

2 October 2001

To the Participants in the Faculty/AD Seminar:

While I was writing the first lecture of the course that I'm currently teaching (Theology of History), I got the idea that I would really like to try this out at the Faculty/AD Seminar.

What I am distributing is the first 8 pages of that lecture. It is not a finished piece of work ready for publication, but the presentation of a basic question and of some of the elements of my answer to that question.

At the seminar, I will speak very briefly to these 8 pages and at somewhat greater length to the two issues of Lonergan's theory of history and the suggestions that I offer in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*.

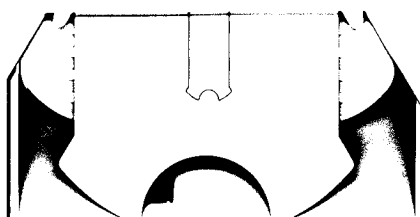
If any of you should be disposed to read something on these two issues, I suggest

- Bernard Lonergan, 'Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,' in *A Third Collection*
- Chapters 3 and 4 in Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*

Thank you.

*Bob Doran*

Robert M. Doran, S.J.



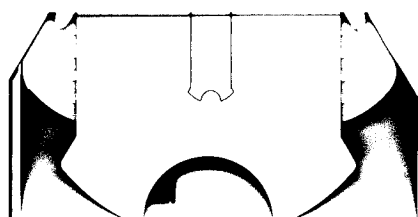
## Is There a Unified Field Structure for Systematic Theology?

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The matters that we will be investigating in this course lie at the very heart of contemporary efforts to construct a systematic theology. I have argued elsewhere, and will argue again here, that a contemporary systematic theology is to take the form of a theology of history. What this statement means is that a contemporary systematic understanding of Christian doctrine, of what one holds to be true, of the mysteries of faith (which is the principal function of systematics), whether these be formulated in dogmatic pronouncements or not, will be formulated in relation to one's grasp of the immanent intelligibility of human history, and so in relation to a theory of history. In systematics the theologian is attempting to offer a synthetic understanding of the realities named in what he or she affirms to be the meanings constitutive of the Christian community – that is, of what one has already affirmed to be true in 'doctrines.' My affirmation is that that understanding is to take the form of a theology of history, that the principal doctrines that express the mysteries of faith are to be integrated in the understanding of history, or that, in Lonergan's terms, the mediated object of systematics is *Geschichte*, history.

Now if this is true then one of the most pressing concerns of the systematic theologian is to derive the categories that will be adequate for a theological understanding of history. Strictly speaking, of course, deriving categories is a function of foundations. And to a large extent this is what we will be attempting to do in this course.

This task is a relatively new one. Just as it was thought, prior to the discovery of the calculus, that there could be no strict science of movement, so *system* and *history* have been thought to be intellectually incompatible. But perhaps there is something to be discovered in human affairs that plays a role vis-à-vis history that is analogous to the role of the differential calculus in explaining motion. Lonergan found that 'something' in dialectic. It is dialectic that makes it possible that there be a systematics of history just as the differential calculus makes it possible that there is a science of movement. More precisely, '... dialectic stands to generalized method as the differential equation to classical physics, or the operator equation to the more recent physics.' Our attempt here is to locate that explanatory key.



And the first step is to relate the entire issue to the problems involved in constructing a systematic theology.

## 1 Four Emphases of Lonergan

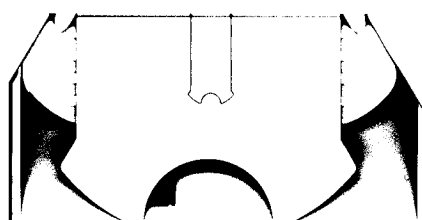
I find that the most convenient way into that first step is to begin by stressing and amplifying four emphases that can be found in Lonergan's writings about systematics, and as it were by forcing the meaning of these emphases so that they yield a movement into a step (or, as it may be, a leap) forward.

First, the *principal function* of systematics is to promote the kind of understanding of the mysteries of faith that was commended by Vatican I (DS 3016): '... reason illumined by faith, when it inquires diligently, piously, soberly, can with God's help (*Deo dante*) attain a highly fruitful understanding of the mysteries of faith both from the analogy of what it naturally knows and from the interconnection of the mysteries with one another and with [our] last end.'

