second phase, the theologian must bear the responsibility of saying what is so in his cultural environment. In the

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first phase, the theologian has studied how Christians in the past mediated the faith with their cultures. In the second phase, the theologian takes upon himself the burden of doing the same thing today in his culture.

This allows us, then, to formulate Thesis 13:

Thesis 13. In the second phase of an empirical theology, the theologian assumes a personal responsibility for:

- a) judging what the Christian faith holds as true (doctrines);
- b) formulating this truth in a coherent fashion in relation to the cultural environment established by modern science, modern human studies, and modern philosophy (systematics);
- and c) devising ways of communicating this truth to the men and women of different contemporary cultures, different walks of life, and different religions (communications, pastoral theology).

N.B. By "doctrines," Lonergan does not mean "dogmas," but the transposition of truth-claims from the past, including dogmas, into categories that can be understood in modern culture.

Comments on this thesis:

1. The second phase, as we saw earlier, is obviously dependent on the first. One must know the Christian past if one is to judge what one's Christian faith means. But, as we have also seen, this knowledge of the past is not enough of a foundation for one to operate in the second phase. It must be combined with an explicit reflection on conversion, so that the theologian states just where he is coming from in the crucial

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options regarding religion, morality, and knowledge. Both a knowledge of the past and reflection on conversion provide the foundations of the second phase.

2. A subtle point: ~~reflection on~~ ^{or its opposite} conversion influences not only the results but also the ^{very doing} ~~method~~ ^{theology in} of the second phase. In the first phase, it influences only the results. But in phase 2, it also affects the way the theologian will go about his job. One cannot do the second phase without conversion. One is in principle excluded from doing theology in the second phase if one is not oneself a converted subject. Anybody can do history, i. e. follow the critical-historical method. But not anybody can judge what the Christian religion really means. Only the person actively engaged in living a Christian life can understand its meaning. Only one whose horizon is already Christian can make sense out of Christianity and transpose Christianity into contemporary terms that capture all the meaning of the past. Only such a person can really hit upon the contemporary categories that will do the job.

Let me take an example:

In the early 1960's, a theologian named Paul van Buren published a widely publicized book, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel. The thesis of the book is that the meaning of Christianity must be voided of all reference to a supernatural order. What Christianity means, purely and simply, is, we must be men for others. It means nothing beyond this, and any attempt to preserve a transcendent dimension militates against the true meaning, draws people away from the neighbor, removes the challenge of love and justice. In terms we have used, it could be said that

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van Buren was arguing that Christianity means moral conversion but not religious conversion. The obvious question, of course, is why be Christian at all? Secular humanism does this much.

Now what van B. was attempting to do involved the tasks of the second phase. But his very doing of those tasks was truncated by a too narrow horizon on his part. One can go back in the past even beyond Christianity to Judaism and discover that van Buren is leaving out part of the meaning of the tradition. For in Judaism and Christianity, there are two commandments, not one, and the first is explicit in its insistence on a transcendent dimension to human life. What van B. was offering is clearly a watered-down version of what the Christian religion really means.

The point of this example is that only a converted horizon can give rise to the appropriate categories of the second stage. But without such categories one cannot even do theology in the second stage. Therefore conversion is needed even for doing the tasks of the second stage of theology.

3. What are the appropriate categories for doing theology in its second phase? How are these categories derived? Lonergan says there are two sets of theological categories: there are general categories and special categories. General categories will be found in other disciplines besides theology. Special categories will be proper to theology. Both sets are needed if theology is to mediate religion with modern culture. General categories represent the main concerns of the contemporary cultural

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superstructure. Special categories reflect specific contribution theology has to make to the organic whole of human knowledge. General categories are derived from the self-appropriation of the subject. Special categories are derived from reflection on religious conversion. Thus all the categories that will be employed in a modern empirical theology will be verifiable in the data of consciousness, either of cognitive and moral consciousness (general categories) or of religious consciousness. Thus theology meets the demand that the modern world makes upon it that it be empirical. It meets the absolute demand of the Enlightenment for verifiable foundations in human experience for Christian faith. For its categories will all have a referent in ~~the~~ interior experience, and will be derived from and referred back to such experience. Once again, the absolute demand for a thorough-going analysis of the subject appears clearly. Without self-appropriation of one's own religious, moral, and intellectual or cognitive subjectivity, a modern empirical theology is impossible.

4. Let me conclude this thesis with an example of what doing theology in the second phase means. I draw the example from my own work, where I am slowly beginning to try to elaborate a modern theology in the second phase that would take as its central affirmation the following statement: Authentic faith in Jesus Christ brings about

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liberation from all forms of human alienation. This statement is itself what L. would call a theological doctrine. It is a modern transposition of the meaning of Christianity. Now there are number of categories that appear in the statement: authenticity, faith, Jesus Christ, liberation, human alienation and the various forms it can take. Clarifying each of these categories will lead me to clarify others: authenticity → knowledge, values, religion, conversion, inauthenticity, self-transcendence, self-enclosure, etc. Faith → various forms of belief, what is constitutive of Christian faith, its relationship to God's love, the relation of God's love to other forms of love, etc. Jesus Christ → God, Trinity, humanity. Incarnation, grace, Spirit, redemption. Liberation → freedom, slavery. Alienation → from self, God, others, society, nature, work; sin.

Both general & special categories are present. They ~~would~~ ^{are} mediated with each other in this statement & in the theology I can build around this statement. That theology will demand I learn from other disciplines (e.g., a doctrine of alienation: psych, soc, econ, poli sci). The clarification of how I am using the category will, in the last analysis, take me back to interior experience as the final referent -- the referent that makes my theology inescapably empirical.