

'Amazing Grace' in a New Key¹

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List of Abbreviations

Reference to the following works of Lonergan are given in [brackets] in the text, using the following abbreviations:

- AqT "Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation," in *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), edited by Frederick E. Crowe, pp. 35-54.
- CM *Caring About Meaning: Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan* (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1982), edited by Pierrot Lambert, Charlotte Tansey, and Cathleen Going.
- GF *Grace and Freedom* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), edited by J. Patout Burns.
- GO/I "The *Gratia Operans* Dissertation: Preface and Introduction," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 3/2 (October, 1985), pp. 9-46.
- I *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957).
- MT *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).
- PGT *Philosophy of God, and Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973).
- WTN *The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), translated by Conn O'Donovan.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a question where he is attempting to get at the essence of Christianity, St. Thomas writes:

"Each thing appears to be that which preponderates in it," as the Philosopher states. Now that which is preponderant in the law of the New Testament, and upon which all its efficacy is based, is the grace of the Holy Spirit. [ST I-II, q. 106, a. 1]

Everything else, he insists, is secondary and has its importance insofar as it serves the life of grace. This is an insistence that finds echoes throughout the Christian tradition, both prior and subsequent to Thomas. Christian existence is constituted by God's self-communication to us in grace, and by the revelation in Christ Jesus through which that grace is known.

¹ Prepared for the course, Lonergan's *Method in Theology* (RGT 5571F), Professor Robert M. Doran, S.J., Regis College, Toronto, Fall, 1986.

In any place and time, “the Christian church is the community that results from the outer communication of Christ’s message and from the inner gift of God’s love” [MT, 361]. The form of its teaching and the shape of its ministry are for the sake of the redemptive movement of grace. The effectiveness of its teaching and ministry, accordingly, will be promoted by an ongoing understanding of the reality of God’s grace and of the ways in which it transforms human life.

This essay begins with the conviction that Bernard Lonergan’s notion of religious conversion can profoundly enrich Christian reflection on the reality that the tradition has named grace. In itself, however, it is not an investigation directly of that notion. The present study, rather, regards a prior task. Decades before the emergence of his position on religious conversion, Lonergan had engaged in an interpretative investigation of the doctrine of grace in Aquinas. At the heart of that investigation was the acknowledgement of significant development in the understanding of grace leading up to the medieval synthesis. It was an understanding of that process of development which enabled Lonergan to grasp the meaning of Aquinas’ position. Section two of the present essay, then, is an attempt to analyze this early position on the historical development of the theology of grace as found in *Grace and Freedom*.

The next step arises from the recognition that Lonergan’s position on the nature of development itself developed. His notion of development is considerably refined in *Method in Theology*. Section three attempts to first consider this refinement of the general scheme of development, and then to apply this scheme to the historical data presented in *Grace and Freedom*.

There followed, however, the realization that a significant element in this refinement of the notion of development included a profound awareness of the fact of decline. Section four represents a brief, initial attempt to consider certain aspects of the breakdown of the medieval synthesis in terms of Lonergan’s understanding of the sources of decline. The center of this brief consideration is the way in which this set the stage for the classic Catholic statement on justification at Trent.

A brief conclusion then tries to point to the need for a contemporary transposition, and to indicate some possible resources for the construction of a contemporary theology of grace.

The musical metaphor of the title, “‘Amazing Grace’ in a New Key,” emerges from the notion of transposition, which plays such a significant role in Lonergan’s later thinking on development.² The medieval synthesis was an authentic theological ‘harmony’ that resulted from the transposition from one framework of thought to another. That harmony, however, fell into a discordant dissonance in the centuries which have intervened between Aquinas and ourselves. We no longer live in his world, and if the harmony is to be restored, it will necessitate a further transposition. This essay does not begin to attempt that task. It attempts, rather, something much more modest. In very broad strokes it attempts to consider something of Bernard Lonergan’s understanding of that initial transposition, and something of the subsequent sources of dissonance, so that some light might be shed on the nature of the further transposition currently needed.

2. THE ‘EARLY LONERGAN’ ON DEVELOPMENT

In his introduction to Lonergan’s *Grace and Freedom*, Frederick Crowe writes of the situation of readers who turn to this earliest work after having been introduced to Lonergan through his thought on meaning and authenticity: “one can only imagine their puzzlement” [GF, ix].

The present essay moves precisely in that direction: from the motivating conviction that the ‘later Lonergan’s’ position on religious experience and conversion has profound possibilities for enriching theological reflection on grace, to a brief initial reading of the ‘early Lonergan’s’ study of Aquinas’ thought on grace. That reading has, indeed, been puzzling. Yet it seems a necessary attempt for two reasons. First, Lonergan’s frequently cited remark as to how

² By “transposition” I generally mean what Lonergan expressed as “a transition of Christian consciousness from a lesser to a fuller differentiation of consciousness” [MT, 309]. The notion of context as a limited nest of questions and answers heading toward a point at which no further relevant questions arise is significant. The transposition currently considered would be from the various sets of questions and answers characterizing the various brands of common sense and the set characterizing theory, to a nest of questions and answers emerging from the appropriation of consciousness.

“reaching up to the mind of Aquinas” [I, 748] had changed him profoundly makes it evident that any understanding of his contribution to the *nova* in theology needs to be grounded in his appropriation of the *vetera*. Secondly, with regard to the specific question of grace, he straightforwardly insists that “operative grace is religious conversion” [MT, 214]. In order to appreciate the *nova* of religious conversion, it is necessary to understand something of the *vetera* of operative grace.

It seems evident that the main interest of this early work was concerned with the history of theological speculation on the question of that operative grace which initiates religious conversion. There appear to be three levels to the investigation: (1) surveying the development of speculative theology as a discipline; (2) grasping the chronological development of Aquinas’ own thought; and (3) attempting a reconciliation of transcendent divine operation with human free cooperation in a way that moves beyond the ‘dead end’ of the *de auxiliis* controversy.

The focus of my present reading of this work has been on the notion of development presented there, though some advertence will be made to the content of Thomas’ position.³ The need for contemporary development has been posited; the subsequent question is whether consideration of past development might shed light on the process and form this might take. Lonergan’s position is obviously that it can do so. His very thought on development, however, has itself developed. His earliest position on the question was presented in the introduction to his dissertation, where he both developed a general scheme and applied it to a significant body of historical data concerning theological speculation on grace.

2.1 An *a priori* Scheme of Development

The fundamental problem in attempting to trace the movement of speculation on any question from the fourth through the twelfth centuries is “to determine scientifically the unity and coherence of a vast body of historical data” [GO/I, 16]. Lonergan proposes that determination of an intelligibility in this enormous range of diverse materials can be facilitated

³ Cf. section 4.2 of the present essay, pp. 27-31.

through the use of a theory of the nature of the historical development of theological speculation. He posits the need for an *a priori* scheme that can synthesize **any** possible set of historical data, insisting that it is possible to construct such a general scheme of historical process precisely “because the human mind is always the human mind” [GO/I, 12]. This insistence on the invariant structures and procedures of the human mind indicates a basic continuity throughout all of Lonergan’s thought on development; as David Tracy notes, however, this concern will not find clear **critical** expression until *Insight*.⁴

Posited is “a ‘pincer’ movement” [GO/I, 13] which first determines a general scheme of development based on the nature of the development of understanding in any human mind, and then, through this scheme, synthesizes the data which are revealed by historical investigations.

The investigation proceeds in five stages: (1) presenting the generic scheme of the development of speculation; (2) assembling the historical data, in this case the explicit statements on operative grace by thinkers from Augustine to Thomas; (3) a subsidiary investigation of Thomas’ idea of ‘operation;’ (4) a parallel investigation of Thomas’ theory of will; and, finally, (5) a chronological examination of Thomas’ developing position on operative actual grace. It is the first two stages that are of present concern; in them is presented Lonergan’s initial position on the nature of development.

Construction of the general scheme begins by distinguishing four key elements in speculative theology: theorems, terms, dialectical positions, and technique. **Theorems** are exact technical expressions of scientific understanding. In understanding this it is helpful to note the difference between a common notion (e.g., ‘going faster’) and a scientific concept (‘acceleration’); “the common notion apprehends no more than the fact, while the scientific concept elaborates it by understanding it” [GO/I, 19]. Words are given a precise meaning within the context of a theorem; **terms** are such words, transformed by a precise, scientific meaning. Since theology deals with mystery, full human understanding of the doctrines of faith will never be achieved; nevertheless, the theologian operates with the conviction that different truths of

4 David Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan* (New York: Herder and herder, 1970), p. 42.

faith cannot be contradictory. There results the **dialectical position** which both asserts non-contradiction and denies full explanation. Speculative **technique** involves three central methodological procedures: (1) consideration of the whole field of data; (2) philosophical analysis of the 'natural' factors involved; and (3) careful ordering of the questions that require solution.

The dialectical position remains throughout any development. As technique improves with the introduction of new data and/or refinement of philosophical tools of analysis, theorems will develop, with consequent change in terms. The dialectical position always remains, but the development results in a progressive understanding of "all but the essence of the mystery" [GO/I, 25]. This development of progressive understanding can be expected to follow this general law:

The mind begins from the particular and works to what is most general; it then returns from the most general through the specific differences to the particular. [GO/I, 32]

The anticipated phases of development, then, will proceed from an initial dialectical position, through various intermediate phases to a final dialectical position. The order of intermediate phases will be expected to follow the above-stated general law. In the introduction to his *Gratia Operans* dissertation, Lonergan delineated seven phases in the a priori expectation of the order of development.

- i. A **specific theorem**, which is found to explain something, is adverted to and analyzed.
- ii. This specific theorem is **generalized** to consider related issues.
- iii. The implications of the specific theorem are worked out, with a tendency to **give it greater significance than is due**, seeing in it the full solution to the whole problem.
- iv. Recognition of the insufficiency of the specific theorem to be the full solution leads to discovery of the **generic theorem**.
- v. The implications of the generic theorem are worked out, and it is **generalized** to consider related issues.
- vi. There is a tendency to make the generic theorem **serve as the full solution**.