Second, the *core or central problems* of systematics have to do with understanding what is meant by the defined dogmas. While systematics includes more than these, still it is in the dogmas that the theologian will find the principal problems to be subjected to the understanding of systematics, and it is around the understanding of the dogmas that a systematics will be constructed.

Third, the ideal proper order of systematics is what Thomas called the *ordo doctrinae*, the order of teaching as contrasted with the order of discovery. Lonergan's most extensive presentation of the difference between the two orderings of ideas is found in the first chapter of his *De Deo trino, Pars systematica*. But sufficient for our purposes here is *Method in Theology* 345-46: In the order of discovery there is

... a gradual increase of understanding. A clue is spotted that throws some light on the matter in hand. But that partial light gives rise to further questions, the further questions to still further answers. The illuminated area keeps expanding for some time but eventually still further questions begin to yield diminishing returns. The vein of ore seems played out. But successive thinkers may tackle the whole matter over again. Each may make a notable contribution. Eventually perhaps



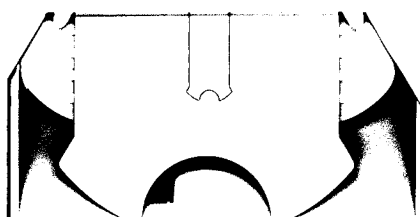
there arrives on the scene a master capable of envisaging all the issues and of treating them in their proper order.

That order is not the order in which the solutions were discovered. For the course of discovery is roundabout. Subordinate issues are apt to be solved first. Key issues are likely to be overlooked until a great deal has been achieved. Quite distinct from the order of discovery is the order of teaching. For a teacher postpones solutions that presuppose other solutions [and] begins with the issues whose solution does not presuppose the solutions of other issues.

And fourth, systematics is hypothetical explanation, the categories of a contemporary systematics are derived from interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness, and those categories are both general and special. General categories are shared with other disciplines; special categories are proper to theology.

In *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, I ask the question, Where do we find the general categories of a contemporary systematic theology? In Thomas's theology the general categories were derived by and large from Aristotle's metaphysics. Lonergan is certainly not about to jettison metaphysics or to deny its importance for theology. But: (1) metaphysics can no longer be the ground of the general categories, since that ground lies in interiorly differentiated consciousness; and (2) part of what occasioned the move to interiority was the development of a historical consciousness that would not be satisfied with the usual employment of metaphysical categories in the philosophical and theological traditions of Western thought; that same historical consciousness is the source of the emphasis on history itself as the locus of the principal general categories of a contemporary systematics.

But that emphasis has to be given some grounding or justification. That justification, I believe, can be found if we reflect on the first three of Lonergan's four emphases: (1) There is a principal function for systematics, and it lies in understanding in some imperfect and analogous fashion the mysteries of faith. (2) The mysteries that constitute the core of systematics are those that have been expressed in dogmatic definitions of the church. (3) The order of systematic presentation begins with a core systematic conception that itself may have been arrived at only at the end of a prolonged process of discovery.



First, then, let us consider the first two emphases together. What is a dogma? On Lonergan's interpretation of Vatican I, as I interpret it, a church doctrine can qualify as dogma if it expresses a mystery that is otherwise so hidden in God that we could not know it at all had it not been revealed.

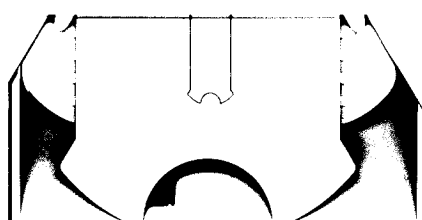
Still, not all of the mysteries of faith have received or will receive (or perhaps even *can* receive) dogmatic status, and so 'dogma' is a subset, twice removed, of 'church doctrines': there are doctrines that affirm mysteries, and there are other doctrines that affirm elements that are not mysteries; and among the doctrines that affirm mysteries, some are defined dogmas, and others are not. Systematics for Lonergan is organized around the subset of church doctrines that (1) affirm mysteries of faith and (2) have received dogmatic formulation.

Not only does Lonergan make this methodological statement; he also provides a superb synthetic statement of precisely what he means, that is, of such an organization of systematic understanding around problems provided by the defined dogmas. This synthetic statement appears in a four-point hypothesis that is presented on pp. 234-35 of the *pars systematica* of *De Deo trino*. The hypothesis integrates trinitarian and christological doctrine with the doctrines of grace and eschatology.

... 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 brings the children of adoption perfectly back to the Father.

