

LONERGAN WORKSHOP

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION JUNE 17, 1976

1. Would you say something about changes of schemes of recurrence in relation to parochial and diocesan structures? What institutional implications regarding the good of order in the Church would you see arising from your chapter on "Communication" in Method.

2. Given the history in the American Church of the imperialism of the ~~practitioner~~ ^{practitioner} and the strength of general bias, what suggestions would you have for people who are trying to bring theological reflection to bear in that situation?

3. Why is there so much difficulty in relating the first seven specialities to the eighth? In what forum will the critical dialogue among theology, the sciences, and pastoral leadership take place?

4. How or at what point does the data of pastoral experience enter into the theological enterprise?

5. If theology continues to be done within the institutional matrix of the University (given the Enlightenment presupposition of that matrix), how will a university based theology seriously and correctly involve itself in praxis within the ongoing process of self-constitution that is the Church?

6. If praxis is the art of living, a guide to the creation of the future, is psychic conversion a necessary constituent of authentic praxis?

7. What influence do you see psychic conversion having on doctrines, systematics and communications?

8. Could you give some indication of the sublation of your systematics of the Trinity into Praxis?

9. In relation to the Tuesday discussion of "philosophy" and "method" would you still consider defining philosophy as the "pursuit of wisdom" or the "search for understanding"?

10. Now that we recognize a four-fold structure of consciousness, is there a metaphysical element that corresponds to the fourth level as potency, form and act correspond to the first three?

11. Granted the conversions and the ongoing studies in the history, psychology, etc. of religious experience (MT 290), ~~WHEATON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY~~ could a sublated version of Chapter XIX of Insight be located in the third set of special theological categories of Foundations?

1. Schemes of recurrence are first considered in Insight, ch. 4, as the nodal element in a universe in which order results from both classical and statistical laws.

Classical laws link events in successive interdependence (if A then B; if B then C;.... if X then A) under certain conditions.

~~XX~~
~~XX~~

Statistical laws yield schedules of probabilities, and such schedules have their conditions, which are fulfilled successively working forward from some initial state, eg from plasma in the physicist sense, through the formation of each of the atoms and then of the consequent compounds, to the emergence of organic life and the genesis of the species.

However the emergence of species is not discussed until chapter 8, because only there is the step made from process to things.

Now spontaneously evolving schemes of recurrence also characterize human living, but there a new element supervenes, namely, intelligence which spots in a situation the potentiality for a scheme, implements it, modifies the situation by the implementation, and thereby may give rise to further insights, and so the cyclic recurrent process named progress.

The most easily accessible example of such a process has been the development of modern industrial society in its technological and economic aspects. It has all gone forward without overall planning. What two centuries ago Adam Smith in ~~his~~ the Wealth of Nations called an invisible hand, has its root in emergent probability. Every machine is a scheme of recurrence. Every firm is a schme of recurrence. Every such scheme x of recurrence can be improved by further insights, remodelled by further insights, superseded by more comprehensive schemes.

Moreover, essential to such development is the absence of the overall plan, the possibility of the insights of the man on the spot, the man doing or running the job, being put into practice and improved by incessant trial and error. Planning can reproduce in a backward country the achievements

of a more developed country. But the plan contains no more and no better ideas than the planners in the national head office for planning; and when the plan does not work, the planners are not on the spot to grasp the possibility and the need for better methods, procedures, etc. Insight does not develop with respect to plans that fail or do poorly; it develops with respect to concrete situations and in minds operating in the situations and seeing what exactly is going on and what else could be done.

Hence seven topics for your consideration:

a) Free enterprise is good because it is decentralised, and it is decentralised in the measure that all insights that arise on the spot can be put into effect, tried out, etc.

b) Higher integrations are also the fruit of insights but they have to be the work of people familiar and ongoingly familiar with the lower schemes that are being integrated.

c) Free enterprise, accordingly, is something distinct from the guidance of the profit motive.

The significance of the profit motive is that it provides motivation for egoists, but that is not pure gain, for egoism is a source of bias and bias is the source of decline. On the other hand, emergent probability is a quite general process, that brings together in a single process of the universe the emergence of atoms, compounds, vegetable and animal species, spontaneous human developments, and the developments that suppose the conscious entry of human intelligence in recognizing the possibility of further schemes and bringing their existence into effect.

to a notable extent
d) Now the modernity of the modern world resides in its rapid cumulation of new schemes of recurrence in the fields of technology and economics with consequent adaptations in the realms of the family and mores, the society and education, the state and the law, the church and the sects, and with further adaptations in the realm of culture that provides the legitimation and motivation for the social arrangements and procedures.

e) Contrasting with this modern state of affairs was the prior state, which goes back to the discovery of the ox and the plough, of large scale agriculture, of the temple states, of their unifications in the empires of Egypt and Mesopotamia and Crete, of Alexander and Rome, and the emergence ~~ix~~ after the decline and fall of Rome of the feudal order of medieval Europe.