- vii. Recognition of the insufficiency of the generic theorem leads to rediscovery of the specific theorem in a new setting, yielding a **synthesis** of generic and specific theorems.

The anticipation is that this scheme will be helpful in grasping the intelligibility of any body of data on the development of speculation. In itself, the scheme is not an understanding of anything. Its value lies in being used as a tool for synthesizing a body of concrete data. The data in question are the speculative positions on grace adopted by theologians from Augustine through Aquinas. A key advantage of the scheme is that it “is something tangible that can be refuted” [GO/I, 34]. But it will be refuted or seen to be helpful only in the process of analyzing concrete data.

2.2 Developing Speculation on Grace

The ‘lower blade’ of the ‘pincer’ is supplied by the series of texts which express the ongoing theological speculation on grace. Prior to such speculation is the task of gathering the sources. Thus, throughout the patristic period, early Christian writers collected various scriptural passages bearing on a certain point. This effort is not, in itself, speculative. Without the accomplishment of this prior task, however, no speculation would be possible. “one cannot speculate without having something to speculate about” [GO/I, 23]. The medieval Sentences continued this preliminary work of providing speculation with a solid basis. By the fourth century, sufficient bases had been developed for movement toward authentically theological speculation to have begun. The development of that moving speculation on grace can be understood on the basis of the seven stage general scheme.

First, the initial dialectical position emerges with Augustine. The dialectic is evident in the way in which Augustine juxtaposes texts asserting (a) the efficaciousness of grace, and (b) the reality of human freedom.⁵ Augustine’s context was that of meeting the exigencies of controversy: on the one hand against the Pelagians who exalted the capacities of human freedom, and on the other hand, e.g., against the monks of Hadrumentum who had virtually denied that freedom. It was in response to these controversies that the distinction of operative and cooperative grace emerged: it is by God’s operation that a bad will is made good, and it is by God’s cooperation that good performance is possible for a good will

⁵ For example, cf. Harry McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* (New York: Newman Press, 1969), pp. 76-78, for the way in which the Augustinian tradition tended to juxtapose assertions of (a) the necessity of grace and (b) free will, recognizing the dialectical tension without engaging in fully systematic discussion.

God operates to initiate us in the spiritual life, and he cooperates to bring us to perfection; alone he works to give us good desires, and together with our good desires he labours to give us good performance. [GF, 3]

The dialectical tension of efficacious grace and human freedom is asserted, without clear systematic discussion. A speculative dimension, however, is present in Augustine's advertence to the difference between Adam and ourselves regarding the need for grace; this is the specific theorem. Grounding speculation on grace in the Western tradition is the notion of operative grace as liberation from sin. The will may be free by nature, but then it is evil; only when liberated from sin is it good, and thus truly free.

Secondly, this specific theorem on the difference between Adam and ourselves is generalized. The non-controversial context of Anselm made it possible for him to go beyond simple assertion of the dialectical position to "the deeper problem of reconciliation" [GF, 6]. The impulse toward speculation is evident in all of Anselm's thought, but there is little progress in this particular question. Peter Lombard's contribution was significant both in collecting an enormous range of scriptural, patristic, and contemporary texts, and in a speculative venture. He outlined four states of human liberty: paradise, fallen human existence, redeemed human existence, and heaven. Grace is conceived essentially to be that which distinguishes the second stage, *non posse non peccare*, from the third, *posse non peccare*. It is asserted that some good acts are possible without grace; there, however, are not meritorious.

Thirdly, in retrospect it is possible to see that the fundamental problem in conceiving the relationship of grace and freedom throughout this period is that the two realities are considered on the same plane, "grace and liberty are correlatives" [GF, 9]. Freedom can be considered only in theological terms as an effect of grace; it is not yet possible to speculate on its nature in itself, in philosophical terms. In a sense, "the difficulty was to explain why everything was not grace" [GF, 14]. There was no possibility for discussing 'natural' virtues; the distinction was commonly made between *naturalia* and *gratuita*, but the meaning of the distinction was not at all clear. Further, finding speculative ground for the doctrine of merit was very difficult. These problems were making evident the need for what would prove to be the pivotal development in the

theological speculation: recognition of the disproportion between grace and nature. As a speculative tool, this theorem had not emerged; a sense of its necessity, however, had.

Just as one can apprehend 'going faster' without understanding the calculus, so also the theologians of the twelfth century and earlier could apprehend globally the supernatural character of grace without suspecting the theorem that regards the relations of grace and nature. [GF, 13-14]

Fourthly, the 'supernatural' emerged as a scientific theorem with Philip the Chancellor; this generic theorem posits an entitative disproportion between nature and grace. Essentially, what this did was "to insert an ideal middle term between the two extremes, to place *natura pura* between *natura lapsa* and *natura elevata*" [GF, 13-14]. The impact of this recognition of two disproportionate orders – grace/faith/charity on the one hand, and nature/reason/natural love on the other – was to release speculation concerning each order on its own terms. The data of human psychology could ground understanding of the nature of freedom; concurrently, theological attention to the data of revelation on grace could expand speculative understanding of grace beyond its liberation of sinful freedom. The development is fundamentally a breakthrough in human thinking. Philip created a mental perspective which released speculation both on grace and on the nature of freedom. But considering the two orders in their distinction, it became also possible to consider their interrelationship in new ways. This amounted to

A 'Copernican revolution' in theory: the centre of the whole issue shifted violently; certain developments were released at once; others followed in a series of intervals, change implying further change. [GF, 16]

Fifthly, whereas in the earlier periods of reflection, the necessity of grace was conceived solely in terms of the liberation of liberty, "the new analysis explains this necessity in terms of human finality" [GF, 18]; it might be said that the shift of focus is from *gratia sanans* to *gratia elevans*. At the center of this perspective lies the conviction that the final end of the human person is beyond created nature; grace is the elevation of the person toward that supernatural end. In this perspective, Alexander of Hales applied the theorem to the problem of merit. Grace elevates human actions beyond the merely natural level, to the supernatural level on which they can truly be meritorious. Philosophical reflection on the psychology of freedom also offers the category of habit which promotes the notion of sanctifying grace.

Sixthly, the focus on elevating grace which followed emergence of the generic theorem of the supernatural, however, was inadequate for dealing with “the old *non posse non peccare*, which had been a line of reference for the whole of grace” [GF, 18]. Lonergan argues that the dogmatic data forced a revision of the solution, in that it pointed to the fact of moral impotence which remains problematic in the generic theorem.

Seventhly, with Aquinas⁶ there emerges a synthesis of the generic and specific theorems on the necessity of grace: fallen humanity needs (a) *gratia sanans* to be healed of the wounds of sin and moral impotence, and (b) *gratia elevans* in order to be raised to the level of divine operation on the supernatural plane. Lonergan finds this synthesis expressed most clearly in the following text:⁷

In the state of perfect nature, therefore, the human person needs a gratuitous strength superadded to natural strength for one reason, namely, in order to do and to will supernatural good. In the state of corrupt nature, however this is needed for two reasons, namely, in order to be healed, and furthermore in order to perform works of supernatural virtue, which are meritorious. Beyond this, in both states, the human person needs divine assistance in order to be moved to act well. [ST I-II, q. 109, a. 2]

Since the goal of human existence is not proportionate to human nature, any human person – pre-lapsarian Adam as well as ourselves – needs to be elevated in order to attain this transcendent finality. And in the concrete, human existence *de facto* is fallen existence; accordingly, in order to be healed, i.e., restored even to natural dignity, the human person stands in need of grace. Theological speculation on operative grace reaches a certain term in

6 This synthesis is presented in Aquinas' late work, the *Summa Theologiae*. Lonergan notes that previous considerations of the necessity of grace in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *De Veritate* did not yet arrive as a position on truly operative grace.

7 Lonergan [GO/I, 35] cites the Latin text: “Sic igitur virtute gratuita superaddita virtuti naturae indigent homo in statu naturae integrae quantum ad unum, scilicet ad operandum et colendum bonum supernaturale. Sed in statu naturae corruptae, quantum ad duo: scilicet ut sanetur; et ulterius ut bonum supernaturalis virtutis operetur, quod est meritorium. Ulterius autem in utroque statu indigent homo auxilia divino ut ab ipso moveatur ad bene agendum.”

the realization that the full solution is “neither of these two theorems taken singly, but their integration into a synthesis.”⁸ This synthesis is the final dialectical position.⁹

3. DEVELOPMENT REVISITED

The return from *Grace and Freedom* to *Method in Theology* makes evident the sea-change of perspective which has occurred within a remarkable continuity of concern.¹⁰ The monumental achievement of *Insight* has made possible a significantly developed and critically grounded notion of the invariant procedures of human consciousness which promote development. The Trinitarian and Christological investigations have broadened the base of historical data, making possible a sharpened insight into the breakthroughs represented by the Greek councils. *Method in Theology* exhibits a profound awareness of the primacy of existential consciousness, which grounds highly developed positions on the nature of human culture, the nature of religion, and the role of theology in mediating between them.

Throughout this moving viewpoint of Lonergan’s own work, however, two concerns from the period of his dissertation remain constant: the attempt to understand the nature of development in theological reflection, and recognition of the centrality of what the medievals termed “actual operative grace” in Christian living. Both constants have been greatly enriched by the breakthroughs which occurred in the three decades separating *Grace and Freedom* and *Method in Theology*.

Any full explication of the impact of those breakthroughs¹¹ is beyond both the scope of this essay and its author’s competence, as well. Intended here is a far more limited consideration of a few key elements: the constitutive function of meaning in history, the notion of horizon, the possibility of differentiating horizons, and a position on the inner and outer

8 Michael Leonard Rende, *The Development of Fr. Bernard Lonergan’s Thought on the Notion of Conversion* (Unpublished Dissertation at Marquette University, 1983), p. 23.

