

A New Project in Systematic Theology

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Abstract

The article explores the possibility of a new collaborative venture in systematic theology based in the work of Bernard Lonergan and Robert Doran. A prospectus is offered of five volumes intended as texts to be used at the level of MA and MDiv students.

Keywords

contextual theology, doctrine of God, divine missions, divine processions, Doran, four-point hypothesis, general and special categories, Girard, Lonergan, social grace, systematic theology

The past several years have witnessed a growing consensus among a number of students of the work of Bernard Lonergan that the materials are now in place to begin the collaborative work of assembling a new systematic theology.¹ Almost simultaneously, and independently of each other, Darren Dias of the University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, and Neil Ormerod, Catholic University of

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1. This paper was delivered at Marquette University on October 23, 2014, as the annual Emmett Doerr Lecture in Systematic Theology. This paper represents my current vision of an unfolding project that will ultimately be a collaborative work. The two organizers of the project described here, Ormerod and Dias, have encouraged me to publish the paper. It is entirely possible that, as the project unfolds under their direction, some emphases not included here may come to the fore and some of my initial emphases may recede.

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Australia, began planning such a project. They quickly coordinated their efforts, and a fall colloquium sponsored last year by the Marquette Lonergan Project took the first major steps.² In my Doerr lecture that commenced last year's colloquium, I suggested a sequence of topics for such a systematic theology. The next morning Darren Dias convened a number of us, including professors visiting for the colloquium and Marquette faculty and graduate students, to review and modify the sequence. On Friday afternoon a public Skype conversation with Ormerod confirmed that the various international contributors to the project were on the same page. And in the past year Ormerod organized the topics we isolated into five projected volumes. Thus, in a sense, even this article is a collaborative venture.

We are proposing to write books collaboratively that could be adopted as theological texts in systematic theology at an MDiv/MA level of study, to form a basis for theological education in Catholic systematics. The authors of the contributions have not yet been determined, except in a couple of instances. Each author would read and comment on the other contributions, so that the end result would be the fruit of an organized community. The individual essays may in many instances be the work of two or more authors. And it is entirely possible that there may be more than one essay on a given topic. Gregory Lauzon, whose work in making Lonergan materials available electronically is acknowledged by many, has established a dedicated space on the website <http://www.lonerganforum.com> to facilitate communication among the contributors. The hope is that the volumes will be useful for about 30 years, before needing to be updated. But another important feature of the project is that ongoing research and reflection at a more basic level will continue to be pursued by the participants, so that it would be possible, if not necessary, to produce supplementary texts electronically. The electronic component in the logistics of the project opens the entire project to the possibility of new voices being heard. In other words, we are in this for the long haul.

My principal purpose here is to explicate as best I can the sequence of topics that we have decided on. While I will speak at least briefly to each volume, I will emphasize in particular the structure and content of the first of the five volumes, since it is in those areas that I have done most of my own work in systematics. I acknowledge that the treatment here is uneven. The whole report is still at the proposal stage, and will probably undergo development and revision as it proceeds.

But first I wish to comment on three contexts for this work: the cultural context of a contemporary Catholic systematic theology, its ecclesial context, and the theological context within which we are working.

The Cultural Context

All theology is contextual. That is, the situation that a theology addresses is itself a source for the theology, and indeed a source not only of questions but also of possible

2. The proceedings of the colloquium can be found at <http://www.lonerganresource.com/conference.php?20>. The entire colloquium was recorded by Gregory Lauzon. My paper is available as a PDF. All URLs cited herein were accessed January 4, 2015.

answers.³ The contributors to the project recognize three principal defining characteristics in the contemporary cultural context or situation.

First, there is the self-consciously multireligious character of our world, which raises numerous questions for Christian theology, none of which has been satisfactorily answered to date either in official ecclesial documents or in theological writings. We hope to offer a set of suggestions over the course of the five volumes that would advance the response to these questions.

Second, there is the increasing socially and culturally globalized character of the human situation, with all the ambiguity that globalization accrues: first, its positive recognition of cultural, religious, and lifestyle diversity; second, however, increasing intolerance of difference on the part of religious and political factions determined to live in a world that no longer exists and to resort, if needed, to horrific physical and psychological violence against perceived threats to that world; third, imposing challenges to the equitable global distribution of vital goods due to the exploits of rampant expansion based in both ignorance and greed on the part of what Thomas Piketty calls “capital in the twenty-first century”;⁴ and fourth, the need to incorporate in a systematics of social grace at least incipient guidelines for economic responsibility.

The third defining characteristic is the ecological fragility of our planet, a condition also intimately related to corporate and government ignorance and greed.