Then society was static, innovations added to the convenience and adornment of life but did not transform society, and culture was classicist with its preaching of a perennial philosophy, its appreciation of its immortal works of art, its commitment to the wisdom and prudence of mankind enshrined in its social arrangements and its laws.

f) What the church of today suffers is the conflict ~~x~~ between feudal elements in its structures and classicist elements in its thought on the ~~ix~~ one hand and on the other the conditions of the possibility of fruitful change.

These conditions are decentralization, the freedom of the man ~~ix~~ on the spot to be intelligent in a practical way, the emergence of ~~ix~~ higher integrations from below upwards, otherwise they will not integrate what is emerging below and constitutes the promise of the future.

g) The gravest danger to this process of renewal from below is, of course, the failure to distinguish between mere bright ideas (that launch bandwagons that provide for a few months or years the opportunity for opportunists to be big shots) and genuine insights into the real possibilities of the situation, the signs of the times, etc.

It is here that discernment is crucial, a discernment that is indeed spiritual and religious, but also moral and without bias, and above all intelligent and ready to be corrected qualified modified developed by further intelligence in other ~~ix~~ heads. After all, the essence of emergent probability in human history is insight into situations.

1b. What institutional implications

Above all a cultural change, out of feudal order and classicist culture, into contemporary dynamism in arrangements and thinking

Scissors like operation

from above downwards: theology as interdisciplinary and so as learning from and exerting influence on other human disciplines
from below upwards: innovation at the grass roots, leading to innovation in the higher integrations

2. Theological reflection operates

on the personal level: one's prayer and study

on the level of teaching: from catechetics to the university

on the interdisciplinary level: theology as one of the sciences

on the level of practical discernment: progress from concrete intelligence, avoidance of decline from moral conversion, recovery from the effects of decline by the law of the cross

3. Because it is in the ~~x~~ eighth speciality that the emergence of a new ball game emerges into the clear light of day.

But method in theology ~~breaks~~ breaks from Greek and medieval thought, from the Aristotelian ~~hierarchy~~ hierarchy of the sciences, from the feudal notion of sound social arrangements, from the classicist notion of culture.

In what forum will the critical dialogue take place? Perhaps in Fr Mullign's successor institution to replace the seminary.

4. As the feedback from pastoral experience to the innovators on the spot, from the innovations to the proximate higher integrations, their policy making and their planning, and so on upwards.

5. By doing first class theology, by its contact with religious studies to inform its ecumenism, and its relations with non-Christian religions, by its self-understanding as interdisciplinary (vs Aristotelian hierarchy and Queen of the sciences) and its interdependence with other human fields.

6. Psychic conversion, ie a sufficient flow of communication between organism mind and heart, is needed

When is it needed? Psychological tests: NY province.
Don't weed out the geniuses.

7. It cuts down on the nuts that waste time ~~xxxx~~ in their misguided attempts to improve on doctrines and systematics

It enhances a peron's capacity to communicate to others what he really knows, feels; it improves his interpetsonal relations and activities.

8. Systematics enters into practice inasmuch as (1) it frees the teacher and preacher and instructor from the necessity of either repeating formulae he does not understand x or else of passing off as Christian doctrine what is merely his misapprehension, and (2) it provides the preacher teachere etc with an understanding of the doctrine that he can express accurately in countxless manners.

9. Definitions are possible only from within a systematic grasp of a whole field. Eg Socrates and Aristotle on Ethics. Analysts on ordinary language does not define itself but knows when words are use appropriately.

If you mean the "philosophy" meant in history of philosophy, then I would say that historians do not define but narrate.

If you mean some particular pphilosophy, then get the definition from the pariticuair philosopher you have in mind.

In brief I dod not accept classicist presuppostions that there is one right definition for eveything.

10. Both the third and the fourth level regard the third component in metaphysical structure, namely, act in the triad of potency form and act. Judgement of fact regards act as already existent; judgement of value and decision regard act as prospective.

11. Certainly. Philosophy of God and Theology proposes that natural theology be transposed into the theology course of those that study theology. It may remain in the philosophy course of those that do not study theology.