

Critical Theology

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Fall 2022 issue edited by Christine Jamieson

Introduction

By Christine Jamieson

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The fall 2022 issue of *Critical Theology* presents three papers that share common threads of dialogue and dialectic. How might Christians enter into dialogue with other Christian and non-Christian interlocutors, and how might Catholics, in the context of Pope Francis' launching of Synod 2021–23, grapple with contradictory differences? The first paper, by Richard Renshaw, explores the “parallel paths” of Canadian theologians Gregory Baum and Bernard Lonergan. While very different in approach, both sought to understand the meaning of Church at the level of our times. While Baum's focus was on contemporary ecclesial and societal issues, Lonergan's focus was on method in theology. Both contributed significantly to the Church's growth and development in the 21st century.

Shifting levels, next is Hugh Williams' very technical paper, written against the backdrop of the Synod called by Pope Francis in 2021, the future of the Catholic Church and Christian thought, and Bernard Lonergan's understanding of dialectic. The paper reminds us of the complexity of thought involved in working through Church doctrines and moral teachings. The current Synod is asking Catholics, Christians from other traditions, and all people of goodwill to contribute to taking stock and thinking about what changes are needed in the Catholic Church as it moves forward toward being a more synodal Church. “Synodality denotes the particular style that qualifies the life and mission of the Church, expressing her nature as the People of God journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel.”¹ Thinking about

the “mission of the Church” against the backdrop of Canada's Indian Residential Schools and the Pope's summer 2022 visit to Canada, we are confronted with the difficulty of understanding “mission” in moving forward. The difficulty is not only moral or religious, it is a difficulty in thinking about who and what we are as intellectual beings living a life of faith. Hugh Williams urges theologians (and philosophers) to take seriously the demands that dialectic poses in thinking through seemingly “abstract” but foundational questions of being and knowing even in the midst of “the Church's

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ordinary way of living and working.” Williams’ article is well worth reading to begin to grasp the level of complexity involved in understanding conflicting views about the future direction of the Catholic Church. It is not a simple task.

Drawing from his experience of many years giving homilies and leading retreats, Leonard Desroches’ reflective paper also comments on dialectic: that between the call of the gospel to love one’s enemies and the more common response of hating and destroying one’s enemies. He provides some remarkable examples of people in the midst of terrible violence, following what Desroches identifies as the “mature” love that Jesus calls for in Matthew 5:48. Both Renshaw and Williams speak of Lonergan’s notion of conversion, and it seems that is precisely what is

needed if one is to live the mature love that Christians are called to. For Lonergan, conversion is three-fold: *intellectual* (recognizing that knowing is not just “taking a look” but requires the three steps of experiencing, asking questions about our experience, and weighing the evidence that our understanding is correct); *moral* (where what is good is more than merely what satisfies us; rather, it is what is truly valuable in the long run); and *religious* (where our point of reference for living in the world is an unrestricted love of God). The mature love of religious conversion is what will make loving one’s enemies possible.

1 Taken from <https://www.synod.va/en/what-is-the-synod-21-23/about.html>.

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Amazing Church

Gregory Baum and Bernard Lonergan

By Richard Renshaw

The two theologians mentioned in the title have been important influences in my life. I got to know them when I was a seminarian studying in Rome during the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). Bernard Lonergan taught me theology at the Gregorian University and remained a key reference for me ever since; I met Gregory Baum at a gathering (over several days in Rome) near the end of the Council. In a sense, he took me under his wing during his later years, when I moved to Montreal. Though contemporaries, Lonergan was 19 years older than Baum. They are central figures in my faith and theological journey.

This essay is an initial exploration of the parallel paths of two internationally recognized Canadian theologians who, as far as I know, never made any reference to one another in their writings. I write in the context of a Synod on synodality, which brings to the fore our understanding of Church in our times. Both of these men spent decades addressing this issue. I will restrict my focus to two documents: *Amazing Church*¹ by Gregory Baum, with references to some methodological reflections in *Method in Theology*² by Bernard Lonergan. In *Amazing Church*, I will focus particularly on the introduction, the conclusion, and the chapter on “The Conversion to Human Rights” as an example of how Baum uses effectively a method similar to that suggested by Lonergan.

Both theologians were strongly influenced by German writers on history and hermeneutics; both studied Thomas Aquinas; and both were caught up in the transition from a theology dominated by Neo-Scholasticism to a significantly transformed framework for theology after Vatican II. Baum was German and did his doctoral work in theology in Germany; Lonergan, while North American, taught for 12 years in Rome and was exposed to European philosophical and theological writers, especially Germans. My interest is not to follow those influences but rather to explore the result and particularly some parallels in the way they understood the work of a theologian.

While Lonergan is a theologian’s theologian, in the sense that his body of work is specifically focused on the method to be used in theology, Baum is much more directly focused on specific contemporary ecclesial and societal issues. While addressing

those issues, especially economic issues, was also Lonergan’s ultimate concern, he saw the restructuring of theological method as a necessary step in creating the conditions for addressing the ecclesial and social issues that underlay his theological project. Lonergan’s writing is scholarly and notoriously difficult to digest; Baum, on the other hand, uses language that is much more accessible to the non-specialist and introduces himself and his own learnings much more directly into his writing.

Amazing Church

Amazing Church was published by Gregory Baum in 2005; it is a useful resource for anyone participating in the Synod on synodality. That synod is unique in that it invites Catholics, Christians, and all people of goodwill to a dialogue about the relevant issues needing attention if we are to have a more authentic Church for our times. The underlying thesis of *Amazing Church* is that, on a number of issues significant for our times, the Church has, since the 19th century, “changed its mind” on important doctrinal matters in a fairly radical way. Baum attributes these changes to new questions about Church doctrine—questions that earlier history had not addressed because European society had not developed a culture in which those questions could be addressed. The cultural changes include transformations in societal structures and values that ultimately called for an evolution in the understanding of Church doctrine. I find it extremely significant that Baum mentions on several occasions how shocked he was to hear Catholics questioning Church doctrine, even to the point of saying that papal statements or other Church documents were “wrong.” In other words, as a theologian, Baum found himself challenged to intense personal reflection on the Church’s understanding of its own doctrine. Baum’s worldview at that point was what Lonergan would have called “classicist” (a view of doctrine as true for all time and beyond differences of culture). This is not surprising; until Vatican II, Catholic theology was universally classicist, in the sense of being framed in a metaphysics of “eternal truths.” Baum, who paid close attention to such apparent discords in Church thinking, evolved as a theologian noted for his capacity to explain the remarkable evolution of Church doctrine that was taking place in his own lifetime. It is clear that his was a personal struggle to determine

how to resolve a series of dialectics that needed some resolution. As he admits, his initial feeling was that opposition to established Church teaching was a matter of contradiction, a rejection of Church, and a departure from truth. As a theologian deeply influenced by the Augustinian theology of the role of sin in the world, his effort to come to terms with questions raised by a rejection of Church authority was of the utmost importance. It was only by carefully rethinking the parameters of history and dialectic that he was able to understand that the Church could “change its mind” through a resolution of the poles of a dialectic and also that this involved a “dialectic of transcendence rather than contradiction.”³ His understanding of dialectic as an act of transcendence is also central to Lonergan’s understanding of the evolution of cognition toward “higher viewpoints.”

I will restrict my examination of this process to the first example Baum offers in *Amazing Church*, namely the transformation of the Church’s teaching on human rights from the time of Gregory XVI (1832) to John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council. Subsequent chapters, while addressing other doctrines, follow a similar methodology.

In 1832, Pope Gregory XVI issued an encyclical, *Mirari vos*, which Baum identifies as a “passionate defence of the feudal-aristocratic order” and a rejection of the “emerging liberal society.”⁴ He quotes several excerpts from the document to show its intent. The argument in the encyclical is based on the principle that “there is no authority except from God” and that unchanging submission to princes, with their God-given authority, is a precept of the Christian religion. Baum insists that the cultural context, or “ethical horizon,” of that period in history is a key factor in the position taken by the Pope as well as a key to the evolution of the doctrine in an historically later context. The emergence of “liberal society” in European society provided that framework. In 1888, Pope Leo XIII issued an encyclical entitled *Libertas praestantissimum* in which he addresses the question of religious freedom in the State and affirms that “reason itself forbids the Church to be godless.”⁵ Thus, the “profession of one religion is necessary in the State.” Shortly thereafter, the same Pope published the encyclical *Rerum novarum*, where he addresses social inequality in society. However, there is, in this second document, “no concession to democracy.” The State is to adopt the religion of the majority.⁶ Again, Baum makes reference to the ethical horizon of that time as the factor that made this position acceptable to the general public. For Baum, the concept of an ethical horizon, a set of values, will be a key to the resolution of several dialectics.

John XXIII’s encyclical *Pacem in terris*, published in 1963, considerably altered the position of the Church on social rights. The context invoked by that document

is the publication (in 1948) of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* by the newly formed United Nations. Baum points out that the UN document offers no philosophical arguments to back up its position. It relies, rather, on a “universal ethical principle” of that time. John XXIII, Baum says, saw the acceptance of that universal principle in the UN document as a “sign of the times.” This was also the title of a subsequent book written by Baum. John XXIII’s encyclical represents the first time in history that the Church adopted a defense of human rights. The fundamental argument for an altered doctrine on this topic is grounded in the principle of God’s image in every human person—a specifically Christian principle, as Baum points out. He calls it a commitment to “universal solidarity,” a phrase repeated frequently throughout *Amazing Church* as central to the horizon of the Church’s ethical teaching today.

One of the documents of the Second Vatican Council approved in the final session of Vatican II is the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* (1965). With considerable inside knowledge of the proceedings at that time, since he participated in the Council sessions, Baum points out that this document caused a prolonged debate at the Council, with the American bishops leading a strong defense of the principles enshrined in the document. Once again, Baum stresses the importance of a transformed cultural context—enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—which made it possible for the Church to commit itself to the doctrine presented in the final conciliar declaration.⁷

Finally, *The Declaration on the Church in the Modern World*, approved by Vatican II, “praised three modern cultural values in particular: freedom, equality and participation.”⁸ Baum is here underlining the profound difference between the treatment of these three issues in Vatican II and in the earlier documents of Gregory XVI and Leo XIII.