Not only does this statement express a synthetic understanding of the mysteries affirmed in dogmas regarding the Trinity, the incarnation, grace,



and the life everlasting, but also, I will argue, it is equipped to serve as *part* of a basic organizing systematic conception, as *part* of the core statement of a systematic theological construction. Moreover, it reflects that part of the core statement of systematics to which metaphysical categories are most applicable.

But why does it serve only as part of a basic systematic theorem? That is the issue, and it is by answering that question that we will, I think, see the significance of the theology of history, that is, of the emphasis that a contemporary systematics must understand the mysteries of faith, whether dogmatically expressed or not, in terms of an understanding of the constituents of history.

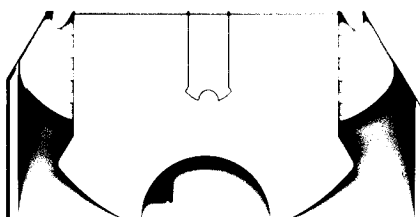
Here we can turn to the third of Lonergan's emphases, namely, that the ideal proper order of systematics is what Thomas called the *ordo doctrinae*, the order of teaching as contrasted with the order of discovery. And my argument at this point relies very much on questions prompted by explorations done by Danny Monsour.<sup>1</sup>

When Lonergan indicates his understanding of the *ordo doctrinae*, the order in which one begins with that element or those elements the understanding of which does not entail understanding anything else but is rather the basis of understanding everything else, he regularly resorts to the example of chemistry: As chemistry texts begin with the periodic table, which itself is the product of a long history of work in the way of discovery but which now provides the basis for understanding over 300,000 chemical compounds, so a systematic theology should begin with some synthetic statement that may have emerged only after centuries of hit-and-miss exploration but that, now that it is understood, provides the key to understanding other elements.

Is there, then, some synthetic statement, however complex it may be, that would stand to systematic theology as the periodic table stands to chemistry, as a basic organizing systematic conception, a unified field structure? More

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1 Most recently in his paper delivered at the 2001 Boston College Lonergan Workshop, 'The Four-point Hypothesis and the Special Theological Categories.' My reflections, however, depend more on an earlier paper presented at a seminar conducted by the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto.



specifically, will the four-point hypothesis just cited do, or is something more demanded?

## 2 The Organizing Systematic Conception

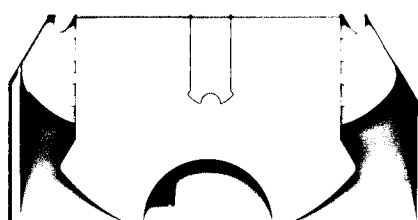
In a paper that he presented at a seminar conducted by the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, in the spring semester of 2000, Danny Monsour proposed a test of the adequacy of the four-point hypothesis as the organizing systematic conception. The test lies in the question, Can the five sets of special categories that Lonergan suggests in *Method in Theology* be mapped onto this four-point hypothesis? If so, the hypothesis is a 'good bet' as an organizing systematic conception. If not, then obviously something else must be added to the hypothesis, which may still function as part of such an organizing conception.

In *Method in Theology*, then, on pp. 290-91, Lonergan suggests five sets of special categories. The first set 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 him both to enter into the experience of others and to frame the terms and relations that will express that experience.'

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. (Emphasis added)

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.'

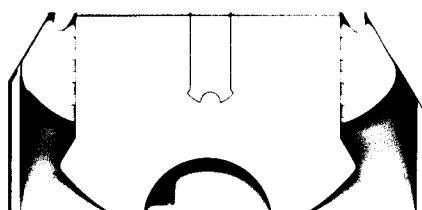
A fourth set differentiates authentic and inauthentic humanity and authentic and inauthentic Christianity. '... to the unauthentic man or Christian, what appears authentic, is the unauthentic. Here, then, is the root of division, opposition, controversy, denunciation, bitterness, hatred, violence.'



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 mankind 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.'

A major question that has yet to be answered is, How does Lonergan arrive at these five sets? Monsour addresses this question in his most recent paper, the one delivered at the Lonergan Workshop in the summer of 2001. But whatever the answer to that question may turn out to be, my question is a different one, namely, **To what extent can these five sets of special categories be mapped onto Lonergan's four-point hypothesis, so that the four-point hypothesis provides a basic organizing systematic conception for understanding all of the realities named in the five sets of special categories?** Obviously the third set matches the four-point hypothesis almost point by point. Obviously, too, the hypothesis provides a key element in the clarification of religious experience (and so of the first set), as I have argued in several articles on consciousness and grace. But mapping the other three sets onto the hypothesis is not only more difficult; in the last analysis, in my view (and I do not know whether Monsour would agree), it is impossible. The other three sets demand that one establish 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).