9 More explicit attention will be given to this position in section 4.2 of the present essay, pp. 27-31.

10 Cf. *MT*, 309-310, where Lonergan very succinctly outlines the development treated in his dissertation.

11 A truly adequate treatment would require something like Charles Hefling’s *Lonergan on Development: “The Way to Nicea” in Light of His More Recent Methodology* (Unpublished Dissertation at Boston College, 1982).

constituents of religion. Of these, it is the notion of differentiation that most directly enables Lonergan's developed understanding of development.

The division of the present section, then, will parallel that of the previous section. A consideration of how these breakthroughs have enabled an advanced general notion of development will be followed by a brief attempt to reconsider the historical data concerning theological speculation on grace from the fourth through the twelfth centuries.

3.1 The Notion of Development

First, there is a distinction to be noted between (a) history that is written, and (b) history that is written about. Two chapters of *Method in Theology* are devoted to the methods and procedures of written history. Those methods, however, are fundamentally grounded in an understanding of history as it is lived; this history is understood as the going-forward of meaning. Meaning fulfills cognitive, efficient, constitutive, and communicative functions.¹² As cognitive, meaning mediates a 'world' beyond experience that is opened up by acts of understanding and judgment. As efficient, meaning facilitates human planning and human making. Meaning is constitutive insofar as it is the essential element making cultures and social institutions what they are. Insofar as meaning becomes common it functions communicatively, to unite persons across space and time.

History that is written about is the unfolding of meaning as it constitutes human lives which are inextricably intertwined with other lives in networks of common social and cultural meaning. History that is written, accordingly, will attend to this going-forward of meaning. It will attend not only to the question for interpretation, 'What did X mean?,' but will recognize that what in fact is going forward at any place and time is largely beyond the grasp of the persons living in that place and time. To understand instances of development is to understand changes in a social and cultural situation, which resulted from human action, but in such a way that the actors could have no clear grasp of the full implications of their action and that of their contemporaries.

¹² Lonergan's full treatment of these functions of meaning is given in chapter three of *MT*, pp. 76-81.

The study of development, then, extends far beyond notable changes in cognitive meaning. Such changes must be recognized to occur in social and cultural contexts which are themselves real instances of meaning.

Secondly, advertence to contexts leads to the notion of horizon. The suggestive image is that of horizon as “the limit of one’s field of vision” [MT, 235]; it connotes the limited scope of our knowledge and the limited range of our interests. Any expression of meaning will be within a horizon, and can be understood only in the context of that horizon. In retrospective consideration of one’s own life, it is possible to discern not only development within horizons but also movement from one horizon to another.

There has emerged a new organization that distinguishes periods by broad differences in one’s mode of living, in one’s dominant concern, in one’s tasks and problems, and in each period distinguishes contexts, that is, nests of questions and answers bearing on distinct but related topics. [MT, 183]

Different periods of one’s life are constituted by a differing scope of knowledge and range of interest. At any point, a given horizon has emerged from the past and is the immediate condition of further emergence. But what is true of the constitutive meaning of an individual, is true as well of the common meaning which constitutes a culture. There are common horizons within a culture that are available to an individual, and insofar as one enlarges such a given horizon or goes beyond it, that achievement itself – insofar as it is expressed – can become common and offer possibilities of development for the culture and for other individuals within that culture.

Horizons differ, both between different cultures and between different individuals within a culture. Such differences may be complementary, genetic, or dialectical. In trying to reach a notion of development, present interest is in differences of horizon which are genetic, i.e., developmental.¹³ Development of knowledge is not the mere addition of items of information to an already accumulated store of such items; rather it is a matter of organic growth both within a given horizon, and the emergence of new horizons. Horizons themselves develop, and “such development admits categorization to yield a differentiation of horizons” [AqT, 37].

13 Dialectical differences will surface as a concern in section four of the present essay.

Thirdly, then, it is precisely this differentiation of horizons which grounds a general scheme of development. Initially, we are all born into a pre-linguistic **world of immediacy**.

It is the world of what is felt, touched, grasped, sucked, seen, heard. It is a world of immediate experience, of the given as given, of image and affect without any perceptible intrusion from insight or concept, reflection or judgment, deliberation or choice. [MT, 76]

It is precisely the 'intrusion' of acts of understanding, judgment, and decision, insofar as such acts involve emergence of the subject beyond experience, that propel one into a **world mediated by meaning**. The spontaneous flow of consciousness becomes patterned, and insofar as such patterns are shared, a truly common world of meaning is established that goes beyond spontaneous intersubjective bonds. The absolutely fundamental breakthrough is the emergence of this world mediated by meaning, which opens up the past and future as well as the immediately present, the possible and ideal as well as "the given as given." But subsequent breakthroughs will involve the emergence of differentiations within this world.

One key element of our initial movement into the world mediated by meaning is that we are enabled to learn "from the **common sense** of the community" [MT, 77]. On the one hand, this involves the accumulation of specific meanings, learning from "a common fund of tested answers" [I, 175]; on the other hand, there is a "spontaneous and self-correcting process of learning" [I, 174] from this common fund and eventually of contributing to it. As a procedure, common sense is common to all humankind; in terms of its specific content, it is endlessly diversified.

The procedure of common sense is "a specialization of intelligence in the particular and the concrete" [I, 178]. Spontaneously insights begin to accumulate, enabling one to act easily in recurrent concrete situations. Through the process of learning from one's fellows and from insights into one's own concrete experience, there develops a habitual set of insights which one brings to every new situation. A further insight into that new situation brings the entire set into play; that combination of new insight and habitual background gives rise to speech and action, which "sooner or later reveal their defects to give rise to further inquiry and fuller insight" [MT, 303]. These further insights themselves become part of the ongoing background which one brings to further new situations. It is a hit-and-miss process of trying to discover 'what works.'

Its concern is the concrete and particular. Its function is to master each situation as it arises. Its procedure is to reach an incomplete set of insights that is to be completed only by adding on each occasion the further insights that scrutiny of the occasion reveals. [I, 177]

This procedure is followed in the myriad of situations in which human persons and communities live; that diversity of situation gives rise to diversity of content to which the procedure gives rise. In different situations, 'what works' will vary. Accordingly, common to all common sense will be the presence of proverbs; the specific content of meaning communicated by the proverb-form will vary widely, however, from culture to culture. As procedure, common sense will always reveal who the 'experts' in a community are for dealing with situations which one has not mastered for oneself; but again, the specific roles for which 'expertise' is needed will be characterized by a remarkable range. In short, "there are as many brands of common sense as there are differing places and times" [MT, 303]. But some particular brand of common sense will characterize any particular place and time. It is in and through the common sense of one's own situation that one first enters the world mediated by meaning.

Whereas common sense is a specialization of intelligence in the here-and-now given, there is a further specialization that concerns what is beyond any concrete here-and-now; this is the **religious** development that orientates us to a transcendent realm of a Lovableness beyond the specific objects of our love and an Intelligibility beyond the specific objects of our understanding. Authentic religion is the orientation of human living toward this transcendent realm.

There is a further specialization of intelligence that is concerned with this world, but in a way fundamentally different from the procedures of common sense. This is "the scientific development that unifies and relates, constructs and extrapolates, serializes and generalizes, to discover and reveal the cosmos" [AqT, 37]. This is the emergence of **systematic** meaning, in which, for example, one attempts not simply to use words appropriately, but, like Socrates, attempts to achieve universal definitions of them. The concern shifts from objects in their relationship to me, to objects in their relationships to one another. There results the development of a highly technical language, in which terms have meaning precisely by virtue of their relations to other terms within that language. The goal is not simply a determination of

‘what works,’ but a thoroughgoing explanation of a given realm of experience. There results not simply a new set of habitual insights, but an entirely new procedure of understanding, and a new social group which shares that procedure; there results, in short, “a completely new world” [PGT, 5]. This is the world of theory, with its own language, procedures, and communities. It is a specialization of intelligence that results in a significantly new horizon; not only is the scope of knowledge and interest expanded, but the very manner in which one’s interest is pursued for the sake of knowledge has undergone a radical shift. That shift creates barriers to communication between the horizons of common sense and of theory, not only because different languages are spoken, but also because different questions are asked. The shift to theory involves a differentiation of consciousness, through which the world mediated by meaning splits into the realm of common sense and the realm of theory, the former realm meeting the latter largely with incomprehension.

One further differentiation should be noted at present. The theoretic differentiation of consciousness tends to be achieved by relatively few persons in any society; the impact of that differentiation, however, is enormous. Not only in technological developments but also through systems of education, the impact of systematic views affects the thinking of educated persons. Philosophical critique of an earlier stage of common sense or of religion may affect many; similarly, technical terms may enter the vocabulary of many. But this impact does not bring such persons into the world of theory. It does, however, give rise to what Lonergan terms **post-systematic** literature.

This progressive series of differentiations of consciousness will profoundly affect the manner in which thinking about any realm of experience will occur in the developing situations of a culture.

This progressive series of differentiations of consciousness will profoundly affect the manner in which thinking about any realm of experience will occur in the developing situations of a culture.

Fourthly, the particular realm of living with which theological speculation is concerned is religion. And religion is comprised of both an inner and outer ‘word.’ At its core, religious

experience is the orientation of human consciousness to unrestricted truth and loveliness, experienced, not as achievement, but as gift. This given orientation is understood in Christian faith in terms of the Pauline verse which recurs repeatedly in Lonergan's later writings, "the gift of God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" [Rom 5.5].¹⁴ This gift is experienced as a dynamic state of conscious living which brings a fulfillment to the basic desire of the human spirit, a fulfillment which can be recognized in a deep-set joy and a radical peace; it further manifests itself in acts of love. In itself, it is the 'inner word' spoken by God as an "unmediated experience of the mystery of love and awe" [MT, 112].