Based on these selected documents, and on his interpretation of them in the historically conditioned context of their times, Baum moves on to a theological reflection regarding the significance of the ethical horizons of each period and the “discontinuous” development involved. Baum points to a cultural transformation between 1832 and 1965 that he does not see as one of straightforward progressive development. There is a leap involved. Later, in the same chapter of *Amazing Church*, Baum turns to Cardinal Ratzinger’s *Nota* (2001). This short document lifted the sanctions against the writings of Rossini. Baum argues, against the position of Ratzinger, that the *Nota* is not in continuity with the “unchanging” doctrinal tradition of the Church. Rather, he argues that it is a “new” doctrine. The question could then be asked: Is it contradictory to what went before? The question here is whether the dialectic was one of contraries or of contradictories, as Robert M. Doran would call them in *Theology and the*

Dialectics of History.⁹ In a dialectic of contradictories, one is faced with truth or falsehood, or good and evil. The choice is for one or the other. The two cannot be reconciled. For Baum, considering his use of the term “discontinuous” and his discussion of the 2001 papal *Nota*, we might think he is opting for a dialectic of contradictories in comparing the earlier and later teaching.

In the final chapter of *Amazing Church*, however, Baum explains how there could be an element of continuity. In that chapter,¹⁰ Baum points to Pope John Paul II’s frequent insistence on the “subjectivity” of human beings. Baum identifies this as the capacity to “see, judge and act.”¹¹ For this reason, he emphasizes the role taken by “individual conscience” in searching to do what is right. For Baum, this implies a recognition of the “supernatural” and of “mystery” in the faith of the Christian. That recognition can be found also in a variety of other examples given in Baum’s book. It is grounded in a new ethical horizon of what he terms “universal solidarity,” a “*catholicisme solidaire*.” Lonergan calls it “cosmopolis”; Robert Doran refers to it as “world cultural consciousness.” Under this rubric, the dialectic is resolved through the discovery of a new set of values that reconciles the real differences.

Method in Theology

Lonergan published *Method in Theology* in 1972. It was a theme he had been pursuing for a number of years. In fact, he had given courses on it during his years in Rome, preceding and during the Second Vatican Council. For Lonergan, method is a “normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results.”¹² That method is grounded in the pattern of operations that is the structure of conscious human cognitive operations: experience, understanding, judgment, and deliberation.

In *Method in Theology*, Lonergan uses this structure of human cognitive operations to outline eight theological functions that clarify the procedures to be followed for an authentic theological body of work in the Church. His method begins with research: the selection of documents—or other sources (such as art)—pertinent to his investigation. Second, theology involves hermeneutics or the historically contextualized interpretation of those sources, a study that occupied much of his attention for many years. The third theological specialty is history, where a theologian explores the effort of theologians, over time, to determine the authentic teaching to be derived from the theological sources or documents. Fourth, Lonergan also proposes a specialty called dialectic, which deals with the challenges faced by a theologian in coming to grips with the historically grounded struggles of theologians and church authorities to identify and characterize new questions left unanswered (and unasked!) by the earlier history of theology. Fifth is foundations: the

critical graced dimension through which a theologian grounds their theology in the gift of God’s loving grace that provides the horizon without which theology, as a study of God and God’s action in the world, could not exist. The sixth theological specialty is doctrine, which expresses the decisive consensus of Church authorities as to the proper understanding of the tradition embodied in the various historical documents. Seventh, Lonergan proposes the specialty of systematics, a particularly critical specialty in that it points to the effort of theologians to provide what Robert Doran, following a thematic developed in the final chapter of *Method in Theology*, calls an “ontology of meaning.” This specialty addresses questions posed within a contemporary culture in order to provide new meaning to church tradition.¹³ Finally, the theological specialty of communications presupposes a certain accumulation of the results of all the other specialties in view of sharing new insights with a broad public in cultures that are grappling with issues related to living an authentic Christian life today. It should be underlined that Lonergan is always focused on the theologian operating as a conscious subject within a given cultural horizon at a specific moment in history. The theology he speaks of, ultimately, is that which exists in the mind of a concrete existing human being.

Obviously, the method proposed by Lonergan requires collaboration among theologians operating in these specialties. No one theologian could possibly be expert in every domain. Nevertheless, the theologian who undertakes to operate in any one specialty draws on the expertise of the others. Lonergan pays special attention to matters of history, dialectic, and the conscious operations (experiencing, understanding, judging, and deliberating) of the human subject, the theologian, in presenting their understanding of theological issues. The resulting method, he argues, is universal both in time and across cultures because it is rooted in the very structure of human consciousness. What caught my attention is that Gregory Baum also paid close attention to the selection of theological documents, their interpretation, the doctrines which emerged from those documents, and the dialectic that occurred when, in the course of history, new questions arose and required the creative rethinking of doctrine. He addressed those issues in language designed to reach a broad public.

The Resolution of Dialectic

Amazing Church consists of a series of presentations of change in Church teaching using a similar methodology in each case and noting that in each case the teaching is new. As a good observer of society, Baum cannot help remarking that he finds it amazing (and hopeful) that what had been perceived as a permanent teaching of the Church could change so radically, given the need for a new understanding. Yet, it is only

in the last chapter of the book that he addresses the question of continuity through these extraordinary changes. His reflection parallels in an important way that of Lonergan.

Lonergan devoted significant attention in two of his books—*Insight: A Study in Human Understanding and Method in Theology*—to how dialectic both evokes what is new and yet includes a dimension of continuity. For Lonergan, it is the authentic search of the human subject for real meaning and authentic value that are transformed, without being lost, through changes in theological doctrine. In terms of the issue of human rights addressed by Baum, this would mean that an authentic Christian could find meaning and value in obedience to the prince during the early 19th century and, in turn, an authentic Christian in the 20th and early 21st centuries could find meaningful and valuable what Baum calls “universal solidarity.” Baum puts his finger on the key element when, in the last chapter of *Amazing Church*, he speaks—approvingly, I think—of John Paul II’s emphasis on “subjectivity.” The bridge, the enduring element through the change, is the authentic Christian’s dedication to real existential meaning and value. This is also what Lonergan insists is the case.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with a question about the relationship between Lonergan’s *Method in Theology* and Baum’s discussion of contemporary issues in *Amazing Church*. It is my conviction that the work of Baum, certainly in the book we have been examining, is a clear example of the kind of theological method that Lonergan promoted in *Method in Theology* and is so on many levels, including his care in the choice of documents, their interpretation in historical context, the confrontation with historical dialectics, the emergence of a new horizon involving a new set of values, and, finally, the grounding of change in the faith of the Christian who will not be satisfied with anything less than real meaning and authentic value.

What continues to puzzle me is that while both theologians contributed to collections dealing with issues such as *The Declaration on Religious Freedom*, Baum, as far as I know, never makes any reference to Lonergan’s writings, even though he is using a method very much like that proposed in Lonergan’s *Method in Theology*, which was published more than 30 years earlier. Nor did Lonergan, as far as I know, ever make any reference to Baum’s publications as an example of an excellent use of his proposed theological method. A first possibility is that both drew upon the same sources in German philosophical discussions of academic research and social analysis, and each pursued their work independently. That much does seem to

be the case. Yet it is highly unlikely that they were unaware of each other’s writings.

I want to suggest a second possibility. My conjecture is that, since both authors were at the very edges of theological discourse at the time, for either of the two to explicitly reference the work of the other could have become an occasion for public debate and criticism that could have confounded the work of both. My own personal experience with each of them certainly left me with the strong conviction that both were men of great intellectual ability and highly respectful of the efforts of other theologians. They had a tendency to reference the work of others who had contributed to their own position; while, at times, they might point out difficulties with certain positions, they did not intend to cause personal or professional harm. They were admirable in this respect. My speculation is that each of these two men continued on their own track. Lonergan spoke to theologians about the structure of their work, and Baum addressed specific contemporary issues such as human rights using a methodology that corresponds quite closely to that proposed by Lonergan.

This exploration of historic dialectic leads me to a deeper appreciation of the genius of each of these two theologians. What an amazing Church constructed through people of faith, grounded in “universal solidarity” who, guided by the Spirit of God, walk the same path through the twists and turns of history!

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1 Gregory Baum, *Amazing Church: A Catholic Theologian Remembers a Half Century of Change* (Toronto: Novalis, 2005).

2 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

3 The term is from Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

4 Baum, *Amazing Church*, 14.

5 *Ibid.*, 17.

6 *Ibid.*, 18.

7 *Ibid.*, 23.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 74–77 and *passim*.

10 Baum, *Amazing Church*, 135.

11 The “see, judge, act” method of social analysis was adopted by the Catholic Action movements and is significantly like Lonergan’s analysis of the cognitional structure of human consciousness, even though somewhat telescoped.

12 Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 4.

13 Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, ch. 19, 592–629.

Synod and Dialectic

A Philosophical Reflection with Bernard Lonergan, SJ and Gerard Smith, SJ

By Hugh Williams

Pope Francis' call for the whole Church to enter into synod leading up to the World Synod of Bishops' meeting in Rome in the fall of 2023 is an event of considerable ecclesial significance; it also is an issue of philosophical interest.¹ The Synod, at first glance, seems a generous and benign invitation to dialogue and listen. However, it soon leads into serious and difficult *dialectic*, acknowledged by many experienced observers and participants to be not for the faint of heart.²

Dialectic, according to Bernard Lonergan, is concerned with fundamental differences that are conflictual.³ These fundamental differences arise because of differences in how we understand the true, the good, and the holy. Such differences are the result of differing horizons that define our respective knowledge and interests. These differences can be functional and complementary, genetic and developmental, or they can be dialectical, which means that differences have their basis in intelligibility or the lack thereof, in truthfulness or the lack thereof, and/or in goodness or the lack thereof. In Lonergan's account, *dialectic* in its more destructive aspects can be overcome only through intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. It is the intellectual aspect and its possible implications that we will examine more carefully in this paper.

Lonergan's Philosophical Account of *Dialectic*⁴

Lonergan outlines several differing philosophical horizons shaping the intellectual realm, such as provided by what he calls empiricism, idealism, and realism. These positions can and do differ profoundly in their views as to the nature of knowledge and its object. The sustained critiques and negations of certain aspects of metaphysics, values, and religion, as we have in the philosophies of Kant and Nietzsche, for instance, can have some truth to them, inasmuch as they are genuine though perhaps misguided efforts to offset cultural decline and decadence. What is important to grasp is that once a process of dissolution is under way, even at the intellectual level, it can be screened by self-deception and perpetuated by a sort of logical consistency. And as dissolution mounts, it is accompanied by increasing

division, incomprehension, suspicion, distrust, hostility, hatred, and even violence. The social body can be torn apart, and its cultural soul can be incapable of reasonable convictions and responsible commitments based on judgments of fact and value resting upon solid beliefs.