The Theological Context

For at least some of the contributors to the project the principal Catholic strands that have to be integrated into a consistent theological perspective represent the principal fruits of post-Vatican II Catholic theology. My own proposal, accepted by at least most of the participants, is that these can be best summarized under three headings: first, the generalized empirical method of Bernard Lonergan, with all its implications for interdisciplinary collaboration; second, the emphasis on theological aesthetics and dramatics insisted on by Hans Urs von Balthasar; and third, the preferential option for the poor articulated not only in liberation theology but also in documents of the teaching Church and in the pastoral magisterium, especially of Pope Francis.⁵ The attempt to integrate these three currents with one another is a major effort that will modify all three of them. My conviction, and the conviction of at least some of the other contributors, is that none of the currents can be left behind without truncating our efforts and compromising our chances for success. If

3. The situation as source is a major theme in my *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990, 2001); see 8, 12–16, 140, 143–44, 453–58.

4. Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-first Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard University, 2014).

5. I first proposed these priorities in “Prolegomenon for a New Systematics,” *Grail: An Ecumenical Journal* 10.3 (1994) 75–87. They are repeated in Robert M. Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005) chap. 8. For a careful reading of the preferential option in both liberation theologies and magisterial documents, see Rohan Curnow, *The Preferential Option for the Poor: A Short History and a Reading Based on the Thought of Bernard Lonergan* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2012).

there is a difference of opinion among us, it is over the relative importance of Balthasar. My own view is that his major emphases on aesthetics and dramatics must be incorporated in any future work in systematics.⁶

The Ecclesial Context

The papacy of Pope Francis represents for all the contributors a still fragile and precarious but most welcome opening onto a long overdue transformation of ecclesial ministry, so that the Church responds to cultural exigencies in ways that do not spark cultural wars. The spirit that animates his critique of clerical privilege and power, and the significance of this for any future ecclesiology, would inform these volumes from beginning to end.

Topics

Let me then proceed to the sequence of topics and volumes.

There are 15 topics in all. The preliminary division allocates three topics to each volume. In this article and possibly in future Doerr lectures on the volumes, I will be presenting my own views on the directions the various volumes should take. I need to emphasize that my role in these volumes is largely an inspirational one. The volumes are based on Lonergan's work in *Insight*,⁷ *Method in Theology*,⁸ and some of his treatises in systematics, and on my contributions in three books: *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, and *The Trinity in History*. I have no final say on just how the volumes will unfold, but I offer these views for consideration. It is generally understood by the contributors that as the volumes are being assembled, I will continue to be writing the second volume of *The Trinity in History*, which will be another source for the project.

The general prospectus of the volumes is as follows:

- 1: God, Trinity, Invisible Missions-Holy Spirit-Grace
- 2: Revelation, Creation, Incarnation
- 3: Anthropology/Nature, Sin (Original, Personal, Social), Social Grace
- 4: Redemption, Resurrection, Sacraments
- 5: Church, Praxis, Eschatology/Reign of God

6. See, e.g., Robert M. Doran, S.J., "Lonergan and Balthasar: Methodological Considerations," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997) 61–84, and the index entries in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, *What Is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005), and *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions*, vol. 1, *Missions and Processions* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2012) s.v. "Von Balthasar."

7. Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (hereafter CWBL) 3, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992).

8. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990). The critical edition that will be part of CWBL has not yet appeared.

Volume I: God, Trinity, Invisible Missions-Holy Spirit-Grace

Volume I addresses the Christian doctrine of God one and three and a complex of topics having to do with the universal presence and efficacy of divine grace in history.

The sections entitled “God” and “Trinity” have permeable boundaries, similar in this regard to the manner in which questions 2–26 and 27–43 in the first part of Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae* really are one unified presentation of the Christian doctrine of God. But lest the sequence “God” and “Trinity” be interpreted as just another failed attempt to make trinitarian doctrine subordinate to a philosophy of God, let me clarify what I mean by this sequence (in the following remarks the sequence differs from that found in the *Summa*).

What I am going to say about the treatment of the Christian doctrine of God depends in large measure on the implications of what I have written elsewhere about the genetic sequence of systematic theologies.⁹ Systematics should proceed as much as possible in what Aquinas called the *ordo disciplinae* or *ordo doctrinae*,¹⁰ and so, as Aquinas made clear in the *Summa theologiae*, it must begin with what is first, not for us but in itself, and so in theology obviously with God. But there is a history of Christian systematic-theological treatments of the doctrine of God, and if subsequent generations maintain that some permanently valid discoveries have occurred in that history, this will affect the way the doctrine of God is presented systematically. The treatment of the doctrine of God that I propose will take its stand on a theological doctrine found in the treatment of the divine missions in Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae*, and so on the affirmation that the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit *are* the divine processions joined to created external terms.¹¹ This theological doctrine is affirmed in contemporary systematic theologies by at least Lonergan and Balthasar.¹² But it means *we may now begin our presentation of the doctrine of God with the missions without failing to begin where Aquinas began, namely, with the processions*. In other words, as I have argued in volume 1 of *The Trinity in History*, the order of a systematic trinitarian theology need no longer proceed, as Aquinas did, from a general doctrine of God to processions, from processions to relations, from relations to persons, and from persons to missions. If the missions *are* the processions joined to created external terms, then once this theological doctrine is accepted, one may begin with the missions as giving access to the processions and so to who God is. The notion of a genetic sequence of systematic theologies implies that once certain achievements in the theological tradition have been accepted as permanent theological

9. See, for instance, Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?* 39, 78–79, 89, 92, 144–46, 203.

10. See *ibid.* 9–10.

11. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 43, *passim*.