In this immediacy, the gift of God's love is conscious, but not known. For Lonergan, knowledge results from the performance of a whole set of operations, moving from inner or outer experience, through inquiry to insight, to conceptualization and reflection, grasping the sufficiency or insufficiency of evidence, and affirming or denying. The inner word of religion is consciously experienced and can ground such a movement of the subject toward knowledge, but in itself it is simply given in conscious experience.

The 'outer word' of a historical religious tradition brings that experience into focus, facilitates the movement into understanding, and opens the possibility of sharing in a concrete religious community. It is the focusing of religious experience that constitutes the uniqueness of religious traditions and communities.

Christianity involves not only the inward gift of being in love with God but also the outward expression of God's love in Christ Jesus dying and rising again. In the paschal mystery the love that is given inwardly is focused and inflamed, and that focusing unites Christians not only with Christ but also with one another. [PGT, 10]

14 The earliest citation of Rom 5.5 by Lonergan that I have been able to locate was in "the Mystical Body of Christ," an unpublished domestic exhortation given at Regis College, Toronto, in November, 1951, p. 4 of the mimeographed copy available at LRI. The verse is cited frequently in his later writings. Cf., e.g., *A Second Collection*, p. 153; *Method in Theology*, pp. 105, 278, 282, 327, 340; *Philosophy of God, and Theology*, pp. 9, 50; and *A Third Collection*, pp. 31, 53, 71, 77, 124, 175, 231, 241-242. In addition, the language of the verse is cited frequently without specific reference to the text.

By this outer word, religion enters the world mediated by meaning; the meaning of that word will depend on the context in which it is uttered, and such contexts, as has been seen, “vary from place to place and from one generation to another” [MT, 112].

Understanding the process of development within any historical religious tradition will be the varying expressions of that outer word in the context of what is going forward in the history of human meaning. Consideration of the development of theological speculation on grace can be understood as the attempt to consider varying religious expressions in the contexts of successive differentiations of human consciousness.

3.2 Stages of Development

A significant dimension of this generalized expectation of the form of development presented in *Method in Theology* is that it relates the development of theology directly to the development of the cultural contexts in which theology occurs. Indeed, theology comes to be understood as reflection on the role of religion in any given culture. The broader cultural context was present in the scheme presented in *Grace and Freedom*, but it was very much in the background; it became noticeable in the prior scheme, e.g., especially in the impact which Aristotelianism had on medieval thought. But even this is considered in the direct impact of Aristotelian categories on theology, rather than the significance of its broader cultural impact. The earlier scheme had about it the character of a ‘history of ideas;’ the later scheme is a history of the contexts in which ideas occur and have meaning. In general, the radical significance of changing cultural contexts had not yet come to the fore in Lonergan’s dissertation.

It has certainly done precisely that in Lonergan’s later work. Development in theology now comes to be understood as possible and necessary precisely because of cultural change.

Development is when a change in the culture gives you new

tools and new problems in relating the religion to the culture, in talking intelligently about the religion in the culture. You start getting transpositions. [CM, 159]

The key to anticipated development is no longer the broad statement of a general law of the mind's working from particular to general, but rather the notion of a progressive specialization of mind. As a new specialization emerges, development is initially in terms of previous achievement; but gradually new problems raise new questions and new answers raise new problems. The new context of interrelated questions and answers begins to take over. Theology reflects on religion within an ongoing series of such contexts. The problem of understanding development, then, is fundamentally the problem of understanding the individual contexts within which given expressions occurred, and the relationship between different contexts. It is a matter of understanding the 'transpositions' of a religion's outer word from context to context.

Scriptural texts, accordingly, remain sources for theology, but there is a clearer grasp of what it means to understand such texts within the context in which they were first expressed. The first key recognition is that the scriptures are written in the language of common sense. In terms of the procedure of common sense, this means that the concern of the authors is with the particular and concrete situations with which they were faces; they were not seeing universal definitions that applied *omni et soli*. Their concern was to insert the gospel message into the varieties of common sense which they encountered. The transformative gift of God's love was expressed largely in the narrative form of parable in the synoptics. In the genuine Pauline letters, Paul's experience of conversion becomes the paradigm of that gift of love, which progressively comes to expression in the Greek term *charis*, which he uses twenty-four times in Romans alone. The experience of God's gift of love is expressed as "peace" in Ephesians; in the Johannine literature it is expressed as "eternal life" and through many varied images. There is an adaptation within the New Testament to the many brands of common sense to whom the message was being addressed. Those particular forms of common sense are the contexts of the varied expressions, which have their proper meaning only in those contexts.

One turns to the work of scholars to determine the specific common sense of a particular place at a given time. Scholarship

combines the brand of common sense of its own place and time with a commonsense style of understanding that grasps the meanings and intentions in the words and deeds that proceeded from the common sense of another people, another place, or another time. [MT, 274]

This notion both emphasizes and relativizes the contribution made by scholars in their interpretation of scriptural texts. Their role is highlighted by the fact that the meaning of a text can be understood only by entering into its context, which is what scholarship does. The key methodological principle is that what is of primary importance is not any particular expression, but rather the **meaning** which the expression has in its own context. No particular expression can be simply repeated in a new context; it must be 'transposed.' And this goes beyond the task of scholarly interpretation.

As the New Testament writings were adapted to the common sense of the communities to whom they were addressed, so too were subsequent early Christian writers faced with similar challenges. They continued the process of adaptation in new forms, "probing the assumptions and beliefs of the non-Palestinian world."¹⁵ The context remains that of common sense, but there is something of a reinterpretation "within the context of philosophic concern" [MT, 307]. In both the Greek culture of the East and the Roman culture of Northern Africa, preaching the Gospel demanded a certain movement beyond the symbolic language of the New Testament writers. This is especially evident in Alexandria, where the impact of neo-Platonism had been significant. It was there that Clement introduced the new term *theopoein* to refer to the "divinizing" character of grace; it was an attempt to express in a new context, what were understood to be the fundamental meanings of the Pauline and Johannine expressions. There is here a real development, a movement beyond symbolic apprehension. The development, however, remains one within a common sense concern for the concrete, being addressed to the mentality of a particular community. It is not a shift to speculative system; to presume that it is such a shift would be to mistake the context of questions and answers within which the Alexandrian expression arose.

15 Michael C. O'Callaghan, *Unity in Theology: Lonergan's Framework for Theology in Its New Context* (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1980), p. 80.

The fourth century, however, did see at least the beginnings of such a shift. Lonergan remarks that “the Greek councils mark the beginning of a movement to employ systematic meaning in church doctrine” [MT, 307]. The primary focus of his own investigations has been the Christological and Trinitarian decrees of Nicea and Chalcedon which were responses to controversies that had arisen. Those controversies allowed the realization to emerge that simple repetition of scriptural language was not sufficient, because all sides of various disputes cited a vast array of New Testament texts. What occurred at Nicea was the beginning of statements made **about** what is found in scripture; in Lonergan’s reading, this is the key import of the term *homousios*. This was a definitive move beyond scriptural expression, but precisely in order to affirm the truth of scriptural meaning. In order to understand what is common to scriptural and Nicean affirmations, one must “pay attention to the word as **true**” [WTN, 10]. Nicea involved an act of reflective judgment, affirming that *homousios* corresponds to what in fact is so, and corresponds as well to what is expressed in the common sense, symbolic apprehensions of scripture. The movement is beyond scriptural language precisely for the sake of scriptural truth. And this focus on the exercise of judgment marks a significant transition

from the word of God as accommodated to particular people, at particular times, under particular circumstances, to the word of God as it is to be proclaimed to all people, of all times, under whatever circumstances. [WTN, 136-137]

It seems possible to understand a similar concern to have been operative at the council of Carthage, which chronologically occurred between Nicea and Chalcedon. The concern was with Pelagians, who were using a wide array of scriptural texts in proposing a position which the council came to reject. The transition is not nearly as clear as at the Greek councils, for there was no explicit move beyond scriptural language at Carthage. Similar concern, however, is evident. The sixth canon of the council’s decree was a statement about the scriptural statement, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves” [1 Jn 1.8]; the council insists that this statement does not “mean” that we are to say we are sinners “out of humility,” but rather because **it is true** [DS 228]. Virtually identical concern with the **truth** of the common Christian prayer, “Forgive us our trespasses” [Mt 6.12], is evident in the eighth canon [DS 230]. The language of the council does not explicitly move beyond scriptural language; as at Nicea and Chalcedon, however, the concern is clearly with “the word as **true**.” There is clearly a

reflective judgment that sates what in fact is so. The decree of Carthage speaks **about** Christian prayer, but is not itself prayer; its context is one of questions for reflection, and answers of affirmation and negation. Frederick Crowe's characterization of Nicea pertains, as well, to Carthage:

This is not the language of prayer. . . Much less is it the joyful proclamation of the good news. . . It is more like the language of a legal decision handed down by supreme court judges who wish to settle the matter in the more precise manner possible. . . It is the language that results when the truth of the kerygma is set forth as dogma, to be accepted by all who profess the Catholic faith.¹⁶

The development is a shift to a new level of cognitional operation: from a focus on understanding the Christian message within particular contexts, to an affirmation of the truth of that message's meaning.

Similarly, in opposing both the Pelagian exaltation of human freedom and the denial of that freedom by the monks at Hadrumentum, Augustine "was concerned not with speculation but with dogma" [GF, 41]. The transition to systematic thought had not yet occurred. An essential preliminary transition, however, had occurred: beyond the realm of common sense to an incipient affirmation of the truth. It was this affirmation that grounded the emergence of theology as truly systematic thought. What occurred in that emergence was the differentiation of Christian theology from Christian religion, insofar as theology gradually came to be characterized by the systematic specialization of intelligence that became culturally available, and that met "the inner exigences of the situation" [PGT, 27]. It is also significant to note, however, that Augustine's position on grace and freedom emerged not only from reflection on the outer word of the tradition which had come to him, but also on the inner word of God's love which had transformed his life. His conversion, classically narrated in the *Confessions*, was a profound religious experience of being liberated from sin. This experience, as it came to expression in his reflection, shaped the personal horizon of his theology. It seems possible to suggest, I think, that the concrete shape of Augustine's experience of God's gift of love had a profound impact on the subsequent Western tradition, and may partially explain the significant difference between that tradition's focus on liberation-from-sin and the Eastern tradition's more

16 Frederick E. Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word: A Study in History* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 53.