Recourse to belief, Lonergan says, is efficacious only when believers can present a solid front and when intellectual, moral, and religious skeptics are a small minority. But when their influence mounts and comes to dominate the discourse, then believing can work against intellectual, moral, and religious self-transcendence, and what had been an arduous but honoured and respected tradition of struggle and advance becomes only the concern of an irrelevant minority.

How is it that dialectic can assist us in avoiding such situations of decline or assist us in remedying them in some way? In answering this question, Lonergan has to slow down and consider very carefully what dialectic is about, what is its nature. It means considering how in serious human inquiry—in our research, in our interpretation of that research, and in providing some historical context for our interpretation—we are actually concerned with both causality and values. We are concerned with movement in the sense of what is going forward and what can be understood as such because of both causal connections and the influence of values. When we interpret, we understand the thing or object before us, the words, the author, and even ourselves, to some degree. We pass judgment on the accuracy of our understanding, and we determine some manner of expressing this understanding. There is clearly what Lonergan calls a sophisticated hermeneutic at work, the apprehension of values and disvalues as an intentional response to that with which one is engaged and involved. Thus, dialectic adds to the interpretation in our understanding an appreciative dimension. Added to this historical view that apprehends what was or is going forward is a historical perspective that is evaluative of achievements in terms of good and evil. We discover gross differences in historical analysis because as historians, we don't just have different horizons, we have opposed horizons

in our efforts to consider and analyze similar events. And so, it is this situation that is the concern and work of dialectic and, according to Lonergan, its remedy is nothing less than conversion.

In our respective hermeneutical work, we can easily find what fits with our own horizon, but we have much less ability to attend to what we have never understood or conceived. Thus, our theology is at best incomplete if restricted to research, interpretation, and history, for there is no real encounter as yet with the past or with others in their own encounter with the past. For this must involve the meeting of persons, and gradually, over time, the experiencing and appreciating of the values they hold, the criticizing of defects in their horizon, while allowing for challenges by both word and deed to one's own horizon. Such encounter is essential for Lonergan; it is fundamental and necessary for the authentic development of one's own self-understanding and for the testing of one's own horizon.

Lonergan clearly is putting considerable stress on dialectic because he believes that up until the serious and gradual engagement of persons in dialectic over time, there is likely to be a twofold deficiency in our method, resulting in our research, interpretation, and historical analyses tending to be seriously inadequate or incomplete in their treatment of both value and causality.

Philosophical Dialectic and Its Implications

In the intellectual realm, Lonergan illustrates dialectic by discussing the influential philosophical school of linguistic analysis, which holds that language is essentially public and only derivatively private or subjective. This public nature is its basis as a vehicle for intersubjective communication. This means, in Lonergan's assessment, that the meaning of a word is not first explicable by reference to mental or intentional acts but instead by reference to common ordinary usage. By contrast, the scholastic doctrine, which Lonergan draws from, believes that words first have meaning because they express concepts as subjective mental acts or states, and it is the public expression of these concepts through words in language that is derivative. This means, for instance, that the notion of "God" as referring to a transcendent Creator *being* does not pose a controversial linguistic problem if this is what is intentional in one's language usage. But this becomes a formidable problem according to the position of linguistic analysis, presumably because in the position of linguistic analysis, one's subjective intentions are basically derivative of the terms of one's ordinary and common linguistic usage, whereas in the scholastic doctrine, the term "God" is basically linguistically derivative of one's intentions.

Now, as much as this account highlights the problem and controversy this poses for the notion of "God" and perhaps for transcendence more generally, in our view, it is the mental act as intentionality that is Lonergan's foremost concern.⁵ For he insists that subjective mental acts do occur in conjunction with a sustaining flow of expression which may not necessarily be linguistic or be adequate as a form of expression, but they in fact do occur.

Lonergan agrees that the ordinary meaningfulness of ordinary language is essentially public and derivatively subjective or private. It is ordinary if it is in common use, where all individuals of the relevant group understand its meaning. However, Lonergan wants to distinguish what is true of the ordinary meaningfulness of ordinary language from what is true of the original meaningfulness of any language, whether it be ordinary, literary, or technical. All language develops and consists of the sedimentation of these developments, which in turn consists in discovering new uses for existing words and diffusing these discoveries and inventions. All this involves expressed mental acts. The discovery of a new usage is a mental act expressed by a new usage, and the invention of a new word is a mental act expressed by the new word.

Lonergan is clearly contending that unqualified meaningfulness originates in expressed mental acts and is communicated and perfected through expressed mental acts attaining ordinariness in effective diffusion among others. But there has been a persisting confusion between this ordinary and original meaningfulness based upon the erroneous generalization that all philosophical problems are linguistic in nature.

If one conceives language as the expression of mental acts, then one must conclude that philosophical problems have their source not only in linguistic expression but also in mental acts. One then will give due attention to mental acts as well as linguistic expression. But if one believes mental acts are unreliable occult entities and not a good basis for one's method, then one's philosophical reflections are likely to be limited to ordinary language and those additional disciplines based exclusively upon ordinary language.

However, according to Lonergan, if one wholly embraces this viewpoint, one will be unable to account adequately for the meaningfulness of language by any appeal to the originating mental acts which the adoption and promotion of this position necessarily presupposes. We have, then, an illustration of a fundamental performative contradiction revealing the inauthenticity of a significant counter-position, i.e., a philosophical and methodological decision that is fundamentally self-defeating because it is self-contradicting in its fundamental structure. We have here an

example of a horizon where this basic distinction between ordinary and original meaningfulness is ignored or overlooked so that one proceeds to judge that the meaningfulness of language is essentially a matter of public and common usage and only derivatively private or mental, or a matter of the subject's intentionality, which is so important for Lonergan's project, as we hope to show in what follows.

Lonergan's Position on Intentionality Analysis: Dialectic within the Account of Dialectic

Lonergan notes how our talk of mental or intentional acts often occurs in genetically distinct horizons, where the talk can be both correct and incorrect. It is in what Lonergan calls the more differentiated horizons of meaning where such talk tends to be fuller, more accurate, and more explanatory.

In the philosophical development of theoretical thinking and meaning, where there is the development of a technical language, theory operates with concepts and judgments, terms and relations that give us some degree of greater clarity, coherence, and rigour in dealing with objects. In this course of development, any turn to the subject and its operations, says Lonergan, has tended to be of the subject and its operations objectified and conceived metaphysically in the classical philosophical terms of matter and form, potency, habit, and act, and of efficient and final causes.

But as development in the natural sciences gathered momentum, philosophy gradually has been impelled to move from theory to what Lonergan calls interiority and has proceeded to find its foundations therein. While science has increasingly distanced itself from any claims of necessary truth, it has retained the somewhat totalitarian ambition in its goal of providing a full explanation of all phenomena. As Lonergan sees it, the intellectual and cultural ascendance of science has brought to philosophy a totally new intellectual and cultural environment where the epistemological problem of truth and relativism, the problem of the meaning of reality, the problem of the grounds for theory and common sense and the nature of their relationship, and the problem of the grounds for the human sciences—all these problems—have acquired a persisting acuteness for serious thinkers.

Lonergan has shown that there has been a seismic intellectual shift confronting the realms of philosophy and theology in our times. It is the cultural shift and historical change for both society and the Church that underlie the unsettling context for the Church's synodal call and its preparatory documents mentioned so briefly above.

Philosophy has long held that our knowledge has its basis in the data of experience, but since natural science has so convincingly come to dominate this area of our sense experience, Lonergan sees philosophy having to adjust by now taking its stand in the data of consciousness. This is both an observation and a matter of advocacy for Lonergan's project.

This world of interiority, as Lonergan calls it, is distinct from the worlds of theory and common sense, and, he says, it is constructed only through the manifold use of mathematical, scientific, and commonsense knowledge combined with the use of both ordinary and technical language. Thus, it is common sense and theory that provide the basis for entering this world of interiority that mediates to us what is given immediately in consciousness.

However, this discourse concerning interiority will be clear, accurate, and explanatory only if one is properly prepared for it. This proper preparation involves a type of apprenticeship or formation requiring a serious grounding in both common sense and ordinary language, as well as in theory and its technical language. This means some significant familiarity with both mathematics and natural science, and with their historical development. It means being able to attend to scientific objects as well as to the conscious operations by which one intends these objects. One has to get some considerable grip on how common sense differs from mathematics and natural science. Lonergan sums up his account and its requirements by giving us a special window on his entire project: "To say it all with the greatest brevity: one has not only to read *Insight* but also to discover oneself in oneself,"⁶ presumably in the course of reading *Insight*.

Invariably, when Lonergan makes such extraordinary claims regarding the seemingly revolutionary break that is the purpose of his project, it seems he also wants to show some degree of continuity with the classical tradition and especially with Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. In fact, engagement with these two giants from the history of philosophy is integral for Lonergan's own thinking, as we witness in both *Verbum* and *Insight*.

Here again, in *Method in Theology* in his discussion of dialectic and of how a proper turn to interiority is crucial for avoiding the more destructive aspects of dialectic, Lonergan feels he must examine and pay tribute to the exceptional accuracy in Aristotle's classical account of the soul, its potencies, habits, operations, and their objects. It is, however, an account that presupposes a metaphysics throughout its investigation and is, according to Lonergan, theoretically incomplete in these metaphysical presuppositions. It is an account that is

not of the world of common sense, nor of interiority, but strictly of theory.

And so, it is an account that needs to be complemented by what he calls the fuller theory of Aquinas, which contributes to the differentiation of consciousness and the development of a more systematic account of mental acts and intentionality. This greatly enlarges the communication capacities for ordinary language and thus the capacity for human dialogue in overcoming the destructive aspects of dialectic and in moving toward authentic development.

Lonergan, at this point in his discussion, mentions four thinkers—Augustine, Descartes, Pascal, and Newman—all of whom, while remaining within the world of the commonsense apprehension of self and language, have managed to assist philosophical reflection in grasping the possibility of knowing the conscious subject and its operations without presupposing or assuming this prior metaphysical structure. Lonergan also believes this characterizes his work in *Insight*, where there is an apprehension of the conscious subject and its operations without having to assume this incomplete metaphysical structure, as has been inherited from Aristotle and to some extent from Aquinas as well, and that ultimately ends up inhibiting the advance of our knowledge.