12. See Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, CWBL 12, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2007) chap. 6, *passim*; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theodrama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 3, *Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992) 157.

doctrines, a systematic theology may state those achievements up front, in a manner somewhat analogous to the way chemistry textbooks begin with the periodic table, which itself is the product of a lengthy process of discovery and experimentation.

Why, then, the division of “God” and “Trinity” in the topics covered in this first volume? Because if the theology begins with the missions, it means *it has to begin with a fundamental statement of the biblical doctrine of God*, where the missions are revealed. The method of writing this statement is not exegetical—that would take forever—but specifically doctrinal and systematic, though based on the best exegetical work.

“Mission” will be understood from the outset, however, not simply in biblical terms, but as processional, and so as revealing trinitarian relations and persons in a manner far more explicit than is obvious in the New Testament itself. Nonetheless, the initial portion in this section on the Christian doctrine of God has to disengage in forthright statements regarding who the God of Israel and the God of Jesus Christ is, as these are revealed in the biblical literature, and in reliance upon but not simply repeating the best work of exegetes who have treated this topic. Moreover, in his breakthrough page to functional specialization as constituting the structure of collaborative creativity in theology, Lonergan states that the mediated object of the functional specialty “Doctrines” is “Redemption.”¹³ That is to say, doctrinal affirmations are to be organized around the theme of redemption. The type of reliance on the biblical doctrine of God with which the project collaborators would begin is summed up perfectly in the subtitle to Raymund Schwager’s *Jesus in the Drama of Salvation*, namely, “Toward a Biblical Doctrine of Redemption.”¹⁴ Moreover, my own strong recommendation to the group with regard to disengaging the biblical doctrine of a redeeming God will be to privilege the still emerging series of volumes by N. T. Wright on Christian origins and the question of God.¹⁵

The topic of the Christian doctrine of God, however, must move to considerations that are specifically systematic, and on the level of our time the debate between classical theism and process doctrines of God still must be addressed. In my view the most profound appropriation of the Thomist doctrine of God appears in various works by Lonergan, including both his trinitarian systematics and the recently published set of notes he wrote in the early 1950s on God’s knowledge and will.¹⁶ But the results of that systematic discussion have to be integrated with what has already been said about the biblical doctrine of God. Lonergan did not do this. He did begin work on a seventh

13. See item 47200D0E060 on the Bernard Lonergan Archive Website, <http://www.bernard-lonergan.com>.

14. Raymund Schwager, *Jesus in the Drama of Salvation: Toward a Biblical Doctrine of Redemption*, trans. James G. Williams and Paul Haddon (New York: Crossroad, 1999).

15. The following volumes have been published: *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1992); *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1996); *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 2003); *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013).

16. Bernard Lonergan, “God’s Knowledge and Will,” in *Early Latin Theology*, CWBL 19, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2011) 256–411.

chapter of his trinitarian systematics, aimed precisely at making these connections.¹⁷ To those working on the first volume, I would recommend that they take up that work, which is available only in fragments, but these can still be formulated in a way that makes clear where Lonergan was going, and can be used as the starting point for understanding the Christian doctrine of God. In other words, this would link the best in the theological tradition regarding the systematic treatment of God with the best in the contemporary exegetical retrieval of the biblical doctrine of God.¹⁸ This is a tall order, but it will set the stage for everything else that follows in this project.

Thus, the approach to the Trinity will integrate the biblical doctrine with the systematic achievements appropriated from the tradition by beginning with a *systematic* presentation of the divine missions revealed in the *biblical* sources. This has been a principal focus of my work in *The Trinity in History*, which proposes to *begin* a systematic trinitarian theology by affirming with Aquinas, Lonergan, and von Balthasar the identification of divine missions with divine processions joined to create external terms, and so by approaching divine processions, relations, and persons from the standpoint of the missions. An analogy for the divine processions derived from theological reflection on the missions is at the heart of *The Trinity in History*, and this analogy should be expressed as clearly and directly as possible in this section of the first volume in the systematic project. It is a very accessible analogy: gratitude for the gift of God's love expressing itself in a set of judgments of value from which charity proceeds as a love for the self-giving God with all one's heart and mind and strength and a love for one's neighbor as oneself. So this section will present a basic systematic integration of processions, relations, and persons in God beginning from the identification of these three realities both with one another and with the missions revealed in Scripture.