'optimistic' focus on divinization. Whatever the validity of that suggestion, it remains that Augustine was concerned to go beyond subjective experience and the meaning of a tradition to an affirmation of truth.

Following the reflective judgments of the fourth and fifth century councils, thinking tended toward a speculative level that sought some insight into the meaning of the realities affirmed in those judgments. The thinking which led to and surrounded those councils was Christianity's reflections on its own proper meaning in an attempt to distinguish itself from other meanings and to guard against aberrations. By the early medieval period, affirmations of fundamental Christian truths had been made, and reflection was freed to become more speculative and systematic. The process of questioning became a more organized, ongoing procedure, and there emerged that shift toward system, which Georg Simmel named *die Wendung zur Idee*. This systematic impulse was clearly evident in Anselm, but reached its flower only in Aquinas. In Lonergan's view, the differences between Anselm and Aquinas

were the result of a century and a half of unremitting labors to assemble and classify the data, to work towards an understanding of them in commentaries, to digest them by establishing the existence of questions and by seeking answers for them, and to ensure the coherence of multitudinous solutions by using the Aristotelian corpus as a substructure. [MT, 309]

Abelard and Peter Lombard are frequently cited as key figures in both the assemblage of data and the organizing of questions. But Philip the Chancellor's discovery continues to be seen as the pivotal moment, making possible a whole series of developments. What has emerged in *Method in Theology*, however, is a keen awareness of the context of that discovery. That context was the "systematic substructure" [MT, 310] provided by Aristotle. This was not simply a particular concept or set of concepts. Rather, Aristotle

was supplying them with what is called a conceptuality, a *Begrifflichkeit* – in other words, a set of terms and relations where the terms fix the relations and the relations fix the terms. [CM, 120]

What emerged was a truly new specialization of intelligence, a new differentiation of consciousness. The 'system' toward which theological reflection had been tending found a certain realization in the thirteenth century. This involved not simply a new language, but a new way of using language; it involved not simply new thoughts, but new ways of thinking. The 'theorem of the supernatural' was only possible because the world of theory had become

differentiated from the world of common sense. That differentiation had made it possible to think about grace and freedom in distinction from each other, even though concretely they were known to be inseparable. Aquinas' synthesis was only possible because of the emergence of that horizon; it can only be understood within the context of that horizon. Interpretation of that synthesis, therefore, involves far more than scholarly entrance into the common sense of the medieval world; it involves nothing less than the theoretic differentiation of the interpreter's own consciousness.

The development of theological reflection on the doctrine of grace can be understood, then, largely as a function of the developing cultural context within which that reflection occurred. Insofar as that cultural development involved more than a shift within common sense, so too does understanding the meaning of theological development involve a more radical shift.

Reflection on the reality of grace underwent precisely such a development. Before attempting to understand something of the possible permanence of that development, however, it is necessary to recognize that besides the possibility of development there is also the possibility of decline; that possibility must be faced.

4. DEVELOPMENT AND DIALECTIC

The key shift in providing a critical foundation for Lonergan's notion of development occurred with *Insight*, where he begins, not from some abstract 'general law' of the mind's operation, but from attentiveness to concrete cognitional performance. The foundational question is, "What, in fact, am I doing when I am knowing?" From the further questions,¹⁷ insights, and affirmations which emerge from one's grappling with that question, there arise foundational positions on the subject, on objectivity, and on reality. Elaboration of these positions is beyond the scope of this essay.¹⁸ What must be stated at this point is simply that

17 The two key questions to which Lonergan consistently refers are the question of epistemology, "Why is doing that knowing?," and the question of metaphysics, "What do I know when I do that?"

18 I have presented my understanding of these basic positions in a previous paper, "Lonergan's *Insight* on Our Human Predicament."

these positions, insofar as they are grounded in a correct appropriation of cognitional human performance, provide bases for a critically grounded normative stance. In other words, there is a “law of genuineness” [I, 476] such that insofar as thinking is in accord with the immanent norms of human consciousness, genuine development results. But “such genuineness is ideal” [I, 477]; insofar as the ideal is not met in actual human performance, there results decline.

Concrete human reality involves both genuineness and its opposite; concrete human history, accordingly, involves both development and decline.

4.1 The Need for Evaluation

That Lonergan was concerned with the problem of decline from the outset is evident from his attitude in *Grace and Freedom* toward the Banezian and Molinist theologies of grace; he judged the conflict between these positions to be an “instance of the bipolarity of disintegrating synthesis” [GF, 144]. What emerges in his later work is an attempt to develop truly critical criteria for recognizing such disintegration, and truly critical methods for reversing it. The critical norms of *Insight* for genuine cognitional performance are sublated into a wider context of norms of existential authenticity in *Method in Theology*.¹⁹ In this fuller position on the human subject, central place is held by the notion of conversion, which refers to intellectual, moral, and religious authenticity.

Intellectual conversion is the radical clarification of one’s positions on knowing, objectivity, and reality that receive a critical foundation in the self-appropriation of one’s own consciousness; the heart of this foundation is a personal act to which one is specifically invited, e.g., in chapter eleven of *Insight*. The resulting horizon is a critical realism which goes beyond empiricism and idealism by affirming that “the process of experiencing, understanding, and judging is a process of self-transcendence” [MT, 239]. Moral conversion involves the realization that by one’s decisions and actions one is not only a practical subject making one’s world, but also an existential subject making one’s very self; it is a shift in the criterion of such world-and-self making decisions “from satisfactions to values” [MT, 240]. Religious conversion is the

19 The nature of the expanded context is considered by Frederick Crowe in “An Exploration of Lonergan’s New Notion of Value,” *Lonergan Workshop III* (1982), pp. 1-24.

dynamic state of consciousness that results from God's gift of love and becomes the underlying orientation of one's conscious acts.

Religious conversion is to a total being-in-love as the efficacious ground of all self-transcendence, whether in the pursuit of truth, or in the realization of human values, or in the orientation man adopts to the universe, its ground, and its goal. [MT, 241]

Before any such conversions are known and objectified, they are realities in concrete human consciousness. One's cognitional, moral, and religious living can be authentically converted without one's being able to state an explanatory position on that living – though the value of such explanation is surely not to be minimized. What remains always primary is the concrete human subject in her/his concrete conscious performance. Conversion – intellectual, moral, religious – is the critical norm of the authenticity of that performance. Any human expression – in thought or action – will flow from a more or less converted consciousness. To fully understand that expression necessarily involves coming to understand the presence or absence of conversion that grounds it. This is the complex task of the functional specialty Dialectic, explained in chapter ten of *Method in Theology*.

No delineation of the complexity of that task can be given here. The present concern is simply to note the transformation which this involves in one's understanding of the past. Not only does one need to ask, "How did the situation move from 'x' to 'z'?", but also one needs to ask the further question, "Was that movement an instance of development or decline, or some entangled mixture of the two?" That further question involves attempting to discern the presence or absence of the conversions in the human subjects whose thinking and action generated the movement.

There can, accordingly, be many kinds of development. There can be adaptation from the common sense of one place and time to another. There can be transposition from one differentiation of consciousness to another, for example, from common sense to theory. But further, within the common sense of any culture and within any differentiations of consciousness, there can be the presence or absence of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. Insofar as the going-forward of meaning is carried by the conversions, there is

development; insofar as that movement is carried by “breakdowns” of intellectual, moral, and religious consciousness, there is decline.

Lonergan’s later position not only enables greater explanation of the development of theology on the basis of the ongoing differentiations of consciousness, it also enables an evaluation both of Aquinas’ synthesis and of theological movement which followed Aquinas on the basis of the conversions. This involves a far more explicit stance of historical evaluation.

4.2 The Permanence of Aquinas’ Achievement

The consideration of permanence in *Method in Theology* refers explicitly to church doctrines, or “dogmas.” By extension, however, it seems possible to hold that insofar as a theological doctrine is an authentic development grounded in the conversions, its meaning, too, will have a certain permanence. “What is true, is permanent: the meaning it possessed in its own context can never be denied truthfully” [MT, 323]. What is characterized by such permanence is neither a given expression nor its context, but the **meaning** which the expression had in its context, precisely as this meaning embodies the fruit of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.

It is in this sense that Lonergan judges the ultimate value of Aquinas’ synthesis. It is not simply a transposition into theory; it is an **authentic** transposition, and can be affirmed as such when one truly encounters the horizon that it embodies. Concerning this horizon, David Tracy writes:

Assuming the scriptural, Conciliar and patristic periods as their own context and opening themselves up to the new horizons of a deepened religious conversion made possible by the gospel Christianity of the Mendicant movements and the new horizon of a genuine intellectual conversion made available to them above all in the newly discovered works of Aristotle, the medievals proceeded to move wholeheartedly into the world of theory.²⁰

The key to what Aquinas achieved is in the intellectual and religious authenticity which made his achievement possible.

²⁰ Tracy, *op cit.* (cf. note 4 above), p. 35.

The cultural availability of Aristotelian thought was clearly the central factor in the successful shift to theory characteristic of medieval theology. The intellectual authenticity of Aquinas, however, is evident in the face that he did not merely 'translate' the Christian faith into Aristotelian terms. Rather, he actually entered into the 'world' of Aristotle while remaining in his own Christian 'world,' and achieved a transposition of both. It is most clearly in his movement beyond Aristotelianism that the intellectual conversion grounding the transposition is evident.