This advance in knowledge that Lonergan is speaking of is the advance from cognitional analysis which asks, “*What are we doing when we are knowing?*” to the epistemological concern “*Why is doing that knowing?*” and then, on the basis of answers to these two questions, moves on to the metaphysical question “*What do we know when we do this?*” It is this line of inquiry that takes us into the world of interiority, where our mental and intentional acts are experienced and systematically represented with a recognition of their logical and psychological firstness. This means, for Lonergan, that it is only on the basis of the logical and psychological firstness of cognitional and intentionality analysis that we can move authentically to the epistemological concern and, on this basis, we finally can move authentically to the legitimate concerns of metaphysics. And it is all three questions and their answers that enable us then to give a systematic account of meaning, its carriers, elements, functions, realms, and stages. This is the advance from common sense and theoretical knowledge to the knowledge of authentic interiority that has been and is sorely needed in the history of philosophy and for the sake of human development more generally, both individually and collectively.

This account of Lonergan’s does raise a certain persisting question from within the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. There remains considerable hesitancy to ac-

cept that real *being* and its proper metaphysics can be derived or obtained solely as the objective correlate of the structure of our knowing, i.e., merely from the kind of act of knowing. Must it not also be based upon the content or kind of evidence that grounds our affirmations of knowledge and thus ultimately come from the object itself as our final standard in knowledge?

This question and the accompanying refusal or, at least, hesitancy is well acknowledged by Lonergan and, in a sense, constitutes an important dialectic still present within his account of dialectic itself. And so, some critically reflective pause over Lonergan’s reference to Descartes is highly relevant for our discussion. This is especially so since he is widely viewed as the father of this turn in modern philosophy to the subject and, as cited by Lonergan, as having helped establish our knowledge of the conscious subject and its operations allegedly without presupposing or assuming any prior metaphysical structure.

Gerard Smith’s Important Contending Position on Being and Knowing

In Gerard Smith’s reading of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, any true judgment is true not only because it is in the thought of the mind but because the mind’s judgment or thought is in *being*, that is, it is engaged in some encounter with being. When the mind knows that it is X, or, let’s say, “Richard” himself, who has certain attributes, knowledge is engaged with being.⁷ And so, knowledge viewed mainly or merely as an assertion alone is to engage only knowledge as thought. But knowledge is not only given in knowledge as thought; being is also given in knowledge.

Now, it is to Descartes’ credit, according to Smith, that he reminds us that the thinker is immediately given in his thinking. But this thinker given in his thinking is not that which is first thought about. The incompleteness in Descartes’ own philosophy—and, dare we say, in his entire legacy, including Lonergan, to the degree he shares in this legacy—is in not realizing or adequately accounting for that which is thought about and is not the thinker, and most importantly is no less given in knowledge than is the thinker himself.

Descartes subsequently finds himself—indeed, because of certain mistaken but fundamental metaphysical assumptions—logically required to prove, albeit unsuccessfully, that there are beings other than the thinker. And this is because his metaphysical assumptions prohibited him from saying philosophically that that which is thought about is fundamentally and legitimately *being*, as is any thinker reflectively thinking thoughts.

Still, all this leaves us with the complex and troublesome question of *being*—which is the foremost

question of metaphysics. And, following Lonergan below with respect to his desire to avoid getting bogged down in the complex idealism-realism debate and dialectic that surrounds this question, it is certainly not our intention to get bogged down with this deep question of *being* in this article.

And yet, in my view, it is this effort on Lonergan's part, following after Descartes, to give primacy to cognitive analysis and epistemology over metaphysics that is the major reason for the rejection, or at least the reluctance, of many to fully endorse his project. There are many, such as myself, who are sensitively attuned, perhaps because of their own intellectual formation, to the persisting relevance of this idealist-realist tension and dialectic.

Clearly, this dialectic leads us toward the troublesome question of being, where we continue to argue that some reconciling balance must be found, and it is my contention that there are indications in Lonergan's corpus that he was open to just such a possibility, a possibility that would see the problem, let's call it the problem of being, transposed from that of idealism versus realism to that of the real complementarity of intentionality analysis and what we will call causality or the causal analysis of our existential situation, understood as St. Thomas Aquinas would understand it.⁸

But, on the other hand, perhaps this question of being does need some clarification. Because of its centrality to the tradition of metaphysics proffered in both Aristotle and Aquinas, and with which Lonergan is to some degree in both dialogical and dialectical relation, clarification is necessary to know what we are talking about with a term such as "being" and its metaphysics.⁹

This is to venture into an investigation of key technical terms of a certain philosophical tradition and of their meaning. At the outset, it is important to establish that the study of the meaning of words must be based decisively upon the thing meant. If inquiry into meaning ends with meaning alone, then we will remain unable to determine if our meaning means anything at all. For example, our discussion of the relational being of "dialectic" may be relatively intelligible for one's understanding, but if the term means only itself and its signifying operations, we unfortunately are headed for a dead end in our discourse and its hope for intellectual and spiritual nourishment.

"Dialectic" must mean the thing meant when there is that thing. This is fundamental for Aristotelian-Thomistic realism. To become satisfied with the analysis of words alone is like trying to raise oneself up by the hairs of one's head. In my view, this in large part is the reason Lonergan showed such concern with

the philosophical trend of linguistic analysis and the misguided principle that philosophy "is all a matter of words."

For Smith, there are then four fundamental points to be made by a way of any summarizing account of this metaphysics of being. The first point is that the metaphysics of being uses the term "being" as an existent thing: they are synonymous, i.e., they refer to that which can act upon you and which you in turn can act upon. Smith uses the example that when two soccer boots collide in a soccer match, the colliding boots feel no shock, but the soccer players do. This latter shock between persons is a primitive manifestation of the knowledge of being. Primitive as this example may be, in our view it is highly analogous to the fruitful collisions inherent in serious dialectic that Lonergan expounds upon at length in his *Method in Theology*, chapter 10. Second, any existent has two fundamental aspects: its "that which" or essential aspect and its existing or existential aspect, also known in Thomas' terms as *esse*. For example, in an existing dialectic, you may discern its dialectical essence, especially now with Lonergan's assistance in his *Method in Theology*, and you also may discern its actual existence. Third, there is also the fact that there is no 'existing' aspect in a being such as dialectic unless that existing aspect is an aspect of the essential aspect. In short, there is no existing dialectic unless the "existing" be the actual dialectic existing. Nor is there any essential aspect of a being unless it be related to an existential aspect. However, there is an important additional fourth point: that this relationship between the essential and the existential is not reciprocal. For though there is no existing without the essential aspect or essence, there may well be an essence without its own existence, as in some future meeting or encounter involving dialectic as Lonergan has defined it.¹⁰

It is this fourth and final point that has caused, and so can cause, metaphysical thinking to become corrupted or even to self-destruct. Because if we hold to being as something which exists, and yet we are saying a being which does not exist is still a being, what exactly are we talking about in this talk of being as in our third point above? If we hold to the position that "there is no 'existing' aspect in a being such as dialectic unless that 'existing' aspect is an aspect of the essential aspect," and we are saying that there are beings which do not exist, then have we not lost our grip on the existing aspect of any being, as in our first point above? This would seem to be the case if our thinking is devoid of what I'm introducing as causality analysis, and so allows for the claim that a possible being is possible apart from a cause which can make this possible being to exist. But this we cannot do, nor can it be so; it is necessarily inadmissible metaphysically. This is because a possible being's possibility, just as

an existing being's existing, is based in existing—if not in its own, then in the existing of its cause that is able to make the possible to exist. It is there in the actuality of the *esse* of its cause that we find the possible “existing” of the possible, which without care and, indeed, the proper apprenticeship it is possible to lose sight of in one's philosophical thinking.

The fundamental metaphysical principle at play in this account is that a possible existent can be properly understood only in relation to an actually existing cause able to make the possible *to be*. Clearly, we can understand a possible existent in terms of its essence—“what it is,” without understanding its cause—but this understanding gives us no assurance of the possible being's existence. It is to overestimate what *intentionality* and *intentionality analysis* by itself, without a metaphysics, is capable of. Without a cause, a possible being is strictly nothing.

Thus, we can say that any existent as *being* is that which “is” or that “can be,” but this “can be” of a possible existent is to be understood as the *esse* of a cause which can make the possible to be. Such dialectic, actual or possible, has two aspects about it—its essential aspect and its existential aspect: either its own existence when it actually exists, or the existence of its cause when it does not exist but could do so.

Dialectic and Intellectual Conversion: Toward Reconciliation

Throughout the winter of 2021, I was engaged in a serious dialogue and dialectic with others based upon a turtle-paced reading and study of Lonergan's *Verbum*.¹¹ Some students of Lonergan have contended that Lonergan worked out and resolved many of the philosophical problems, such as the troubled relationship between cognitional analysis, epistemology, and metaphysics, found in *Verbum*, in his later works such as *Insight*. But there is also the view that says that *Verbum* sets the course for *Insight* and especially the treatment of the relationship of cognitional analysis, epistemology, and metaphysics we find in *Method in Theology* and which, in my view, remains significantly problematic.

Great care was urged for accurately discerning the context for Lonergan's complex discourse on knowledge and truth in the early parts of *Verbum*, where Lonergan does speak of an interdependence between metaphysics and introspective psychology, and yet there is some risk of misinterpretation if its meaning is generalized too easily or quickly. Lonergan does argue that there is in St. Thomas a practice of introspective psychology that leads him into a highly nuanced and complex theory of human intellect where the light of intellect, insight into phantasm, acts of defining thought,

reflective reasoning and understanding, and acts of judgment can all be characterized as psychological facts.

Lonergan's special concern in *Verbum* is that if one should fail to grasp the empirical content of these psychological facts, one risks such an impoverished generality in one's metaphysics that it can no longer bear the weight of the superstructure of trinitarian theory in Christian thought. He further explains that his giving first concern to these psychological facts intends to provide an improved sureness for the metaphysics involved in Christian thought.

While saying all this, he admits that “if our interpretation of the applied metaphysics depends upon psychology, so too the interpretation of the applied psychology depends upon the applied metaphysics.”¹² Now, I have attempted to show above that this latter dependence remains incomplete in Lonergan, especially in *Verbum* and *Insight*.¹³

It is in certain later works, such as *Understanding and Being*, where this problem is more adequately identified and, in certain respects, more adequately addressed.¹⁴ In this work, Lonergan confronts the problem of objectivity and the question of where one should begin one's inquiry and analysis.

Lonergan begins with cognitional processes, where the notion of objectivity is defined entirely on the basis of cognition. It is by means of this approach that Lonergan attempts to proceed to a metaphysics of the object, of the knower, and of knowing, thereby giving an account of knowing by positing *being* in terms of a metaphysics that conceives the knower as a being and reformulates everything said in terms of beings that are known and beings that know.