These sections on God and Trinity will present and explain the major systematic-theological hypothesis that will govern most of the work in the entire project: the so-called four-point hypothesis expressed by Lonergan first in his 1951/1952 notes on grace and then in his systematic work on the Trinity.¹⁹ In this hypothesis, the four real divine relations—paternity, filiation, active spiration (identical with paternity and filiation together), and passive spiration—are said to be imitated and participated in through four created external terms: the secondary act of existence of the incarnation posited by Aquinas is understood as a created participation in paternity, sanctifying grace as a created participation in active spiration, charity as a created participation in

17. I am currently editing these fragments for publication.

18. In *Method in Theology* (276) Lonergan speaks of the "impenetrable wall" that exists between systematic theology and its historical religious sources, just as he had earlier spoken of a chasm or gap between systematic orderings and the sources. See "Understanding and Method," in *Early Works on Theological Method 2*, CWBL 23, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2013) 42–49. His method is designed to break down the wall or to bridge the gap.

19. This hypothesis is again drawing considerable attention in the pages of such journals as *Theological Studies* and *Irish Theological Quarterly*.

passive spiration, and the light of glory as a created participation in filiation. The participants would probably all agree with Ormerod's assessment that this hypothesis may be the most important systematic statement made by any Catholic theologian since Aquinas. It has already influenced an ongoing and very active theological conversation and research program. The hypothesis reads:

There are four real divine relations, really identical with divine being, and therefore there are four very special modes that ground the external imitation of God. Next, there are four absolutely supernatural realities, which are never found uninformed, namely, the secondary act of existence of the incarnation, sanctifying grace, the habit of charity, and the light of glory. It would not be inappropriate, therefore, to say that the secondary act of existence of the incarnation is a participation of paternity, and so has a special relation to the Son; that sanctifying grace is a participation of active spiration, and so has a special relation to the Holy Spirit; that the habit of charity is a participation of passive spiration, and so has a special relation to the Father and the Son; and that the light of glory is a participation of filiation, and so in a most perfect way brings the children of adoption back to the Father.²⁰

Beginning the systematics with the biblical doctrine of God raises several other issues that will affect the entire project. First, there is a methodological question: on what basis does a systematic theologian choose the biblical scholars he or she will privilege as providing legitimate doctrinal access to the biblical sources? At this point a number of significant statements come into prominence regarding issues called "foundational" in Lonergan's *Method in Theology*. "Foundational reality" in the method proposed there lies in the conversion—religious, moral, intellectual, and affective/psychic—of theologians. A systematic theologian brought along by Lonergan's method will especially look for exegetical treatments that are not only sympathetic with his or her doctrinal commitments but also implicitly or explicitly carried out on critical realist presuppositions regarding cognitional theory and epistemology. N. T. Wright, mentioned above, acknowledges his dependence on Ben F. Meyer, who has presented the most persuasive arguments yet for reliance on Lonergan's critical realism in the doing of biblical exegesis.²¹ James D. G. Dunn has also admitted his reliance on Lonergan's critical realism,²² and Larry Hurtado, who perhaps has never read a page of Lonergan's work, is de facto operating on critical realist presuppositions.²³ These are the types of exegetes one will rely on for doctrinal access to the biblical sources.

20. Translation slightly revised from that found in Bernard Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics* 471, 473.

21. See Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, new intro. N. T. Wright (San Jose, CA: Pickwick, 2002); *Critical Realism and the New Testament* (Alison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1989); *Reality and Illusion in New Testament Scholarship: A Primer in Critical Realist Hermeneutics* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1994); "The Primacy of the Intended Sense of Texts," in *Lonergan's Hermeneutics: Its Development and Application*, ed. Sean E. McEvenue and Ben F. Meyer (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1989) 81–119.

22. See James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003) 110–11.

23. See Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

A second issue, though, is more than methodological. It is theological and has to do with what these studies reveal. Wright's answer to Anselm's question, *Cur Deus homo?*, and so to the doctrinal question of redemption around which other doctrines would be organized, does not move immediately to atonement theories or anything even faintly resembling them, but insists that Jesus came to announce and inaugurate the reign of God. That is why God became human. Wright is equally insistent that Kingdom and Cross are always conjoined realities, and so the reign of God is de facto ushered into human history only through participation in what Lonergan calls the Law of the Cross.²⁴ All of this must be up front in the systematics we are anticipating, since it will profoundly affect how later topics in the systematic order, such as redemption, will be treated. In this instance, atonement–propitiation–expiation–satisfaction issues must be located in the broader context of the inauguration of the reign of God in the world. Independent of that context, treatment of these issues will be not only theologically suspect but also pathological.

A third issue may be introduced by referring to René Girard's confession that his studies brought him back to the faith in which he was baptized as a child precisely because he discovered to his surprise that the God of the Bible is on the side of the victims of history, not on the side of the oppressors.²⁵ Liberation theology and the teaching of the Catholic Church have expressed the same point in their affirmations of the preferential option for the poor. These aspects of the doctrine of God have to be emphasized from the beginning of this work.

Finally, the opening volume of the systematics must comment on what precisely this reign of God entails. Later treatments will expand on this topic, but the basic position on the integral scale of values I worked out in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, including its transcendental argument for the preferential option for the poor, will be offered from the beginning as keys to a systematic theology of the reign of God.