Throughout his writings,²¹ Lonergan has drawn attention to the limitation of Aristotelian thought, as well as to its brilliance. One such limitation is that Aristotle wanted the basic terms and relations of any science to be further determinations of metaphysical terms and relations, but

he was not sufficiently on his guard against a tendency to transform a common-sense meaning into a systematic meaning by adding the qualifier "as such," *qua tale, kath' hautō*. [PGT, 29]

This tendency was not absent from the initial attempts made by Christian theologians to use the Aristotelian Organon. As Lonergan remarks,

The problem with twelfth-century theology was that they had as many divisions of grace as Augustine had adjectives to talk about it. [CM, 111]²²

The radicality of the shift was not clearly recognized, and there resulted attempts to treat Augustine as a systematic thinker, which he was not. The categories employed by Augustine were, in fact, common sense responses to particular controversies. Real transposition of his thought involved movement beyond concern with his expression to concern with the meaning of that expression. Lonergan notes, e.g., concerning an Augustinian text on prevenient grace, that "whereas the author of the Glossa (ordinaria) was content to repeat the Augustinian formulae, St. Thomas... makes a... speculative effort to interpret the text in terms of change of will" [GF, 120]. This involved a real focus on the meaning of Augustine, and on the need to

21 The limitations of Aristotelian thought are discussed, e.g., in *I*, pp. 402-404, 406, 482-483; *MT*, pp 310-311; *PGT*, pp. 6-7, 29, 32; *AqT*, pp. 44-47.

22 Lonergan expresses the same point in *GF*, p. 125: "The early medieval theologians tended to multiply terms with respect to grace not so much to denote differences of meaning as to keep pace with the facility of St. Augustine's rhetoric."

transpose that meaning into a genuinely theoretical context. This was the focus of an intelligently converted consciousness wanting to get beyond expression to meaning, and beyond meaning to truth.

Also, Aquinas explicitly moved beyond the Aristotelian theory of will.²³ In Aristotle, the will appears to be radically passive, being “automatically determined by the first course of action that occurs to intellect” [GF, 95]. In Aquinas, on the contrary, it is the will that is the immediate principle of action; “it is indeed the radical and sole instance of a self-moving mover in the created order.”²⁴ The will actively chooses an object presented by intellect; it subsequently chooses means toward that end. These notions of the autonomy of will and of the distinction of two acts of will – choosing ends and choosing means – are at the heart of Aquinas’ theoretic transposition of operative grace. Of key importance here is simply to notice that these notions were derived from neither the authority of revelation nor of Aristotle. Rather, they were derived from Aquinas’ attentiveness to the data of human psychology. His “cognitional theory is cast in explicitly metaphysical terms” [I, 407]. Concerning the first principles of his metaphysics, however,

it was not enough for the principles to result necessarily from any terms whatever; the terms themselves needed some validation, and this office was attributed to the judicial habit or virtue named wisdom. [I, 407]

And implicitly, Lonergan argues, there is in Aquinas’ writings “a sufficient number of indications and suggestions to form an adequate account of wisdom in cognitional terms” [I, 407]. There is, in other words, an implicit critical grounding to the Thomist theory of will. It is derived from attentiveness to human cognitional performance, and can be verified by appeal to that performance. And while this remains only implicit, it is regarded by Lonergan as an achievement of remarkable intellectual authenticity.

Finally, Aristotle “conceived science as a deduction of conclusions from necessary first principles” [PGT, 29]. Now, however Aquinas may have defined science, necessary first

23 My understanding of Grace and Freedom has been aided considerably by Patrick Byrne’s essay, “The Fabric of Lonergan’s Thought,” *Lonergan Workshop VI* (1986), pp. 1-84.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 31

principles which enable one's conclusions to be certain and eternally true are not at the heart of Aquinas' actual performance. One of Lonergan's great discoveries in *Grace and Freedom* was the **movement** of Aquinas' thought.²⁵ In the *Commentary on the Sentences*, for example, the divine promotion which constitutes actual grace is conceived as consisting of interventions in the external situation of a person. In the *De Veritate*, the divine promotion is conceived as being internal to mind, but actual grace is regarded almost strictly as cooperative. In the *Summa Theologica*, the divine promotion is actual grace operating in the will. Grace as causing conversion came to be progressively understood as operating more and more internally on the will. Aquinas clearly did not understand his achievement as having arrived at absolutely certain conclusions derived from eternally necessary first principles. Rather, the concrete performance of his restless desire to understand gives evidence of the intellectual authenticity which Lonergan characterizes as follows:

Sustained advance is a succession of fresh insights, of increasingly accurate hypotheses, of the emergence of quite new theories, of an ever greater command of data in precision, in variety, in extent, and of a constant openness to still further ideas. [AqT, 48]

In at least these three ways, Aquinas represents a real theoretic advance of Aristotelianism; in each case, the advance results from what can only be understood as an authentic intellectual conversion.

Besides this genuine intellectualism, a profound religious sensibility is evident in Aquinas. In Chesterton's biography, it is the chapter on holiness and sanctity that is entitled "The Real Life of St. Thomas."²⁶ From his composition of the liturgy of *Corpus Christi* to his near-death fascination with the Song of Solomon, there is evident an authentically mystical dimension to Aquinas' life. The concern here can only be to note the embodiment of real religious conversion in his thought on grace.

This can be seen in at least two ways. First, there is the progressive focus on the real activity of God. In Lonergan's first explicit writing on conversion [GF 6.3, pp. 121-125], he notes

²⁵ The broad lines of the development of Aquinas' thought are presented in chapter two of *Grace and Freedom*. The key texts are *In II Sent.*, d. 26-27, *De. Verit.*, qu. 27, and *ST I-II*, q. 111, a. 2.

²⁶ G.K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: "The Dumb Ox"* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1956).

that what Aquinas means by operative grace is illustrated in the *Summa Theologiae* by conversion [ST I-II, q. 9, a. 4-6]. Such conversion becomes “the cause of other acts” [GF, 125], but in itself it is an absolutely gratuitous gift; it is that *conversio cordis* experienced in a will that is *mota et non movens* [GF, 137]. As such, religious conversion is antecedent to any operation on a person’s part, lying outside any creature’s power. But while it is not itself a free act, it becomes the foundational principle of free acts. And while the expression is clearly metaphysical, “the later category of religious experience is there in reality without being thematized as such.”²⁷

Secondly, by interpreting Aquinas to represent a “final dialectical position,” Lonergan insists that there remains a profound awareness of the reality of mystery. There is here no rationalist reductionism. The theoretical differentiation of Aquinas’ own consciousness and the availability of the Aristotelian conceptuality have enabled profound insight into both grace and freedom, but “the essence of the mystery” [GO/I, 25] remains: the fact of our need for a gracious healing and elevation of human existence that cannot be encompassed by human understanding.

Insofar as Aquinas’ synthesis embodies profound religious and intellectual authenticity, its expression remains a genuine classic, which “is never fully understood,” but from which we “must always want to learn more” [MT, 161].

4.3 Sources of Decline

If Lonergan’s evaluation of Thomas is fundamentally positive while recognizing certain limitations, he considers the immediately subsequent tradition in a quite different light as representing a “breakup of synthesis into irreconcilable alternatives” [GF, 144]. As Dialectic is concerned to detect authentic development, so too is it concerned to identify the decline manifest in that breakup. The importance of this task lies in the fact that our contemporary situation has been profoundly shaped by a tradition comprised of these “irreconcilable alternatives.” Only by getting to their root can the work of reconciliation and integration begin.

²⁷ Gerald H. McConnell, *The Development of the Notion of Grace in the Theology of Bernard Lonergan* (Unpublished Dissertation at the University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto, 1983), p 42.

The initial goal, then, of Dialectic is twofold: (1) to distinguish differences that are true dialectical oppositions from those that are not; and (2) to get to the root of the dialectical oppositions. Non-dialectical differences will tend to arise from different cultural matrices and different differentiations of consciousness; dialectical oppositions will have their radical ground in “the presence of absence of intellectual, of moral, of religious conversion” [MT, 247].

I am not familiar with any work of Lonergan giving an extensive analysis of theology following the thirteenth century, comparable with his careful analysis of the centuries leading up to it. His frequent comments on that period, however, would seem to indicate that whatever decline occurred can be understood in terms of at least four related factors: (1) a “troubled consciousness” [MT, 84] which emerged in the contrast between common sense and theory; (2) a theological conceptualism in which theory lost its intellectualist roots; (3) a rationalism in which theology lost its foundation in authentic religion; and (4) a classicist mentality which ignored and/or resisted “the ongoing discovery of mind.”

First, as an example of the source of “troubled consciousness,” Lonergan gives the provocative image of Eddington’s two tables:

the bulky, solid, colored desk at which he worked, and the manifold of colorless “wavicles” so minute that the desk was mostly empty space. [MT, 84]

The contrast is between two ways of knowing reality: common sense and theory. Conflict arises insofar as one of the ‘ways’ refuses to acknowledge the other as authentic knowing. In its perhaps most destructive form, this gives rise to the general bias in which common sense extends “its legitimate concern for the concrete and the immediately practical into disregard of larger issues and indifference to long-term results” [I, 226]. Any transposition to theory is highly suspect, and the authentic clarifications made possible by such transposition are lost. Natural freedom and supernatural grace as understood within the theoretic differentiation can come to be considered as ‘unreal’ as a desk consisting of mostly empty space.

Concerning the end of the thirteenth century, Lonergan comments that “the onslaught of the Augustinians was a disaster” [CM, 22]. The works of Aquinas were actually burned in Paris and Canterbury, because of his dependence on Aristotle whose philosophy was

“disregarded as merely pagan” [PGT, 30]. Subsequently, the theoretic synthesis of the natural and the supernatural orders began to break down. And at the level of popular piety in the *devotio moderna*, the words of a Kempis took on the character of an anti-theoretic slogan: “I had rather feel compunction of heart for my sins than to know how to define it.”²⁸

Consciousness is profoundly troubled concerning the question as to how religious reality is to be known. Failure to grasp the fact and significance of differentiations of consciousness led to mutual incomprehension and contributed to real decline.