Lonergan believes that all these activities involved in knowing can be said in terms of being, potency, form, and act. “It is just a matter of changing the language.” Thus, “one may begin from knowing, arrive at objectivity, work out the metaphysics of objects and of knowing, and then repeat the whole account of knowing in metaphysical terms.”¹⁵

Though I have serious reservations that it is simply “a matter of changing the language,” what is crucial is that the hermeneutical circle involved here be completed. One approach is to begin with knowing as Lonergan has. However, one can also begin with the metaphysics of being as object, then move from there to the metaphysical structure of the knower and knowing, and then on this basis consider the psychological issues for human consciousness.

In this approach, the same hermeneutical circle is completed, though one's approach to completion is

different. One has begun with what is first in reality, *quoad se*, whereas Lonergan's approach begins with what is first for us, *quoad nos*. Lonergan says, "In principle it makes no difference where one chooses to start. What is important is going around the circle."¹⁶

Important Lonergan scholars such as Fred Crowe interpret Lonergan here as meaning that though there may not be much difference in principle where one begins, nevertheless, from a practical perspective, if one's approach is concerned with the subject in his or her learning, with the developmental nature of this learning, and with one's method of learning, then where one begins is very important.

And yet, Lonergan goes on to say again that the question of starting point is not a serious material problem. What is of much greater concern is that the hermeneutical circle be correctly completed, and in doing so it is important that one get things right in one's articulated account.

So, from the Lonergan side of this dialectic within our discussion of dialectic, it matters greatly in practice where one actually begins in what is being called here the hermeneutical circle. Thus, this distinction between "in principle" and "in practice" for Lonergan is highly relevant for the problem of objectivity and for what, in Lonergan's terms, is the normative thrust in our knowing activity.

And yet again, to arrive at a psychology, one really needs to have the epistemological solution in hand; to achieve this, one needs to grasp the psychological facts, and we cannot forget, after reading a thinker such as Gerard Smith, that one's metaphysics is always at play simultaneously with one's psychology and epistemology. This interpenetrating interdependence is the challenge of the critical exigence in knowledge that Lonergan is also acknowledging in these later lectures in Halifax. One aspect or layer can be known only if one already knows the others. It is a complex intellectual problem that definitely involves metaphysics as well for, again, one's metaphysics is at play simultaneously with one's psychology and epistemology. What is really needed to meet the challenge of this complex critical exigence in our knowledge is a synchronic achievement of psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics.

The question can be asked in earnest: Is this a problem so complex as to become impossible for most thinkers to handle? One answer in true Lonerganian form is in the suggestion that it is a forthright application of the challenge of the hermeneutical circle that Lonergan briefly speaks of in his introduction to *Verbum*¹⁷ and much more extensively in his Halifax lectures, as has been cited. This, it seems now, means that our intellec-

tual challenge of completing the greater hermeneutical circle in practice requires a collaborative methodological approach, as outlined in *Method in Theology*.

This resolution of what has been characterized as an almost intractable problem of *dialectic*, i.e., in terms of idealism versus realism, can now be cast as a more complementary approach involved in *intentionality* and *causality analysis*. It becomes a strikingly new window on the whole of Lonergan's project and its proposed advance within the history of philosophy and, indeed, for human development more generally.

This project retains a theological and metaphysical context necessary for any serious Christian thinker who is a follower and apprentice of St. Thomas Aquinas. This does mean one has to have some sense of the significance of Lonergan's reach up to the mind of St. Thomas and its persistent concern with the quality of Christian thought and knowledge (its reason and faith) and its theological basis in the superstructure of trinitarian theory, which requires a technically competent metaphysics, epistemology, and cognitional theory for its intellectual support.

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1 The overall context, along with the probing questions for participants at the local level, are accessible in the Synod's excellent Preparatory Documents, found at <https://www.synod.va/en.html>. The two central guiding questions are "How does this 'journeying together' which takes place today at different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to Her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow this synodal Church?"

2 Reference to the New Testament's ACTS 15 is in order to give some sense of the significance of this synod. ACTS 15 is an account of the Council of Jerusalem and is referred to repeatedly in the Synodal documents as our best scriptural example of the early Church's first Synod. It is also an illustration of what Bernard Lonergan has called, in his *Method in Theology*, "dialectic," where persons actually encounter and engage one another with what he calls positions and counter-positions. In the early Church, the critical issue of the nature of the relationship of this new movement of "the way" as followers of the Christ, not yet called Christian, to Judaism, and especially to the Mosaic Law and the strict requirement of circumcision was seen to threaten the Church in its very foundation, and unless resolved, the movement was likely to die a natural death or to split in two. Today, the issue before the Church seems very much to be of similar import: that of reform in the roles and functions of both ministry and governance. It is perhaps important to stress that despite the seemingly very human achievement of this first synodal council in Jerusalem, with the scriptural accounts of the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the issue

realistically was not perfectly resolved once and for all but remained a live theological and pastoral issue in the early Church and for much of Paul's ongoing ministry and theological work. See Howard Clark Kee and Franklin W. Young, *The Living Word of the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1983), 230–39.

3 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017); see especially 235–66.

4 What follows in this section is an extensive, though selective, commentary on the philosophical aspects of Lonergan's discussion of dialectic in his *Method in Theology*, chapter 10, 235–66.

5 This issue of *intentionality* has a long root in the Catholic intellectual tradition; its importance for Lonergan will become apparent in what follows in our discussion of Lonergan's treatment of dialectic. There is an extraordinary treatment of intentionality in Gerard Smith, SJ and Lottie Kendzierski, *The Philosophy of Being* (New York: MacMillan, 1961); see especially 153–55. (Kendzierski's role as second author is in providing extensive and exhaustive footnotes, references, and appendixes both to and from Aristotle's and Thomas' texts to support Smith's brilliant discussion and argument in the main text.) This treatment parallels Lonergan's *cognitional analysis* in many respects. Smith was the elder Jesuit scholar whose exceptional work acknowledges Lonergan's *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) briefly but favourably. Lonergan, on the other hand, makes no reference to Smith, though there is some correspondence found in the appendix of *The Triune God: Systematics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 739–41. Lonergan, I expect, and there are indications of this in the correspondence, thought at the time that he had moved or was moving beyond the scholastic problem of being and its intellectual intrigues and controversies. I'll concede that in a certain sense, he has done this, but as this discussion hopes to show, he has done so on the basis of a fundamental framework that remains incomplete and can benefit from constructive engagement with Smith's philosophy. It must also be admitted that very few Lonerganians have much patience for such criticism, but the few who do seem prepared to admit that the issue does lie in this technical treatment of both being and the knowledge of being. And so, when we consider our knowledge of things, we find that things do exist in knowing in what is technically called an intentionally existential way. This means that the thing known exists in knowledge by an act of existing that is neither the knower's physical act of existing nor the known's physical act of existing. In other words, the way I know you, for example, is not by reason of your "is" or my "is," it is rather by virtue of the new "is" of the "is known," i.e., a cognitive or intentional "is." This intentional being functions in two ways: 1) by making known things which do or can exist outside the act of knowledge, and 2) by making known things that exist only within the act of knowledge. Thus, we have two viewpoints on things known, i.e., of the object that can exist in itself—the object of first intention; and of the object that can exist only within knowledge—the object of second intention. We know by first intentions physically existent objects and by second intentions mentally existent objects. The classic example is that in saying "man exists," one has knowledge of a universal which is knowledge of an object of the mind or second intention; whereas to say "Richard exists" is to have knowledge of an object that exists both in and outside my knowledge and so is knowledge of an object of first intention. Now, according to Smith, the long-standing plaguing difficulty within this tradition of discerning first from second intentions centres on the fact that first and second intentions are names for the contents or objects of knowledge, whereas intentional being is the name for the actuation of those contents of knowledge—the actuation of which is their "is known" or "the knowing of them." Intentional can be used to qualify esse as "the act of existence" or the "object." As a qualifier of esse, "intentional" distinguishes objects existing in the act of knowledge from those same objects which can and do exist in themselves by virtue of their own physical esse. Thus, in the knowledge that Richard exists,

Richard is in intentional esse, and yet Richard exists apart from his intentional "*being-known-esse*." As qualifying "object," "intentional" distinguishes within intentional esse two intentional objects: objects which do or can exist outside the act of knowledge, first intentions, from objects which cannot exist outside the act of knowledge, second intentions. In the knowledge that man is a species, the man known as a species exists only in knowledge; only the individuals of a species exist by physical esse. The man who is a species is not a species apart from his being known to be a species. The man who is known to exist has a relation to his physical esse, even if he were not known to exist. To say that there exists the man who is species apart from the status he has of being known to be a species is to reduce metaphysics to logic and idealism.

6 Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 260.

7 In our relatively technical metaphysical exposition of intentionality in footnote 5 above, our discussion was simply focused on an individual existent such as "Richard existing," known as an object of first intention, and "man existing," known as an object of second intention. We have not considered the metaphysical status of relations which would take us into considerably more complex territory, where the striking question is whether knowledge of relations or of our relational practice is knowledge of something that can exist apart from our knowledge of it, such as was established for the case of "Richard" but not for "man as species." Is dialectic, as discussed by Lonergan, solely a relation of reason? Relations as accidents—that which can exist not in itself but only in another, i.e., as modifying some substance as its foundation or ground—are then always grounded in substances and yet stretch outwards toward another substance or subject as the terminus of the relation. These accidents are beings that belong to another in reference to something else again. The relational being of dialogue and dialectic, for example, is spoken of as the realm of the "between" but also as that of "system." Within the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition and its categorical schema, it is substance and relation that provide the ontological basis for relations such as that of dialogue and dialectic between persons. Synod and its dialogue and dialectic can be viewed as a type of "system" or shared agency. Norris Clarke speaks of an order existing between substances. It is a mode of unity existing and bonding individual substances together—not merely as the sum of many different accidental relations but as a mode of unity residing in all the members at once. This relationality is experienced most powerfully through the shared knowledge and understanding of human persons. We can sense from this brief exposition that Lonergan's concern with intentionality analysis may be very helpful in assisting the Thomist tradition of thought in coping with this question of relations which until recently has remained a somewhat undeveloped area of inquiry. See Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), especially 150–58; see also his *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being, God, Person* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).

8 Gerard Smith, *The Philosophy of Being* (New York: Macmillan, 1961); see especially 287–88.

9 *Ibid.*, 287–88, 368–73.

10 Smith would have us think also of the prospect of future children as powerfully illustrative of this important point.

11 Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). What follows will make several references to this important text.

12 *Ibid.*, 105.

13 Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), see especially ch. 12, "The Notion of Being."

14 Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

15 *Ibid.*, 177–78.