The multireligious character of the contemporary cultural situation demands further reflection on the divine missions. It is already a church doctrine, expressed both in documents from the Second Vatican Council and in encyclicals of Pope John Paul II, that the gift of the Holy Spirit, and so the gift of grace, is universal and so cannot be limited to the recipients of the biblical revelation.²⁶ A theological doctrine of invisible missions must be developed. That doctrine has to be more emphatic and nuanced than what is said about invisible missions in Lonergan's trinitarian systematics, which was written before he came to the explicit acknowledgment of the universality of grace. But, contrary to what I affirmed in earlier Doerr lectures, Frederick Crowe's influential affirmation of a

24. See, e.g., N. T. Wright, *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels* (New York: HarperOne, 2012) *passim*. For a more technical treatment, see Wright, "The Reasons for Jesus' Crucifixion," in *Jesus and the Victory of God* chap. 12.

25. See "The Anthropology of the Cross: A Conversation with René Girard," in *The Girard Reader*, ed. James G. Williams (New York: Crossroad, 2002) 262–88, at 262 and *passim*.

26. For an excellent presentation of official Catholic teaching on the salvation of non-Christians, see Susan K. Wood, "Solidarity in Grace: The Salvation of Non-Christians," at <http://www.lonerganresource.com/conference.php?8>.

mission of the Holy Spirit prior to the mission of the Son²⁷ needs to be further nuanced. If the missions are the processions joined to created external terms, then the order of the missions, whether visible or invisible, must follow the order of the processions. An invisible mission of the Word in the form of the actual grace of insights born of religious love must be acknowledged as a principle of the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit. Both volume 1 of *The Trinity in History* and the ongoing preparation of volume 2 will make contributions to these treatments of invisible missions, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and grace; and the project will base its further work on these treatments.

In what follows, I give briefer indications regarding my own recommendations for the other four volumes.

Volume 2: Revelation, Creation, Incarnation

Revelation is the entrance of God's meaning into the human world mediated by meaning.²⁸ Neil Ormerod,²⁹ Charles Hefling,³⁰ Frederick Crowe,³¹ and others have offered contributions to the theology of revelation that will inspire the forthcoming volumes. The treatment in volume 1 of the biblical doctrine of God will enable the development of a treatment of revelation as explicit and developing the "outer word" acknowledged as being from God.³²

But meaning is carried not only by language but also by intersubjectivity, art, symbol, and the lives and deeds of persons.³³ There is no reason not to include these aesthetic and dramatic carriers of meaning as bearers, along with language, of God's meaning and so of revelation. Thus at this point our project will join Avery Dulles's comments in *Models of Revelation* to the effect that revelation is best understood in terms of symbolic communication.³⁴ Moreover, the context established by the universality of grace demands an expansion of the theology even of the outer word so as to illuminate the possibility of moments of revelation elsewhere. The theology of actual grace expressed by Lonergan very early in his work becomes helpful here in understanding just what these moments are. Actual grace, Lonergan says in the traditional Scholastic terminology, consists in "vital, principal, and supernatural second acts of the

27. See Frederick E. Crowe, "Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions," in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2006) 324–43.

28. See Bernard Lonergan, "The Analogy of Meaning," in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958–1964*, CWBL 6, ed. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996) 205–6.

29. Neil Ormerod, *Method, Meaning, and Revelation: The Meaning and Function of Revelation in Bernard Lonergan's Method in Theology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000).

30. Charles Hefling, "Revelation and/as Insight," in *The Importance of Insight*, ed. John J. Liptay and David S. Liptay (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2007) 97–115.

31. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., *Theology of the Christian Word* (New York: Paulist, 1978).

32. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 119.

33. Lonergan treats the carriers of meaning in *ibid.* 57–76.

34. See Avery Dulles, S.J., *Models of Revelation* (New York: Doubleday, 1985) 131–54.

intellect and the will.”³⁵ This statement, when transposed into categories more recognizable in terms of human interiority and historical process, means the gift from God of insights that can be acknowledged as invisible missions of the Word, and the gift from God of efficacious horizon shifts in the ends desired by the human spirit that can be acknowledged as invisible missions of the Holy Spirit. The operative grace of insight and the cooperative grace of the formulation of insight in outer words can be acknowledged as part of the entrance of divine meaning into history, and so as revelation. The position will be taken in this project—at least if my view is persuasive—that at the heart of those insights is a message about the transformation of evil into a greater good. Evil is transformed into a greater good through responses that halt an otherwise escalating sequence of violent deeds and absorb the evil done in a manner that moves the situation to a new level of meaning, discourse, and action. Jewish and Christian sources are not the only recipients of that revelation.

The doctrine of creation can, I believe, be seamlessly integrated with the best cosmologies of contemporary physics and astrophysics. The section dedicated to creation will make that integration explicit. It will rely on the scientific worldview that Lonergan’s *Insight* calls emergent probability,³⁶ a worldview that is still compatible with scientific evidence some 60 years after it was first proposed, and it will explicitly integrate that worldview with “big bang” theories of the beginning and with evolutionary thought. It is not impossible that Pope Francis’s forthcoming encyclical on care of the environment will already have paved the way for what we intend in this volume, at least in that the pope is reported to have insisted that his encyclical must be constituted not only with the special theological categories that are connected with the doctrine of creation but also with the general categories that theologians can adopt from modern and contemporary science.³⁷ Lonergan’s notion of emergent probability is perfectly suited to facilitate that adoption.