Secondly, following the Augustinian-Aristotelian conflict of the late thirteenth century, “Scotist vocabulary became the vocabulary of subsequent Scholasticism” [PGT, 31]. Whereas Aristotle’s other works were disregarded by the Scotists, his logical works were accepted; theology, accordingly, became more and more a matter of logical deductivism. This resulted in great clarity of expression, but frequently did not result in equal clarity of insight. The emphasis shifted from theology as a quest for understanding to its being a quest for proof. Thomas’ procedure had been an ongoing procedure of asking questions that would lead to a series of partial insights; the Scotists’ procedure was to attempt logical proof of a set of medieval doctrines. In sum, “Scotus was a logician; Thomas was the intelligent man” [CM, 6].

Subsequent theology became more and more conceptualist, neglecting the centrality of the act of insight. Knowing is presumed to be a matter of confrontation between knower and known, rather than a matter of identity between them as in Aquinas. A theological extrinsicism results. When reality is presumed to be already-out-there, and to be known by opening spiritual, intuitive ‘eyes,’ there is no need for ongoing attempts to develop procedures that would promote the effort to understand. The goal becomes not understanding, but certainty, and this gives evidence of the absence of authentic intellectual conversion. Of such theologians Lonergan remarks: “They seem to have thought of truth as so objective as to get along without minds.”²⁹

28 *The Imitation of Christ* I.1. Lonergan refers to the anti-theoretic nature of this text, as follows: “Those with no taste for systematic meaning will keep repeating that it is better to feel compunction than to define it, even if those who attempt that definition insist that one can hardly define what one does not experience” [MT, 329].

Thirdly, related to the conceptualist framework of much post-medieval theology was the emergence of “a rationalism that considered mysteries non-existent, that proposed to demonstrate the dogmas” [MT, 320]. To the extent that theology seeks demonstrated certitude of the doctrines of faith within a conceptual system, there results a tendency to reduce, if not eliminate, the tension which ought to characterize the dialectical position of theology in any culture, and within any differentiation of consciousness. Lonergan’s indictment of both Banezians and Molinists is precisely that their oversights led both to virtually eliminate the dialectic, though in different directions: the Molinist minimizing divine transcendence, the Banezian minimizing human freedom. It was precisely such a reduction of mystery in an earlier period that led Lonergan to refer to “the aridity of fourteenth-century nominalism and the sterility of its scepticism” [I, 527].

The radical impact of such rationalism can be understood by adverting to the reformers’ reaction against it, which formed the background for the emergence of both the Lutheran and the Tridentine doctrines on justification. One of the points of Luther’s reaction was against the nominalist theology which he had encountered in the influential works of Gabriel Biel.³⁰ A central point was Biel’s interpretation of the traditional axiom that “God does not deny grace to one who does what is in him” (...*faciendi quod in se est*), to the effect that, without the aid of grace, the human person can freely initiate the movement of faith; in this unaided movement, the person congruously merits the subsequent grace of justification. Natural knowledge of God is posited as sufficient for the unbeliever to begin the process of conversion, without the gift of prevenient grace.

In this stream of nominalist thought, the dialectical position has clearly broken down. Failure to clearly recognize the entitative disproportion between the natural and supernatural orders has led to a veritable reduction of the supernatural to the level of nature. Aquinas’ insistence on the need for supernatural elevation prior to any talk about merit is lost. It may well have been sacrificed to the explanatory power of a conceptual “system.”

29 Bernard Lonergan, “The Subject,” in *A Second Collection* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), edited by William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell, pp. 71-72.

30 For this interpretation of Luther, I am relying on the work of Harry McSorley, *op cit.* (cf. note 5 above).

It is significant that in his earliest works (1509-1513), Martin Luther espoused a variant of precisely this position. McSorley argues that he was clearly influenced by the nominalism of Biel and Ockham. By 1515, however, he had begun a spirited rejection of precisely that position; in a series of *Lectures on Romans*, he insists vehemently that, without grace, there can be no human preparation for grace. Over the next five years, the beginnings of the Reformation took shape, focused largely on this very issue.

It has been quite convincingly argued by many³¹ that this initial Reformation insistence did not contradict the real meaning of the Thomist synthesis. It has been further argued, however, that Luther did not truly understand Thomas, which is not surprising, for, as Lonergan remarks, "I don't believe the Thomist tradition knew much about Thomas" [CM, 103]. The Lutheran rejection of nominalist rationalism led to a concurrent rejection of Aquinas, whose synthesis had in fact theoretically affirmed the heart of the position which Luther wanted to defend.

The world of theory clearly was not Luther's world; but equally clearly, the world of religion was. Involved was a profound religious conversion which revealed the inadequacy of any and all rationalism. Perceiving the breakdown of the dialectical position on grace and freedom, "the Reformation demanded a return to the Gospel" [MT, 280]. Without the availability of scholarly tools, any such attempted "return" was inevitably inadequate; without a genuinely theoretic differentiation of consciousness, the possibility of authentically transposing that "Gospel" into a theoretic context could not be grasped. Lacking such theoretic clarification, an unfortunate necessitarianism resulted in Luther's theology. Nevertheless, he had confronted the entire Western church with the need to reassert the absolute primacy of God's utterly gratuitous grace.

It was at the Council of Trent that a Catholic doctrine on justification emerged from that confrontation. That doctrine must be briefly considered here, before a concluding section faces the issue of a possible further differentiation of consciousness and the need for a consequent

31 This assertion is made in several of the background essays prepared by members of the Lutheran / Roman Catholic dialogue team in the United States, published in *Justification By Faith: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985).

further transposition, as a means of overcoming differences that have heretofore seemed so irreconcilable.

4.4 Trent and Dialectic

An initial reading of the Tridentine debate on justification³² has led me to one central discovery: while the final decree of Trent is expressed in explicitly Christological terms,³³ no Christological focus whatsoever is evident in the preliminary questions which guided the opening of the council's debate [CT/v, 261.27-35]. The question emerges as to what transpired in the debate to account for this shift. In coming to terms with that question, my judgment is that the insistence of Girolamo Seripando, General of the Augustinian order, on key Lutheran themes had a profound impact on the conciliar deliberations.³⁴

An obviously central concern in the first draft of the decree was to reject any doctrine of a solely "imputed" justice [CT/v, 386.12-17] and any exclusive emphasis on forgiveness in justification [CT/v, 386.25-33]. The positive correlative of these rejections was the affirmation of a truly "inherent justice," so that one is not simply said to be just but in fact is just. Seripando reacted strongly against this draft, and was asked by the papal legate, Cardinal Cervini, to propose a revision. It is my sense that the tone of the revision can be noted in a simple fact: while the first draft had quoted Augustine only two times, Seripando's revision quotes him a dozen times and at considerably greater length.

The center of concern also shifts: from dominating attention to the human acts which prepare for justification, to concern for the life which flows from it. The first draft had delineated at some length the role of human freedom in preparing for justification [CT/v, 387.4-

32 The debate on justification is found in volume five of the twelve volume *Concilium Tridentinum* (Societas Gorresiana, Freiburg im Briesgau: B. herder, 1911). References to debate are given in brackets in the text, abbreviated as follows: [CT/v]. The subsequent numbers give reference to page and lines.

33 The Christological focus of the decree is evident in the insistence on the passion of Christ as "meritorious cause" of justification, and in the key insistence that justification primarily consists in being made a member of Christ's body.

34 I have attempted to present textual warrants for this conclusion in a paper entitled "Retrieval of the Christological Focus of Trent's Decree on Justification."

39]; Seripando simply stated tersely that there is an active preparation for justification proceeding from the concurrence of grace and human will [CT/v, 829.7-12].

Seripando then proceeded to offer a hypothesis of “twofold justice” which became the pivot around which the debate turned. His concern was to insist on our need for the explicit justice of Christ beyond the justice of infused charity. It was a concern that embodied the heart of the Lutheran critique; it was also a concern expressed in language that gave rise to objections against a possible interpretation of justification as being something purely extrinsic to the human person. The fabric of the ongoing debate is far too intricate to indicate here; the single point to be made is that it involved an ongoing dialogue between (a) the Augustinian insistence on our need for Christ’s justice beyond our own, and (b) the Scotist insistence that justice truly inheres in us and is not simply imputed to us.

The language of a “twofold justice” was explicitly rejected; great care was taken, however, to embody the Augustinian concern. The intervention of Stephen de Sestino was extremely influential:

There is in those who have been justified, however good they are, however much they exist in grace, a continuous struggle against wickedness; and would that the victory were frequent rather than rare! . . . I beg you, fathers, you know our infirmity; therefore, we should not set up this man cured in every way, justified in every respect; but rather one who is infirm as well and carnal, until this mortal shall put on incorruption, and this corruptible immortality. Let us not speak of transcendent things; let us not square the circle with logic. Let us speak instead of that which each of us experiences within himself. [CT/v, 609.14-20]

This was an appeal from profound religious experience of the inadequacy of the best of human efforts, and was thus sensitive to the authentic concerns of the reformers. The language of the final decree embodied this concern by affirming that it is the very justice of Christ that is really inherent in the members of his body [DS 1530-1531]. The linguistic expression concerning the relationship of Christ’s justice and ours shifted from the vocabulary of “application” to that of “participation.”

