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THEOLOGY AND PRAXIS

If praxis is identified with practicality, then theology becomes an instance of praxis when it is converted into a tool for some distinct and praiseworthy end. So at the present time the conspicuous examples of theology as praxis would be the liberation theologies, whether geared to liberate Latin America from the fetters of capitalism, or to liberate black Americans from the injustice of racial discrimination, or to liberate women from the domination of patriarchal society.

It remains that there is an older connotation to the Greek word, and it is this older connotation that tends to justify the intrusion of ancient Greek into modern English.[1] For in Aristotle there is a contrast between *praxis* and *poiēsis* that may be paralleled by an English contrast between doing and making, conduct and product.[2] Moreover, it is precisely in the contrast that the connotation we desire is to be found. For products pass beyond the maker's control, and the ends to which they are used depend on the free decisions of others. But one's doing, one's conduct, results from the end which one has oneself chosen and, normally, chosen freely. Our making or producing, for ends we do not control, is guided simply by the know-how of technique. But our doing, our conduct, our praxis result from our own deliberation and choice under the guidance of the practical wisdom that Aristotle named *phronēsis* and Aquinas named *prudentia*.[3]

Now such attention to the responsible freedom of human conduct is very attractive to many at the present time. They are reacting against the behaviorists that deny scientific validity to explanations unable to reproduce human behavior in a robot or at least in a rat. They are reacting against the positivism that Jürgen Habermas has characterized as basically a refusal to reflect.[4] They are reacting against industry or again against government as managed by a faceless bureaucracy far too intricate ever to be brought

[1] For example, R. J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action: Contemporary Theories of Human Activity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971).

[2] In the *Nicomachean Ethics* one reads that praxis is shared neither by animals (VI, 2, $1139^{a}20$) nor by the gods (X, 8, $1178^{b}7$-22). It differs from *poiēsis* and so from *technē* (VI, 4, $1140^{a}1$ff.). As is *phronēsis* (VI, 7, $1141^{b}16$), it is concerned with particulars (III, 1, $1110^{b}6$). Desire and the *logos* of the end are the principle of *proairesis*, and *proairesis* is the efficient principle of praxis (VI, 2, $1139^{a}31$ff.). As the hypothesis is the principle in mathematics, so the end is the principle in praxis (VII, 8, $1151^{a}16$).

[3] S. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, qq. 48-56.

[4] J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, 1972), pp. 67ff.

to account.[5] Nor are they simply reacting, for they are adhering to a philosophic tendency that in the last two centuries has worked itself out in many diverse forms. It appears in Kant's first and second critiques, in Schopenhauer's world as will and representation, in Kierkegaard's reliance on faith and Newman's reliance on conscience, in Nietzsche's will to power, in Blondel's philosophy of action, in Ricoeur's philosophy of will, in Habermas's juxtaposition of knowledge and human interests.

Now to ask whether theology is a praxis in this second sense, is not to ask whether the views of Kant or Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard or Newman, Nietzsche or Blondel, Ricoeur or Habermas are to be made normative in theology. On the contrary, it is to ask a general question and a rather technical one. It is to ask whether there are basic theological questions whose solution depends on the personal development of theologians. Again, to use a distinction made by Paul Ricoeur, it is to ask whether issues on which theologians are badly divided call for the employment of both a hermeneutic of suspicion and a hermeneutic of recovery: a hermeneutic of suspicion that diagnoses failures in personal development and a hermeneutic of recovery that generously recognizes the genuine personal development that did occur.[6]

BERNHARD WELTE'S QUESTION

Bernhard Welte is professor at Munich of interdisciplinary questions of concern to both theologians and philosophers. In the fifty-first volume of Herder's series entitled *Quaestiones Disputatae* he has asked whether the Nicene decree marks the invasion of theology by a Heideggerian forgetfulness of being.[7] In adverting to this question I must say at once that it is not my intention this morning to attempt to resolve it. My sole concern is to provide an instance that in my opinion illustrates a theological issue of some importance yet can be genuinely solved only inasmuch as individual theologians undergo an intellectual conversion.

The question, then, as proposed by Professor Welte, comes out of the history of philosophic and theological thought. In such history it is recognized that in different periods there emerge

[5]Cf. R. N. Goodwin, *The American Condition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), pp. 197ff.

[6]A basic presentation is by D. Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971), pp. 140ff.

[7]B. Welte, "Die Lehrformel von Nikaia und die abendländische Metaphysik," in *Zur Frühgeschichte der Christologie*, ed. by Bernhard Welte (Freiburg: Herder, 1970), pp. 100-17.

different approaches to reality and different apprehensions of it. An instance of such emergence and difference is found in a contrast of biblical and conciliar thought. The biblical approach to reality, by and large, is centered on events. Its concern is dynamic. In contrast, at Nicea and in subsequent councils there emerges the static approach of Greek metaphysics, an approach concerned with the present and permanent, and so an approach that Heidegger has criticized as a forgetfulness of being. There arises accordingly the question whether theologians today have on their hands the task of finding a different way of handling the issues that for centuries were thought to have been handled satisfactorily at Nicea.

Now I have no doubt that at different times, or at the same time among different individuals or groups, there exist different approaches to reality and different apprehensions of it. In fact I have argued for the possibility of some thirty-one distinct differentiations of consciousness;[8] and I have no hesitation in granting that in the Greek councils there comes into play a differentiation of consciousness that one hardly finds in the biblical authors.[9]

However, I do find a certain ambiguity in the use of the term "static." It may denote an actuality, or an ideal, or a mere possibility. Let me say a few words on each of these.