My point, then, is that the four-point hypothesis 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, and the created contingent external terms that make possible that there are divine missions are not enough to allow for this integration. Moreover, there are indications in some notes that Lonergan wrote at the time of his breakthrough to the notion of functional





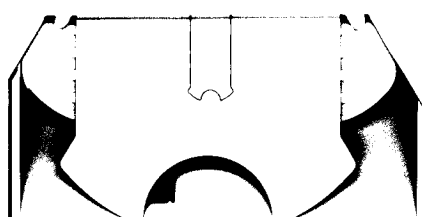
specialization that in his view a contemporary systematic theology in its entirety would be *a theological theory of history*. It seems clear that in these papers Lonergan is expressing the view that the doctrines that express the constitutive meaning of the church are to be understood in the categories of a theory of history. The 'mediated object' of systematics, he says in these notes, is *Geschichte*. All of these considerations lead me to the conclusion that the basic organizing systematic conception must include, in addition to the four-point hypothesis, the fundamental elements of a theory of history.

In *Theology and the Dialectics of History*<sup>2</sup> I attempted to work out some of the general categories of such a systematics of history. If the four-point hypothesis is to be placed in the context of the dialectic of history, I believe we have to turn to Lonergan's own theory of history and to supplement it with the additions proposed in *TDH*. In my view, in the complex structure of general and special categories that emerges from integrating the four-point hypothesis of *De Deo trino* with Lonergan's theory of history as developed and supplemented in *TDH* we will discern the overall contours of the synthesis that a contemporary systematics would attempt to construct.

In the seminar I will speak about the basic structure of Lonergan's theory of history (progress-decline-redemption), and I will indicate briefly (perhaps 20 minutes or so) the additions to that theory that I make in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*. The basic structure of those additions can be found in chapters 3 and 4, on dialectic and the scale of values.

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2 Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990; reprinted, 2001).



- M. McCann

> Not a finished paper. Skeleton.

①

- All depends on a particular view of systematics.

In Lonergan's understanding of the entire theological enterprise, there are eight interrelated sets of operations performed by persons in a collaborative community.

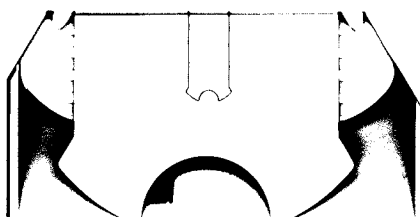
Systematics is the seventh of these, and its <sup>objective</sup> goal is the best hypothetical understanding of the mysteries of Christian faith that can be reached at any given time: understanding that is synthetic, imperfect, hypothetical, and analogical. And, I think, today, collaborative.

For most of us in the Catholic tradition, the classic systematic statement <sup>is</sup> of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. But L. introduces the notion of <sup>ongoing system, or what I call</sup> ~~ongoing sequence of~~ <sup>genetically related</sup> systematic statements. Systematics emerges non-systematically, out of work in the first six <sup>order of discovery</sup> functional specialties. And any given systematic achievement has only a certain probability of survival in its present form. There are permanent systematic achievements, of course, but there is no permanent system. No matter how comprehensive a particular understanding may be at a given time, we can be sure that questions will arise that cannot be treated within the confines of any particular system.  $\Sigma g > \Sigma r$

Nonetheless, the systematic ideal is an exigence. We want intellectual coherence. We want things to hang together. We ask questions in pursuit of that kind of understanding.

And my question is whether, at the present time, there is available to us some statement that could be regarded as a basic systematic conception or unified field structure for the systematic theological understanding of the mysteries of faith. It is a question that Danny has raised as well, and he has pointed to the same text in Lonergan that I have cited in the paper. But I am maintaining that that text is not enough.  $\rightarrow$  p. 4.

A unified field structure is not a complete theory. Rather, it would map out the whole territory that a unified theory <sup>No unified theory short of vision of God.</sup> would cover. In this sense at least, it would perform the same function that the periodic table plays in chemistry. <sup>part even</sup> The text in question is only ~~one~~ of Lonergan's contributions to a possible answer to this question.