Next, incarnation. In the fullness of time the Father sent the Son, incarnate of the Virgin Mary, to announce the advent of the reign of God and to reveal in word and deed precisely in what that reign consists. The portion of volume 2 that treats the doctrine of incarnation will be grounded in appropriations of historical Jesus scholarship in the critical-realist vein, using again the line of work prompted by Meyer, Wright, Dunn, and Hurtado. I would supplement their work with Schwager’s *Jesus and the Drama of Salvation*. The volume will include a solid and accessible statement of the dogmatic affirmations made by the church up to and including the Third Council of Constantinople, present a succinct summary of Lonergan’s position on the ontological constitution of Christ, and treat the thorny issues of the consciousness and knowledge of the incarnate Word. The last of these three will not only present as accessibly as possible Lonergan’s positions on Christ’s consciousness and knowledge but will also speculate on how the divine and human consciousnesses of Christ and his divine and human knowledge are related to each other, something that Lonergan, for all the

35. Lonergan, “The Supernatural Order,” part 2, in *Early Latin Theology* 229.

36. See Lonergan, *Insight* chap. 4 passim.

37. On general and special categories, see Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 285–91.

originality of his positions on Christ's consciousness and knowledge, did not do.³⁸ The treatment of the divine missions and of the Trinity will already have affirmed, with Lonergan, that what Aquinas calls the *esse secundarium* of the human nature of Jesus is a created participation in and imitation of the divine relation of paternity. This is a difficult theological position, and the treatment of the Incarnation in volume 2 will attempt to render it more accessible.

Volume 3: Anthropology/Nature, Sin (Original, Personal, and Social), Social Grace

Catholic theology has always been distinguished by its robust notion of human nature, a nature that has fallen but has not been destroyed by sin, a nature that is perfected and not replaced by grace, and, in the best of Catholic traditions, a nature that *qua* nature desires the vision of God accessible only by a divine gift. The first part of volume 3 will present in contemporary terms this robust notion of nature. It will rely heavily on Lonergan's intentionality analysis, revealing as it does that natural law consists in fidelity to the injunctions or precepts connected with each level of intentional consciousness: experience, understanding, judgment, decision, love. Lonergan succinctly expressed the injunctions in the terms "Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible, and with God's grace Be in love."³⁹ This part of the volume will also contain a thorough presentation of Lonergan's position on the natural desire to see God and on nature as obediential potency for the satisfaction of that desire,⁴⁰ and it will relate that position to other contemporary positions on what has become once again a very vibrant theological topic. It will also be emphasized that human consciousness is not only intentional-spiritual but also sensitive-psychic⁴¹ and will set up the discussion of sin by recognizing the difficulty involved in negotiating the demands of integrating the two dimensions. In this regard it may take some lead from Paul Ricoeur's neglected volume entitled *Fallible Man* (in the English translation).⁴² Lonergan's notion of bias and René Girard's exposition of mimetic violence will become part of the discussion at

38. Lonergan's treatment of all of these issues, doctrinal and systematic, can be found in *The Incarnate Word*, CWBL 8, trans. Charles Hefling, ed. Robert M. Doran and Jeremy Wilkins (Toronto: University of Toronto, forthcoming). See also *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, CWBL 7, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002).

39. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 20, 53, 55, 231–32, 302.

40. See Bernard Lonergan, "The Natural Desire to See God," in *Collection*, CWBL 4, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988) 81–91; and "The Supernatural Order," in *Early Latin Theology* 126–61.

41. See Robert M. Doran, "Two Ways of Being Conscious: The Notion of Psychic Conversion," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, n.s. 3:1 (2012, published 2013) 1–17. See also Doran, *The Trinity in History*, vol. 1, *Missions and Processions*, chap. 9, "The Dialectic of Desire."

42. Paul Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, trans. Charles Kelbley (Chicago: Regnery, 1965).

this point as a segue to the doctrine of sin. Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age* calls attention to the difficulty of negotiating such an integration.⁴³ I would hope that the dialectic of limitation and transcendence that I have specified in personal development, cultural unfolding, and community structuring of the common good can help this discussion.⁴⁴