16 *Ibid.*, 178.

17 Lonergan, *Verbum*, 10.

Jesus and Mature Love

Reflections on Love of Enemy

By Len Desroches

“Love your enemies,” says Jesus.
“Hate and destroy your enemies,” say the ruling classes and their militaries.

The early Church lived the spirituality of love of enemy. We get a hint of that in the letter to the Romans: “If your enemy is hungry, you should give him food, and if he is thirsty, let him drink ... Resist evil and conquer it with good” (Romans 12:20-21). Then the Church itself became the empire, hating and destroying the enemy through its crusades and inquisitions. Over the centuries, minor and major empires perfected the means of destroying enemies: sticks and stones, then swords and spears, then catapults, then warhorses, then guns and cannons and tanks, then warships, and warplanes. Century after century, decade after decade, year after year—spending millions, billions, and finally trillions. The entire body of work of the United Nations, including peacekeeping and the sweeping social and economic operation of 40 specialized agencies and programs, costs \$30 billion per year. It is a lot of money, and it is also less than 2% of what the nations of the world spend on armaments.

The most explicit teaching of Jesus regarding maturity of love is when he says, “I know, I know what you’ve been told, ‘Love those who love you and hate your enemies.’ But I say this to you: Love your enemies. Become as mature in love as God is” (Matthew 5:43-44, 48). Regarding spiritual maturity, I would like to quote Clarence Jordan, a farmer and scripture scholar:

There has been much misunderstanding of this verse (Matthew 5:48) because of the translation “perfect” instead of “mature.” ... The Greek word translated “perfect” means to have all the parts, to have reached full maturity ... To talk about unlimited retaliation is babyish; to speak of limited retaliation is childish; to advocate limited love is adolescent; to practice unlimited love is evidence of maturity.¹

Donald Trump once said: “When someone hurts you, just go after them as viciously and as violently as you can.” When the Japanese Air Force bombed Pearl Harbour in 1945, the United States went after them as viciously and as violently as they could. They could have simply destroyed the Japanese warplanes.

Instead, they committed mass murder against the innocent citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with nuclear weapons, killing between 129,000 and 226,000 people. There are now 13,865 nuclear weapons in the world. Nine of the world’s empires possess nuclear weapons. Nuclear explosions over cities could quickly kill tens of millions. The detonation of just 1% of the 13,865 nuclear weapons could disrupt the global climate and threaten billions with starvation in a nuclear famine. Just a small percentage of the world’s firepower is enough to destroy all the large and medium-size cities in the entire world. The war in Ukraine is also a conflict between two nuclear-armed sides: Russia versus the United States and its NATO allies.

To be concerned about war is far from irrelevant for Canadians! Compared to so many states that are mired in a grotesque military industrial complex, we are in a most special position to build a genuine alternative that would be a practical inspiration to other nations: a Department of Peace. Isn’t there something lazy and hypocritical about our passive dependence on the United States’ war machine while doing almost nothing to develop our own independent “national security” linked to real “global security”? And isn’t it precisely because we don’t have nuclear weapons that we should be taking a far greater leadership role in the urgent global disarmament movement? We are not protected by the nuclear arsenal of the United States and NATO. Nuclear war will not spare Canada! Yet the Canadian government continues to meekly acquiesce to the United States’ insistence that we do not sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which officially entered into force on January 22, 2021, for the 122 states that have signed.

Robert Acheson of the Canadian Peace Initiative pointed out in 2009 during the war in Afghanistan:

Canada is a nation at war. Thousands of Afghans have been killed or injured, the nation is in disarray, the role of the Taliban insurgents has been greatly strengthened, one hundred and twenty-five of our soldiers have lost their lives and hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent every month by Canada in a conflict that by most reckonings is a futile endeavour ... This war is

but a symptom of a larger problem: the militarization of our nation. Increasingly, the Department of National Defence is determining Canadian foreign policy, deeply entrenching us in NATO and in the United States military. Without any public debate, Canada is quickly becoming more integrated with the United States in its military-industrial dimensions.

It's very important to note that at least 62 Canadian soldiers who served in the Afghanistan war died by suicide after returning home. Maybe we are not meant to hate and destroy enemies.

I can agree that we need some organized force to defend ourselves in case of invasion. I am also utterly confident that if we take Jesus' invitation to love our enemies seriously, and if the force of organized non-violence is given at least the same financial, cultural, and political support as the Department of War (aka the Department of Defence), Canadians will eventually discover it as a force with which we are fully capable of defending ourselves by Civilian Based Defence, as just one part of a Department of Peace. Lithuania is the only country in the world to adopt Civilian Based Defence as part of its official defence policy. Canada could become the second country in the world to do so.

To be clear, I do not consider the issue of a Department of Peace to be more important than care of the Earth. Nor do I consider it less important. They are utterly interconnected. For example, the urgency related to the immediate need to deal with the climate crisis is the exact same urgency related to the building of a Department of Peace and the prevention of war. In both cases, we can't keep going in the present direction. In both cases, the consequences are global and permanent. In both cases, time is of the essence.

If love of enemy is impossible, if God's grace doesn't even exist, then it will remain normal to hate and destroy our enemies. I agree that we need to go in that direction if Jesus' call to become as mature in love as God isn't real. Jesus takes us beyond the normal into the realm of faith and mystery. More than even faith and love, it's a matter of faith *in* love. Faith in love's capacity to heal; faith in love's capacity to transform conflict. Faith in the mystery of love. What is faith? I see faith as our deepest spiritual instinct that allows us to step right into the mystery before us. What is mystery? A mystery is a reality that's beyond normal understanding—a reality that needs faith to step right into it and live it. A mystery is meant to be lived, not just talked about or written about.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu stepped right into the mystery of love—of gospel nonviolence—in the face

of the empire of South Africa and its brutal system of apartheid. Tutu refused to hate; he helped unleash the power of love in others. In a culture that props up the myth of victory over the enemy as excitement, we hear too few of the powerful stories of reconciliation with the enemy. Stanley W. Green, originally from South Africa, told the story of an elderly South African woman who had suffered terrible losses at the hands of a brutal murderer:

She stood in an emotionally charged courtroom, listening to a group of white police officers acknowledge the atrocities they had perpetrated in the name of apartheid. Officer Van de Broek acknowledged his personal responsibility in the death of her son. Along with others, Van de Broek shot her 18-year-old son at point-blank range. The group partied while they burned his body, turning it over and over on the fire until it was completely reduced to ashes. Eight years later, Van de Broek and others arrived to collect her husband. A few years later, shortly after midnight, Van de Broek again appeared and took the woman to a place beside a river. On a woodpile her husband lay bound. They forced her to watch as they poured gasoline over his body and ignited the flames that consumed his body. The last words she heard him say were, "Forgive them." Now, Van de Broek stood before her awaiting judgment. Vengeance seemed inevitable. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission officers asked her what she wanted. "I want three things," she said calmly. "I want Mr. Van de Broek to take me to the place where they burned my husband's body. I would like to gather up the dust and give him a decent burial. Second, Mr. Van de Broek took all my family away from me and I still have a lot of love to give. Twice a month, I would like for Mr. Van de Broek to come to the ghetto and spend a day with me so I can be a mother to him. Third, I would like Mr. Van de Broek to know that he is forgiven by God, and that I forgive him, too. And, I would like someone to come and lead me by the hand to where Mr. Van de Broek is, so that I can embrace him and he can know my forgiveness is real." As they led the elderly woman across the silent courtroom, Van de Broek fainted, overwhelmed. In the courtroom, someone began singing "Amazing Grace." Gradually, others joined in until, finally, everyone there was singing the familiar hymn.

There is also the story of Danielle Kane, a 31-year-old nursing student who was shot by the "Danforth Shooter," 29-year-old Faisal Hussain, on July 22, 2018, in Toronto. The bullet tore through her stomach and diaphragm and shattered part of her spine, leaving her paralyzed from the waist down. Faisal Hussain had

severe mental health issues and family tragedies. He struggled with psychosis and depression. His sister was killed in a car accident. His older brother had a drug overdose that left him in a vegetative state. In a CBC interview that aired on July 21, 2019, Danielle reiterated that she felt sorry for Faisal:

It's obvious that he was suffering. He had these issues for a long time, and he fell through the cracks. He was supposed to follow up with a forensic psychologist and that never happened. I think our system needs to be improved. I think that individuals like this should have caseworkers or someone that they need to check in with regularly – whatever it is that they need to stay on track and not be so isolated as he was. I've been in really dark places. If you're alone and you don't have anyone to pull you out of that negative spiral, how far you can go down! I understand, 'cause I've been there. I haven't been as far down as he has, clearly. But we all need community; we all need people to love us. I know it's hard for other people to believe, but we need to bring in people like Faisal and love them.

A few years ago in India, a young man murdered a nun, stabbing her to death. With stunning spiritual maturity, her sister and her mother eventually fully forgave him. He became a brother to the sister and a son to the mother. Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish had three of his daughters killed in Gaza by an Israeli bomb. He wrote a book entitled *I Shall Not Hate*.²

Jesus puts before us the fullness of the mystery of love. I am reminded of that each time I pray a New Zealand version of the Lord's Prayer, where it refers to "the power that is love." Also intertwined with the fullness of the mystery of love is the fullness of the mystery of suffering. Martin Luther King spoke of "redemptive suffering." Much of our culture speaks of redemptive violence. Jesus exposed the lie of redemptive violence and lived redemptive suffering.

The mystery of suffering includes death. Jesus challenged us to not be afraid of those who can kill the body but not the soul. Martin Luther King said, "Do not be afraid, not even of death. Because until you do you can never be free." Free! Freedom! In the end, travelling with Christ is embracing radical freedom. Oscar Romero asserted, "We live by that power that even death cannot destroy." He also declared, "As a Christian I don't accept death without resurrection." I may not fully grasp resurrection after death, but I deeply believe in it. I don't believe that death is the end. Like all the mystics who are my ancestors in faith, I believe that death is a beginning, a resurrection.

In our everyday lives, whenever we risk love of enemy we risk rejection, ridicule, assault, and, in some situations, death. And we have to come to terms with all the emotions that love of enemy elicits—especially disgust and fear. We also need to be clear on the difference between like and love. I can't like someone who spits at me. Love is greater than like.

There is such a thing as spiritual malnutrition. We deprive ourselves and our children by the almost total absence of the spirituality and theology of love of enemy. The sad irony is that the one thing being avoided is the one thing most unique about Christ. Christianity will slowly become irrelevant if all there is to it is ritual devoid of the spirituality and practical action related to love of enemy. Imagine a parish that had love of enemy as one of its central pillars. Martin Luther King insisted that "We are called to this difficult task in order to realize a unique relationship with God." I would add that since God is love, we are called to this difficult task in order to realize a unique relationship with love. Beyond faith and love: faith *in* love.