In terms of the previous concerns of this essay, two things are notable here. First, the Augustinian reaction was primarily a religious reaction against a rationalist affirmation of human freedom; on the basis of this religious impulse, Trent explicitly rejected the nominalist semi-

pelagianism which had characterized the writings of Ockham and Biel. As the emergence of the notion of *gratia elevans* had once obscured the reality of *gratia sanans*, so at Trent did the forgiving and healing character of grace need to be once again affirmed. This affirmation was made, however, in the context of affirming the real sanctifying inherence of grace – in other words, in the context of a real supernatural elevation. The theoretic precision of Aquinas' synthesis is not present, but his integration of the supernatural and the natural, of grace and freedom, is clearly affirmed in an ecclesial act of reflective judgment.

Secondly, the confusion evident in the sixteenth century can be clearly seen to have resulted, at least in part, from the breakdown of the integration-through-distinction of the natural and supernatural orders. The Augustinians were reacting against any apparent reduction of mystery to natural explanation. Regarding another context, Lonergan remarked:

The spiritual motif of Athanasius at Nicea was: we are not saved by a creature. If you know what religious experience means, you understand that very profoundly. [CM, 234]

Seripando's focus was very similar; on the basis of real religious experience, he insisted on the need to affirm the utterly gratuitous character of God's love. But,

It's one thing to have the experience. It's another thing to describe it and express it and talk about it and evaluate it. [PGT, 39]

Seripando's position involved a certain forgetfulness of the realm of nature, and of the clarifications that 'natural' investigations could make concerning the relationship of grace and freedom.

In affirming both poles of the dialogue, Trent can be understood to have affirmed the truth of the meaning of the medieval synthesis, even while not operating in its fully systematic context.

5. CONCLUSION

Trent's decree was an act of judgment affirming the reality of human freedom and the reality of our need for God's gift of healing and elevating grace. By maintaining the dialectical

tension between these realities, it resisted rationalist and fideist tendencies, and acknowledged the inescapable dimension of mystery. In this sense, it seems to me, it restored much of the balance which had been achieved in the medieval synthesis.

In contrast to the speculative development which followed upon Nicea, Chalcedon, and Carthage, however, the centuries following Trent painfully manifest the ongoing dynamics of decline. The difference between the fifth and sixteenth centuries involved a marked difference of context. Whereas the earlier period had witnessed the general resolution of disruptive doctrinal disputation, the sixteenth century saw it re-emerge with a vengeance. The oppositions between Reformed and Roman positions hardened, and the Reformers themselves began to fragment. The atmosphere became radically polemical, and confessional stances were highly defensive.

The possibility that the Lutheran and Tridentine positions on justifying grace were complementary rather than dialectically opposed – which both contemporary Lutheran and Catholic theologians grant – could not be recognized in a situation where the prime concern was to demonstrate the errors of ‘the other side.’

A fundamental loss in Catholic thought and life was the incipient shift to subjectivity characteristic of Luther’s position. As I have tried to indicate, it seems clear to me that this subjective concern was a factor in the Tridentine debates; in the post-conciliar polemics, however, it became highly suspect.

5.1 The Need for a Contemporary Transposition

There emerges from this a fourth source of decline, in the isolation of Catholic theology from a series of profound movements going forward in Western culture. Present concern is with the shift “from substance to the subject” [MT, 96]. Following the Copernican revolution of Kant’s shift to interiority, Lonergan notes that

there followed a still more emphatic shift from knowledge to faith, will, conscience, decision, action in Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Newman, Nietzsche, Blondel, the personalists, and the existentialists. [MT, 316]

The shift is to the recognition of the primacy of existential consciousness, to “the level of deliberation, evaluation, decision, action” [MT, 316]. It is a shift that promises at least partial resolution of the problem of troubled consciousness, for it focuses on the foundational performance underlying both common sense and theory. It also promises to make possible critically grounded criteria for recognizing the absence of conversion and critically grounded methods for reversing the decline resultant from that absence. Accordingly, this shift to interiority has real possibilities for coming to grips with the sources of decline.

The shift, however, is itself a further differentiation of consciousness. And insofar as it has been resisted by a highly objectivist theology, that very resistance has occasioned further decline. Along with the philosophical turn to the subject, our cultural situation is also affected profoundly by a shift in the scientific ideal from what is eternally and necessarily true to what is verifiable as probable; the refinement of methods of historical studies have led to the realization of the complexity of historical knowledge, and have also undermined the notion of cultural ideals considered as valid for all times and places.

These profound revolutions in philosophy, science, and scholarship form the cultural context within which theology must mediate religious meaning. To do so effectively requires far more than logical transitions and linguistic shifts; what is involved is entrance into an entirely new world, the world of interiority. The transposition involved in this will be something like the medieval transposition to theory. An entirely new conceptuality is needed, but now this will be a set of terms-fixing-relations and relations-fixing-terms that can be verified as a set in the events of our own consciousness. The *Begrifflichkeit* is to be a matter of categories derived from human interiority.

The task of that derivation will be laborious. As Lonergan remarked: “Centuries are required to change mentalities, centuries” [CM, 173]. But it is also essential. If theology is to make a contribution to reversing the dynamics of decline in our culture, the sources of decline in theology itself must be uncovered and reversed. But in fact there is no theology without theologians, and the radical sources of theological decline are in the theologians themselves – ourselves. It is in the promotion of authentic subjectivity – conversion – in the minds and lives

of theologians that the dynamics of development are restored. And it is grasping the manner in which such conversion occurs that we are enabled to understand the existential dynamics of healing and elevating grace.

To return to the initial concern of this essay, it is precisely the derivation from interiority of categories for understanding the life of grace that will enable the church to communicate the Christian message in such a way as to truly promote that life – to promote the converted subjectivity which is the only radical ground of reversing cultural decline.

It is perhaps an understatement to say that the church has not raced toward the fulfillment of this task. Indeed, in Lonergan's cryptic remark, the church seems to be "in the unenviable position of always arriving on the scene a little breathlessly and a little late" [I, 733]. But it remains true that the effectiveness of Christian ministry will in part involve bold theological endeavors to achieve for our time something similar to what Aquinas did for his: the transposition of Christian truth to a new key. The invitation now is for "theology to migrate from a basis in theory to a basis in interiority" [MT, 276].

5.2 Possible Resources

The profound power of Lonergan's suggestion is evident in the fact that the resources for this transposition are not distant and hidden. They are, rather, immediately present to ourselves; indeed, they *are* our-selves. The central resource of the transposition envisaged by Lonergan is the appropriation of one's own intellectual, moral, and religious consciousness. Such self-appropriation grounds an interiorly differentiated consciousness, which is able

to determine its basic terms and relations by adverting to our conscious operations and to the dynamic structure that relates them to one another. [MT, 274]

Insight presents a structured invitation to the performance of readers' self-appropriation of intellectual consciousness. And as the consequent intellectual conversion provides the foundation from which philosophical categories for epistemology and metaphysics can be derived, so too can categories for a theology of grace be derived from the foundation of religious conversion. The ministry of the church will be served by ongoing attempts to develop invitations to that conversion similar in scope to the intellectual invitation of *Insight*. Indeed,

the profound power of the Ignatian exercises can be understood in terms of the manner in which they fulfill precisely this role. But the need for transposition of such an invitation can be glimpsed in Lonergan's reference to what happened to the exercises in an inauthentic framework: "It was the reduction of St. Ignatius to decadent conceptualist scholasticism" [CM, 145]. There is need for the emergence of new tools, inspired by the spiritual classics, to invite conversion in our time as they did in theirs. And the foundational theological task becomes one of being attentive to the reality of religious conversion, and deriving categories from converted subjectivity for the expression of religious truth.

It may well be possible that many of the oppositions that have seemed so irreconcilable in the Christian church may be understood as bridge-able, once transposed to such categories. Specifically, I suspect that such a transposition of the classical expressions of Luther and Trent on the nature of justification would be found to constitute complementary, indeed mutually enriching perspectives, not dialectically opposed horizons.

But much work remains before a theological horizon grounded in religiously and interiorly differentiated consciousness makes such a transposition fully possible. My reading of Lonergan points to at least three related resources which contribute to beginning that work.

First, dialogue with the human sciences, especially psychology, can contribute enormously to an understanding of the real operators of religious development. Lonergan's dialogue with depth psychology in chapter six of *Insight*, his interest in the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow and the developmental psychology of Piaget in *Method in Theology*, and references in his later work to such diverse figures as Erikson, Kohlberg, Laing, and Proffitt indicate the value which he considered their work to have for the needed transposition.

Secondly, in *Method in Theology* and later works, Lonergan frequently refers to the testimony of mystics as a provocative theological source. It is in the mystic that one finds a clear instance of a consciousness transformed by the gift of God's love. Reference is frequently made to the work of William Johnston in this regard. But since God's gift of love is universal, the

testimony of all religious traditions is significant. Thus, there are also frequent references to the work of historians of religion such as Mircea Eliade, Friedrich Heiler, and Wilfred Cantwell Smith.

A theologian attempting to derive categories for a theology of grace would be well served by careful attention to these sources.³⁵

Thirdly, I find Lonergan's frequent references to the works of Rosemary Haughton fascinating. Her concrete analysis of interpersonal relations [MT, 51] and her analysis of the consciousness of Jesus³⁶ are cited in his published works. In *Caring About Meaning* there are no fewer than thirteen references to her. He characterizes her work in this way:

It is very comprehensive, and it is in terms of her religious experience, and it will be meaningful to people who have similar religious experience. [CM, 154]

And in answer to a question as to what attracted him to her works, he responded in a way that is very revealing about his own concerns: "I was always a sucker for mystics, you know" [CM, 246]. My suspicion is that it is the combination of profound religious experience and clarity of expression in a literary language that communicates powerfully that constitutes her key contribution.

It is to resources such as these that we must turn if theologians are to make their contribution to enabling the Christian church to sing "Amazing Grace" in a new key.

35 A recent work, influenced heavily by Lonergan, that attempts to integrate a psychological perspective with mystical insights from the works of Thomas Merton, is Walter Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

36 Bernard Lonergan, "Pope John's Intention," *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), edited by Frederick E. Crowe, p. 232.