I contend that the theologies of original and personal sin can be helped by incorporating Girard's mimetic theory, and this part of volume 3 should make that explicit.⁴⁵ Girard, I believe, needs the robust notion of nature that will already have been provided in part 1 of this volume, serving to strengthen his contributions to the theology of original and personal sin. Moreover, in our day—and largely due to the efforts of liberation theologians—we have come to recognize the category of social sin, the social objectification of radical evil in oppressive economic and political structures. At this point, Lonergan's distinction of "basic sin," which is the personal and individual failure to choose a morally obligatory course of action or to reject a morally reprehensible path, and "moral evil," a term that covers the consequences of basic sin, will be incorporated into the volume and strengthened by the work that has been done on social sin.⁴⁶ Furthermore, while "basic sin" and "moral evil" refer respectively to the same realities as those Lonergan in his Latin treatises calls *malum culpae* and *malum poenae* (the evil of fault or culpable evil and the evil of punishment), I will argue that the terms from *Insight* must replace the Latin terms and their translated counterparts.⁴⁷ The doctrine of redemption in the next volume can no longer be presented in the categories that emerge from attempting to get straight the theology of satisfaction. Even Lonergan's valiant efforts in both *The Incarnate Word* and the supplement on redemption that will be published in volume 9 of his *Collected Works* do not offset the mistaken notions that would center redemption on satisfaction and punishment.

The final category in volume 3 is social grace. If theology has recognized the validity of the category of social sin, is it not also time to develop a theology of social grace? At this point the work that I have attempted to do in *Theology and the Dialectics of History* to develop Lonergan's notion of the scale of values will be introduced into the unfolding systematics. The position offered in that book on the structure of history is really a theology of social grace, or in other terms a contemporary articulation of just what the reign of God in human affairs would be.⁴⁸

43. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard University, 2007) 765–67.

44. See Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, index entries s.v. "Limitation and Transcendence."

45. See Robert M. Doran, *Missions and Processions* 204–18.

46. See Lonergan, *Insight* 689.

47. See Bernard Lonergan, *The Redemption*, CWBL 9, ed. Robert M. Doran and Jeremy Wilkins (Toronto: University of Toronto, forthcoming) thesis 16.

48. I began using the term "social grace" around 2010. I have recently been informed that the category appears in Roger Haight's book, *The Experience and Language of Grace* (New York: Paulist, 1979).

Volume 4: Redemption, Resurrection, Sacraments

The fourth volume turns first to soteriology. Following Lonergan's two presentations of the doctrine of redemption,⁴⁹ this portion of the book would proceed in three steps: first, a succinct statement of the biblical doctrine; second, a delineation of what Lonergan calls the Law of the Cross; and third, an attempt to adjudicate the difficult issues surrounding notions of satisfaction, sacrifice, substitution, and so on. The volume will not simply repeat Lonergan's soteriology, however. The statement of the biblical doctrine will already have been provided, drawing in large part on contributions of Schwager and Wright. Lonergan's notion of the Law of the Cross, which I regard as a permanently valid theological achievement, can be further developed by a theological appropriation of Girardian mimetic theory.⁵⁰ And further clarifications beyond those reached in either of Lonergan's treatments of the notion of satisfaction and in his early work on sacrifice have to be forthcoming. A good deal of creative theological work is needed at this point. I suspect that the contributions of Robert Daly on sacrifice can be incorporated into the project at this point.⁵¹

A major hurdle in composing the systematics appears with the category of the supernatural. Without the emergence of the theorem of the supernatural in the work of Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1230), the synthesis offered by Aquinas would not have been possible. But the term "supernatural" is immensely problematic in contemporary conversation. I am going to suggest that "supernatural" ultimately be abandoned in favor of a phenomenology of pure gift, of which the resurrection of Jesus is the principal manifestation in human history. Other treatments of divine grace transposed into a theology of gift will take their impetus from the treatment of resurrection. The treatments of grace in the earlier volumes should anticipate the clarification that will be made possible by the theology of resurrection in this fourth volume.

The biblical teaching on resurrection has been solidly, and in some ways permanently, fixed in Wright's major work, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. But the place that the resurrection plays in Christian soteriology itself needs further development, and I would hope that this can be provided at this point in volume 4.

The transition from resurrection to baptism and Eucharist, and then from both of these to sacramentality, is not difficult to maneuver: the church is born from baptism and Eucharist. It is for this reason that the team composing the program for this effort at a systematic theology has placed sacraments prior to church in the sequence of theological topics.

49. See above, n. 47.

50. For the Law of the Cross, see thesis 17 in Lonergan, *Redemption*. For an integration with Girard, see Robert M. Doran, S.J., "The Nonviolent Cross: Lonergan and Girard on Redemption," *Theological Studies* 71 (2010) 46–61.