The mystery of love of enemy is life giving and world changing. How? It is life giving because it involves growth in an ever-deepening love of self—a stronger and stronger self-love that enables one to encounter the enemy in a life-giving, creative way. It is world changing because it involves a passionate, relentless dismantling of the global institution of war and a passionate, relentless building of cooperation and community among the countries of the world. Imagine the United States and Russia embracing! Imagine Ukraine and Russia embracing! Nothing less is urgently needed among all nations of the world.

French general Jacques de Bollardière came to understand the mature love that Jesus lived. After 30 years of active warfare—World War II, Algeria, and Vietnam—he made this declaration: "War is but the dangerous disease of an infantile humanity painfully trying to find its way." Jesus says four things about love: love yourself; love your neighbour; love God; love your enemies. This fullness of love leads inevitably to love of Earth. It is all about the same maturity of love. This spiritual integration is exemplified in the life of Francis of Assisi, who came to see creation as composed of sisters and brothers—Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Sister Water, and others. I refer to four instances. He wrote: "Everyone who comes to them, friend or enemy, must be made welcome." Elsewhere, he wrote: "They are not to take up lethal weapons or bear them about, against *anybody*." Francis crosses enemy lines during a horrific war between Muslims and Christians and risks his life to meet with the designated enemy, Sultan Malik al Kamil. It turns into a historic embrace of friendship between men of the same age—men of faith. Finally, Francis adds a new verse to his

great Cantic of Creation in response to the potentially deadly conflict between the mayor and the bishop of Assisi, who were beginning to dangerously treat each other as enemies: *Be praised my God for those who forgive through your love ... blessed are those who keep themselves in peace.* He asks some friars to sing the cantic with this verse to both the mayor and the bishop. Both are so deeply moved that they reconcile with each other.

Martin Luther King reflected:

Far from being the pious injunction of a utopian dreamer, the command to love one's enemy is an absolute necessity for our survival. Love even for enemies is the key to the solution of the problems of our world ... Our responsibility as Christians

is to discover the meaning of this command and seek passionately to live it out in our daily lives.

My deepest spiritual instincts tell me that as a human race we need to step right into the mystery of love of enemy. As a global Church, we need to become the Beloved Community and offer love of enemy as a spiritual and practical gift to the rest of the world.

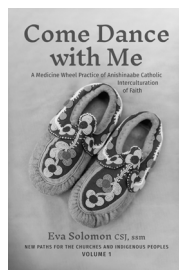
Len Desroches lives in Toronto. He is an author, war resister, and resource person for retreats on gospel nonviolence.

1 Clarence Jordan, *Sermon on the Mount* (King of Prussia, PA: Judson Press, 1970).

2 Izzeldin Abuellaish, *I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2010).

Come Dance with Me

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Eva Solomon CSJ, ssm, DMin, lives in Winnipeg. In her traditional way, she is a Sacred Pipe Carrier and has worked for several decades with the Canadian bishops on Indigenous ministry and on the development of a truly Indigenous Catholic church.

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Book Review

The Importance of Place

Allen G. Jorgenson. *Indigenous and Christian Perspectives in Dialogue: Kairotic Place and Borders*. Religion and Borders Series, ed. Alexander Y. Hwang. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021. ix + 105 pp.

Allen G. Jorgenson's *Indigenous and Christian Perspectives in Dialogue: Kairotic Place and Borders* uses an Indigenous-informed comparative theology to help Euro-North American Christian theologians learn—or relearn—the importance of place. By so doing, Jorgenson hopes to “attend to ... harmony as our way of being, and to ... the circle rather than the timeline” (55). Jorgenson believes a “chastened” Christianity needs new ways forward in its identity and practice, as do the possessive, oppressive, and dysfunctional colonial societies it so enthusiastically helped plant. On the way there must be self-critique, repentance, and transformation. Each of these ingredients is present in this wonderful book.

Jorgenson's language ranges from the playful and poetic to, in sections, the opaque and specialist vocabulary of theology and philosophy. Jorgenson's method is circular: “We turn now to [Indigenous thinkers], so that we can learn something of what we purport to know by being reminded of what we have forgotten” (3).

In fact, a circle is an apt way to conceptualize this slim monograph. The book might be pictured as a ring of speakers; the honoured guests are the Indigenous scholars who have guided Jorgenson's way, such as Vine Deloria Jr, Thomas King, Basil Johnston, George “Tink” Tinker, Lee Maracle, and Raymond Aldred. Also present are two European figures that Jorgenson, as a Lutheran, counts as intimates: Martin Luther, the 16th-century German monk and reformer, and Friedrich Schleiermacher, late 18th and early 19th-century Prussian theologian. I would love to know if Jorgenson calls Schleiermacher the “*pioneer* of modern Protestant theology” with tongue in cheek.

Following decolonizing etiquette, Jorgenson self-locates in the acknowledgements and introduction; he lives and works on the territory of the Six Nations of the Grand River and is descended from immigrant grandparents. In chapter 1, “Indigenous Insights,” the Indigenous mentors around this “circle” share their knowledge. Jorgenson showcases Indigenous scholars who not only speak of *their* relation to land but also dissect how European Christianity's fateful turn from “place” to “time” encouraged the oppres-

sive exploitation that followed. The chapter stresses non-destructive alternatives: the importance of story, relation, and harmony, and the decentring of the human vis-à-vis the rest of the creation. Especially important is belonging to the land as mother, rather than land belonging to us. Jorgenson credits this insight to Indigenous scholars but also finds Christian warrant with the apostle Paul, where (as with the Indigenous scholars) this is “not a metaphor [but] a fundamental cosmic truth” (66).

There is no specific chapter on methodology. Instead, Jorgenson likens his comparative theology to treaty-making (xix) in the liminal zone between cultures. “It is impossible to know the self,” he writes, “without knowing the other, who allows me to come to myself in deeper ways and with a more penetrating analysis” (60). It should be noted that the “Christians” in the “Christian perspectives” half of the title are European or Euro-North American Christians. Jorgenson is aware that this is something of a false dichotomy. Many Indigenous people, including many of his quoted authors, have adapted parts of the Jesus traditions for themselves, just as Europeans before them did. Jorgenson notes that the reverse (Euro-North American Christians taking on Indigenous Traditional ways) is not ethical. Rather, maintaining a dichotomy between [Euro-] Christian and Indigenous, as in the Two-Row Wampum treaty, respects difference and autonomy.

Martin Luther is given voice in chapter 2. As a European Christian still on the medieval edge of the Enlightenment, Luther's theology sees “creation as the peer of redemption” (55). Here Luther's view of place seems to represent “what we have forgotten.” However, Jorgenson also points out the pernicious effects of Christianity's overemphasis on the narrative of the Fall. He notes that in most Indigenous creation stories, there is no expulsion from Eden. Human brokenness is taken seriously but is seen as fractured relationship, while the creation remains fundamentally good.

Accustomed to Prussian salons and art institutes, and having been an advocate of “occidental exceptionalism” (37), Schleiermacher sits a bit stiffly in this

gathering. Nonetheless, in chapter 3, Jorgenson coaxes from him some helpful insights. Specifically, from Schleiermacher, Jorgenson learns that experience is fundamental to religious understanding, that place is “non-competitive,” and that the way to understanding the whole is through the particular. I will admit that as a reader who is not a specialist in philosophical theology, it was the Indigenous voices whom I best understood in this chapter.

The speaker of chapter 4 (“The Poetic Potency of Place”) might surprise some readers, but not those who know Jorgenson. The author himself is the playful poet here. (Those who wish that this strikingly thoughtful chapter would go on longer can find the author’s poetry blog at stillvoicing.wordpress.com.) Jorgenson has a Chestertonian love of language. His wry sense of humour bursts from prosaic formulations whenever given a chance: for instance, his truisms that “our relationship to a place relates us to all place differently” (14) or that “poetic space is roomy” (33). In this chapter, Jorgenson presents pilgrimage as one rare strand of European Christian tradition that did not completely forget place.

As with any circle of speakers, the contributions are gathered up at the end. In his discussion of the holiness of liminal places or borders, Jorgenson returns to the concept of “kairotic place.” These are places where, in certain circumstances, the sacred and transformative might be especially encountered and where the sacred must be met by ceremony. Jorgenson tells stories of both tobacco-laying and of Christian communion ceremony.

Here the metaphor of the book as circle comes full circle. Christians gather in a circle around the eucharistic table, where they encounter the transcendent holy in the other. For Jorgenson, that sacred circle overlaps the conversational one. At the centre of both is the encounter with the “other” that transforms us.

Lexington books are notoriously expensive, and this work is unfortunately no exception. It would be helpful if Jorgenson’s valuable insights were more readily available to readers without access to a university library. Non-specialists would also benefit from this conversational circle. I hope someday to see a more public-facing edition (I would recommend either a glossary or definitions of some foundational terms such as “kairotic” and “kenotic,” if so).

Jorgenson is a theologian and a poet who has listened and studied at the feet of his Indigenous mentors. He is aware of the horrors that Christianity allied with empire caused—and continue to cause—in North America. His project of recovering the importance of place for non-Indigenous Christian theology is a major contribution toward healing Christian theology and practice in this place. It deserves to be heard by as wide an audience as possible.

Matthew R. Anderson, *affiliate professor, Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal*

Book Review

The Sixties and the Christian Left

Bruce Douville. *The Uncomfortable Pew: Christianity and the New Left in Toronto*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021. xviii + 300 pp.

In Kurt Vonnegut's 1979 novel *Jailbird*, the protagonist, Walter F. Starbuck, serves as Richard M. Nixon's special advisor on youth affairs. Every year, Starbuck dutifully sends out a long report with facts, figures, and charts on the state of youth—which he is sure is summarily dismissed or ignored. Vonnegut writes that Starbuck felt he could have replaced the report with a weekly telegram that read simply, “Young people still refuse to see the obvious impossibility of world disarmament and economic equality. Could be the fault of the New Testament (Quod Vide).”