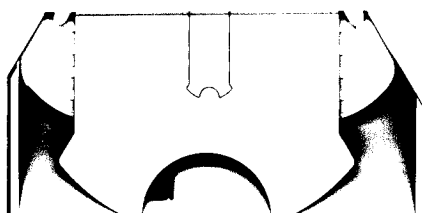
Another is a statement found in his papers <sup>at the time</sup> that <sup>(2)</sup> of the breakthrough to functional specialization. In those papers he assigned a corresponding object to each set of operations: a mediating object in the first place, and a mediated object in the second. And at this point the mediated object of systematics is Geschichte, history.

Danny Monsour, in the first of two papers on these questions, proposes a test with regard to the synthetic statement in DDT: Can the five sets of special categories suggested in Method in Theology be mapped onto the four-point hypothesis, so that without remainder the hypothesis covers the territory mapped out in the five sets? The five sets are given on pp. 6-7 of the paper.

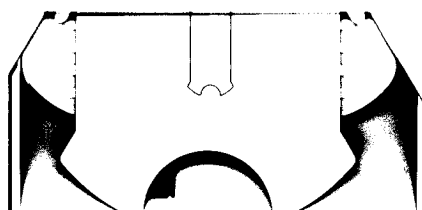
My own response to Danny's question is No.

Read from p. 7.

The sheet distributed shows in what direction I would go.



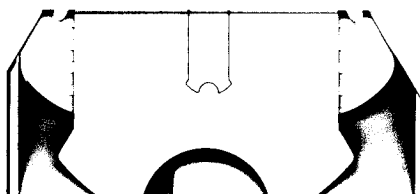
It builds on Honerigan's understanding of history in terms of progress-decline-redemption. That theory finds its most nuanced treatment, I believe, in 'Natural Right and Historical Mindedness' in A Third Collection. In NRHM, the question is whether, with the discovery of historical consciousness, we can still speak of anything normative, and especially for collective responsibility. And the answer is given in terms of meaning. There is a normative source of meaning that obtains for individual responsibility, and 'only inasmuch as [it] becomes revealed in its effects, in the functioning order of society, in cultural vitality and achievement, in the unfolding of human history, does the manifold of individual responsibilities coalesce into a single object that can ~~gain~~ gain collective attention' (176). That normative source is described as 'a tidal movement that begins before consciousness, unfolds through sensitivity, intelligence, rational reflection, ~~responsibility~~ responsible deliberation, only to find its rest beyond



all of there' in 'being-in-love.' That tidal movement, then, is not just the exigences of intentionality spelled out in the transcendental precepts, but also 'the passionateness of being,' which has a dimension of its own' that 'underpins and accompanies and reaches beyond the subject as experientially, intelligently, rationally, morally conscious' (29).

But that normative source is not the only one. The norms can be violated. 'Besides intelligence, there is obtuseness; besides truth there is falsity; besides what is worth while, there is what is worthless; besides love there is hatred. So from the total source of meaning we may have to anticipate not only social order but also disorder, not only cultural vitality and achievement but also lassitude and deterioration, not an ongoing and uninterrupted sequence of developments but rather a dialectic of radically opposed tendencies.' (176)

It is on the notions of dialectic and the related notion of the scale of values that the table I have given you builds.



⑤

The effort is to try to gauge what the history of the salvation that is rooted in a being-in-love evokes as it seeks to 'promote' the ~~the~~ reign of God in the world.' What would that reign of God be? How do we gauge a closer approximation to it?

Lonergan speaks in Method of a scale of values that, as it were, measures the response of feelings to values. <sup>31-32</sup> And in Insight, he speaks of dialectic of the subject and a <sup>dialectic</sup> ~~level~~ of community, which we may locate respectively at the ~~the~~ personal and social levels of value.

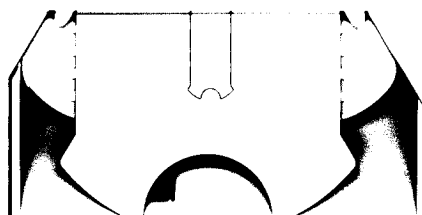
Explain each - contraries not contradictories

Add dialectic of culture

3 sets of relations among levels

- conditioning via the creative vector
- problems of schemes
- healing from above

Start w. religious & go down.



24 OCT 01

# Categories of History