51. See Robert J. Daly, S.J., *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2009).

Volume 5: Church, Praxis, Eschatology/Reign of God

In comments made in discussion sessions at a 1962 institute entitled “The Method of Theology” at Regis College in Toronto, Lonergan commented that while the necessary positive-theological work has been done to support a systematic theology of the church, the categories in which that work can be organized systematically have not yet evolved. He meant that nothing has yet been put forward for a systematic ecclesiology that would parallel the significance of *homoousion* for trinitarian theology, the Chalcedonian “one person in two natures” for Christology, and the theorem of the supernatural for grace. He went on to indicate, as he also did in *Insight*, that these categories will be intimately related to a yet-to-be-developed theological theory of history.⁵²

I have argued in a recent contribution to a *Festschrift* for Joseph Komonchak that the category that will do for ecclesiology what *homoousion* does for trinitarian theology is *mission*, where mission is understood systematically in continuity with the theology of the divine missions that were introduced in volume 1.⁵³ “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (Jn 20:21). Furthermore, participants in the project have looked favorably on the efforts I made in chapter 5 of *Theology and the Dialectics of History* to present an understanding of the church as the community of the servant of God in history. My use of the term “servant” was explicitly developed on the basis of an exegesis of the Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah and an appropriation of Jesus’ identification of those songs as defining the inner constitution of his own ministry. So the ecclesiology offered in this work will be a theology of the church as the community of the servant of God on mission from the Son, as the Son was on mission from the Father. Some of the structures of church ministry can be rethought on this basis.⁵⁴

What is the praxis of the reign of God? What distinguishes the praxis of the community of the Suffering Servant? As I have written in one of the early chapters of volume 2 of *The Trinity in History* (still in process),

social grace is about relations, about the elevation of human relations to the point of being an imitation of and even a participation in divine circumincession. It is to this that I have to turn next. *What are elevated human relations, and how are they pertinent to the integrity of cultural and social values, that is, to the meanings and values that inform given ways of living and to the social structures that embody those meanings and values for better or for worse?*

52. See Bernard Lonergan, “The Method of Theology,” in *Early Works in Theological Method*, CWBL 22, ed. Robert M. Doran and Robert C. Croken (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2010) 280, 340–41.

53. Robert M. Doran, “Social Grace and the Mission of the Church,” in *A Realist’s Church: Essays in Honor of Joseph Komonchak*, ed. Nicholas Rademacher, Patrick Hayes, and Christopher Denny (New York: Orbis, forthcoming).

54. Ormerod has recently suggested in an e-mail that “the key unifying notion is not mission but the ‘kingdom of God’ explicated through the scale of values and the healing/creating vectors.” Mission, in my conception, is precisely for the sake of the reign of God thus understood.

In the volumes under discussion here, the emphasis will be on the community's incarnation of the integral scale of values and on its work to promote that scale of values throughout human society. Here, a systematic theology must appropriate and develop the best of contemporary work in macroeconomic theory to flesh out the meaning of the insistence emergent in the scale of values of economic systems. While this would facilitate the equitable delivery of vital goods to the entire human community, how this will be done remains to be determined. There is probably at least one permanently valid insight into economic process contained in Lonergan's macroeconomic theory, namely, the division of economic process into the two phases of basic and surplus exchange. I remain convinced that a macroeconomics can be built around this insight, but I would also maintain that a great deal has to be done with Lonergan's macroeconomics to make it accessible not only to theologians but even to economists.⁵⁵ I would also wager that at least an attempt to read Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* in concert with Lonergan's theory might be a promising way to proceed. Lonergan and Piketty, I believe, acknowledge the same problem, though they express it in different terms. For Lonergan, the expansion of the surplus phase of the economy has to yield at a given point in economic process to the expansion of the basic phase, until it is time for surplus expansion to begin again. This is precisely what is not happening in global economic process in our day. For Piketty,

capital or wealth grows at the rate of return to capital, a rate that normally exceeds the economic growth rate. Thus, economies will tend to have ever-increasing ratios of wealth to income, barring huge disturbances like wars and depressions. Since wealth is highly concentrated, it follows that inequality will tend to increase without bound until a policy change is introduced or some kind of catastrophe interferes with wealth accumulation.⁵⁶

Piketty's solution stresses taxation on wealth; Lonergan's does not. My hunch—and I confess it is little more than this—is that Lonergan and Piketty need each other.

Last but not least, there is the topic of eschatology, of beatific vision, of the fullness of the reign of God. Suffice it to say that here I would want to see an attempt to integrate the fourth point of Lonergan's four-point hypothesis: the light of glory is a created participation in filiation as the Son leads us home to the Father. Wright's reading of the New Testament on these issues is perhaps best expressed for the general reader in his *Surprised by Hope*.⁵⁷ I hasten to add that his basic position is consonant with Joseph Ratzinger's

55. For Lonergan's efforts, see *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, CWBL 15, ed. Frederick G. Lawrence, Patrick H. Byrne, and Charles C. Hefling Jr. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1999); and *For a New Political Economy*, CWBL 21, ed. Philip J. McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1998).

56. Lawrence H. Summers, "The Inequality Puzzle," *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas* 32 (Summer 2014), <http://www.democracyjournal.org/32/the-inequality-puzzle.php?page=1>.

57. N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

presentation of eschatology, a presentation that Cardinal Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) has, if I am not mistaken, singled out as the best of his theological works.⁵⁸

So there, in perhaps a bit more than a nutshell, is my present view of a new project in systematic theology, which I hope will continue to be an ongoing collaborative project extending not only over the next 30 years but indefinitely into the future.

Author biography

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58. Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology, Death, and Eternal Life*, trans. Michael Waldstein, trans. ed. Aidan Nichols (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1988).