Over the last decades, the Canadian churches have become increasingly silent on issues of justice, peace, and ecology. Consequently, Bruce Douville's book *The Uncomfortable Pew: Christianity and the New Left in Toronto* is a timely reminder that the refusal to engage in public debates on economic inequality and exploitation, social exclusion, and environmental justice is a moral choice. It reminds us that there was a time when Canadian Christians saw the fight for justice and peace as fundamental components of the good news of Jesus Christ. *The Uncomfortable Pew* examines Christian participation in the New Left movement of the “long sixties” (ca. 1965–1975). Through meticulous archival work and extensive interviews with many of the central activists and thinkers, Douville chronicles how Christians contributed to progressive movements focused on opposition to the Vietnam War, Cold War militarism, economic colonization, exploitation of workers, women's and LGBTQ+ liberation, and the rights of Indigenous peoples. He also documents how the ideas and values of the New Left were adopted by Christian organizations, which then developed theologies of liberation, resistance, and renewal. In turn, these groups inspired the mainline churches to take official stances on social questions and even to transform some of their fundamental teachings and practices (for example, integrating feminist theology and ordaining women ministers).

While Douville shows how progressive, even radical, ideas and practices changed Christian agencies, he also challenges the historical narratives of Canada's rebellious long sixties that fail to include the role of religion in the history of the New Left and the importance of spirituality in the lives of many of its leading

activists. While pointing out that a general socialization into Christianity created a moral sensibility of many New Left activists—even those who had left their churches—he suggests that some 15 percent of New Left activists entered the movement via the Christian left. Directly and indirectly, Christianity formed and informed the New Left, as Vonnegut suggested.

Douville focuses on Toronto because it was the home of several national organizations of the student New Left (for example, the Student Union for Peace Action) and several Protestant denominations as well as the largest Roman Catholic diocese in English Canada. However, since Toronto agencies and activists interacted with their counterparts throughout English Canada, Douville does bring in other regional, national, and even international developments. His study, however, is virtually silent on French Canadian communities and on Quebec, where the Christian left in the late 1960s and early 1970s was far more developed and politically active. In Toronto, he focuses mostly on activists, many of whom he interviews, but also includes editorialists and supportive clergy. While he examines a variety of people and agencies in Toronto, most of Douville's attention is centred on groups connected to the University of Toronto, such as the Student Christian Movement (SCM). His data comes from the archives of such groups, some 30 interviews, and news reports. These sources are woven into a narrative rich in detail and feeling. The interviews especially add depth to Douville's argument and illustrate the extent to which much involvement in peace protests and the fight for social justice were motivated by power, spiritual values, and connections.

The archival research, the media sources, and (especially) the interviews allow Douville's history to capture the electric dynamism of the Christian New Left, which was marked by experimentation, innovation, and passion. Members of the SCM believed that they were making society and their religious communities more compassionate, open, democratic, egalitarian, and faithful to the gospel. They celebrated the community spirit, close connections, and friendships that the movement created. Along the way, we meet an interesting cast of characters, including Tom Faulkner, a theology student and president of the University of

Toronto's Student Administrative Council, who became one of the leading voices for student engagement in progressive movements, especially opposition to the American War in Vietnam and women's access to birth control. We also meet Peter Warrian, a devout Roman Catholic student (and a graduate of St. Jerome's College, where I happen to work), who was active in both the SCM and the secular Latin American Working Group (LAWG). Another member of LAWG was Nancy Hannum, an American student who moved to Toronto to work in the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CUCND) and later the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA). It is fascinating to meet these people in their 20s as they try to fashion an identity for themselves by addressing pressing social issues from a faith-and-justice commitment.

Douville begins this history with an analysis of the state of the Christian churches in Canada in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The title of his book echoes that of Pierre Berton's famous 1965 book, *The Comfortable Pew*, a trenchant critique of the social conformity of Canada's mainline Protestant churches. Despite decades of impressive growth and activity, Berton saw that the churches were, in fact, languishing; they had distanced themselves from the concerns of ordinary people and had especially ignored the concerns and interests of youth, who, thanks to the post-World War II baby boom, had become a major social force. Against this backdrop, Douville shows that many of the most dynamic Christian youth groups were responding to this complacency by embracing a faith-and-justice agenda beginning with support for the civil rights movement in the US and peace protests, especially against nuclear disarmament. Hence, Douville chronicles in detail the SCM's participation in the CUCND and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

In 1965, the movement expanded its concerns and activities to include poverty, racism, hunger, Canadian bi-nationalism, women's liberation, and LGBTQ+ rights. This is the time when the New Left also started building formal organizations to address these issues. Within the churches, also, new committees, agencies, and structures were founded. The growth of the movement was hardly orderly. There were fits and starts, conflict with those committed to the old ways, disagreement (often passionate) among New Left activists themselves, and much disorganization. New Left Christians often faced opposition from more conservative members of the churches. Douville reminds us that, in the context of the Cold War, the majority of mainline Christians saw protests against American aggression in Vietnam as scandalous.

Despite internal conflict and external criticism, the New Left flourished both on campuses and in the churches,

often bringing turbulence to both institutions. Douville details how Christian activists played essential roles in the creation and expansion of New Left organizations whether on campus, in Toronto or across Canada, or in the churches. He devotes one chapter to the response of church hierarchies, progressive clergy, and active lay members to the challenges posed by New Left Christians. Even though many older church members were scandalized by the political agenda of the New Left, there were many genuine attempts to meet activists "where they were at." Indeed, some church agencies redefined themselves in response to the new political progressivism.

Finally, in two interesting chapters, Douville addresses the impact of "liberation" on the New Left Christian. In the early 1970s, he notes, the New Left began to wane across Canada. Even so, many activists and groups were reinvigorated by the encounter with liberation movements, both domestic and international. Liberation theology, especially Gustavo Gutierrez's *The Theology of Liberation*, inspired left-leaning Christians, Catholic and Protestant, to adopt more radical positions on the liberation of Canada from US imperialism and domination, the rights of Indigenous peoples, the independence movement in French Quebec, and the struggle of poor people in Canada. Christian activists drew attention to liberation movements, for example, by establishing the Inter-Church Committee on Chile and other groups.

Douville includes a second chapter on liberation, this time focusing on women's liberation and LGBTQ+ rights. While one might expect resistance to feminism in the mainline churches—especially the idea of women's ordination—Douville notes that there was not much interest even in the SCM, which was preoccupied by other issues. Even though many of their activists were feminists, Christian progressive groups were slow to adopt women's liberation. These groups had not yet expanded their critique of capitalism to include gender and sexuality and hence failed to develop a feminist theology. Douville finds this ironic because in the later 1970s and early 1980s, feminism would take root in Canadian Christian circles and, in terms of institutional change, women's liberation would have a greater impact than other liberation movements on Canadian Christianity—paving the way, for example, for women's ordination in several Protestant denominations.

Similarly, the Christian New Left was slow to respond to what was then called the "gay liberation" movement, or what we would now call LGBTQ+ rights. For many on the New Left, LGBTQ+ issues seemed like a middle-class concern, unconnected to the more important socio-economic and political issues of the day. Some Christian activists developed LGBTQ+-friendly agen-

cies. The Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto was formed—as was an Anglican group, Integrity, and the Roman Catholic group Dignity. Even as some ministers preached tolerance toward LGBTQ+ members, they were hesitant to accept homosexual activity, which they felt the Bible condemned. Others, including then-Fr. Gregory Baum, a theologian at St. Michael's College, articulated a positive theology of gay liberation, affirming homosexuality as a gift from God. The SCM practised tolerance, befitting its openness to new ideas and all sorts of people; however, it remained silent on the issue. Douville finds it ironic again since, like women's liberation, gay liberation would actually change church practice and policy—at least in certain Protestant denominations.

Douville's book is not without its flaws. At times, his analysis slips into the language of the religious marketplace. For example, he talks about denominations and Christian agencies reaching out to New Left activists in order to remain relevant and to appeal to radical youth in the face of declining numbers. It is more likely that these denominations and agencies were responding to the same forces as the Christian New Left rather than adopting strategies to stem the declining numbers in their pews. Elsewhere, Douville suggests that the adoption of New Left ideas and values—such as feminism and social justice—may have contributed to the decline of mainline denominations. This model, popularized in the sociology of religion by Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, suggests that conservative churches that maintain a stricter boundary between themselves and society, make more demands of their adherents, and resist the infiltration of liberal ideas do a better job of hanging on to their members than do mainline churches. Sociologists, such as José Casanova, have challenged this model, showing that, while it holds in some societies, in others the opposite occurs. Other, broader social forces seem to be at work. For example, today conservative evangelical Christianity in the American Bible belt is in decline, largely because its base—stable families with good jobs—is being eroded. However, my concerns with Douville's excellent book are relatively minor.

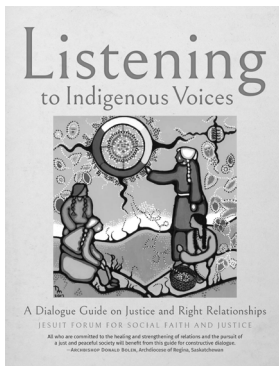
Douville writes that he undertook this study because the mainline histories of the New Left ignore the role of religion and spirituality, missing much of the diversity and richness of the movement and, one could add, its

excitement and gravity. Douville's study demonstrates that for many New Left activists, their causes and campaigns were not the product of trendy, flash-in-the-pan commitments. He argues that these activists, both religious and secular, were seekers, trying on new identities, adopting innovative tactics and practices, experimenting with forms of community, and building new institutional supports. The second reason Douville gives for addressing religion and spirituality is that

many present-day activists in Canada are faith-based activists, motivated by personal spirituality or involvement in religious NGOs such as SCM, KAIROS, and PWRDF [Primate's World Relief and Development Fund]. Many of today's activists look back to the sixties as a source of inspiration, but where is the inspiration for faith-based activists, when they look back to the standard historical accounts of Canada's New Left, only to find “red diaper babies,” Marxist materialist analysis, and a few sentences about the SCM? A more complete history will resonate more fully with those who struggle for justice and peace today.

This book is essential reading for historians of the New Left who have ignored the role of religion and spirituality in an important historical moment. It is also important reading for today's faith-based activists. Finally, it is important reading for those who want to understand more about the role of religion in Canada and modern society. Douville notes that today's culture wars tend to cast Christianity as “homophobic, pro-militaristic, and reactionary.” Consequently, it is important for people, especially Christians, to know that not only is another world possible, but another Christianity—a Christianity of love, acceptance, peace, and justice—is also possible. In the context of the widespread identification of Christianity with right-wing politics (especially given the support of White Evangelicals in the US for Donald Trump) and the retreat of church leadership from public campaigns for social justice, peace, and ecological concerns, *The Uncomfortable Pew* is essential reading.

David Seljak, *St. Jerome's University, Waterloo ON*



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BY JESUIT FORUM FOR SOCIAL FAITH AND JUSTICE

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