A doctrine clearly is actually static when it meets the requirements of the Aristotelian account of science (*epistēmē*) set forth in the *Posterior Analytics*. There science is described as knowing the cause, knowing that it is the cause, and knowing that the effect cannot be other than it is.[10] But the technical account of the expression of such knowledge is in terms of demonstration (*apodeixis*) which proceeds from first principles to conclusions in such a manner that every predicate pertains to its subject universally, necessarily, eternally.[11] Clearly if such a doctrine exists, it is static. But does such a doctrine exist? Aristotle acknowledged only one possibility: mathematics.[12]

[8] A succinct presentation of the pieces that may be combined in various ways may be found in B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp. 302ff.

[9] The movement has been sketched in B. Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology*. A translation by Conn O'Donovan from the first part of *De Deo Trino* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977).

[10] Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* I, 2, $79^{b}9$ff.

[11] *Ibid.*, I, 4.6.8.

[12] So Sir David Ross, *Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), p. 14.

Next there is a static ideal prescribed by a logic that aims at clarity in all its terms, coherence in all its propositions, rigor in all its arguments. Still such an ideal remains ineffective unless it is believed that clarity, coherence, and rigor have been attained or are about to be attained. Such a belief is cancelled when the logical ideal is regarded as only part of a larger methodical ideal. So in the modern sciences the logical ideal is fully acknowledged. But this acknowledgement does not prevent the occurrence of new discoveries and the consequent correction of previous formulations. Similarly, in thirteenth-century theology the endless questions expressed the effort of reflection to attain clarity, coherence, and certain, or at least probable, reasons.[13] But the questions were only part of the method. There also was the reading of ancient authors, commentaries on their writings, compilations of the opinions of different authors, collations of these opinions with the questions that were being raised. Within that conjunction of research with reflection logic had free play but did not lead to fixity. On the contrary, it acted as a solvent, revealed the flaws in previously entertained views and, along with an ever fuller grasp of the sources, kept the questions on the move.[14] In contrast, in the fourteenth century, when logic and even the *Posterior Analytics* became dominant, criticism took over and headed theology into what really is static, into skepticism and decadence.[15]

Besides the static as actuality and the static as ideal there is the static as mere possibility. This possibility arises when one reaches the age of twelve years. For at that age, according to the educational psychology of Jean Piaget, one becomes capable of operating on propositions. It follows that one can define. For when one operates on propositions, one uses them as objects; when one uses them as objects, one can employ them to define the meaning of one's terms. Now once a meaning is defined, and as long as that definition is retained, the meaning remains the same. It is static. Moreover, the static meaning will yield a static apprehension of reality, provided the definition is not merely negative, not merely

[13] Abelard's *Sic et non* is thought to have inspired the *Videtur quod non* and *Sed contra* of the medieval *quaestio*. The relevance of probable as well as certain arguments is attested by Aquinas, *C. Gent.* I, 9.

[14] I became vividly aware of this in studying Aquinas on *gratia operans*. See my articles on the topic in *Theological Studies* 1941 and 1942, or the better presentation by J. Patout Burns in B. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd; New York: Herder and Herder, 1971).

[15] The seminal work is Konstanty Michalski, *La philosophie au XIV^e siècle: Six études*, ed. and introduced by Kurt Flasch (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1969).

heuristic, not merely provisional, not merely partial, but positive, definitive, and complete. So a definition is merely negative, as when Aquinas asserts that we do not know what the divine essence is but only what it is not.[16] It is merely heuristic when it states what we are attempting to discover but as yet do not know.[17] It is merely provisional when it is proposed within a hypothesis. It is merely partial when it claims to be true as far as it goes but acknowledges that there is much more to be said.[18] It is positive, definitive, and complete, when it differs contradictorily from the preceding. The closest instance I recall occurs in the later states of the Arian controversy. The Anomoean, Eunomius, is credited with the opinion that if one grasped the notion of the "unbegotten" then one knew God just as well as God knew himself.[19]

Let us now ask how static was the approach to reality and the apprehension of it set forth in the Nicene decree. It will suffice to take the key term, *homoousios*. According to Athanasius this key term means that statements true of the Father also are true of the Son except that the Son is not the Father. Now is this meaning static or dynamic? Obviously we have to consider the statements that Athanasius had in mind. Nor is any difficulty involved, for Athanasius proceeds to quote a number of statements true both of the Father and of the Son. He finds them not in some text of Greek metaphysics but in the scriptures. As understood by Athanasius, then, the Nicene decree was just as static and just as dynamic as what Athanasius found in the Bible.[20]

Such continuity with biblical statement is not peculiar to Athanasius. A preface in the previous Roman missal, recited on a majority of Sundays throughout the year, employed the Athanasian formula in a prayer addressed to God the Father: "What because of your revelation we believe of your glory, the same of your Son, the same of the Holy Spirit we acknowledge without distinction or difference." There seems no disruptive departure from the scriptural mode of apprehension when one and the same Kabod Yahweh is acknowledged in Father, Son, and Spirit.

[16] *C. Gent.* I, 14.

[17] As when Augustine explains what he means by the term person, as "what there are three of in the Trinity." Cf. *De trinitate* VII, iv, 7; *PL* 42, 939; B. Lonergan, *A Second Collection* (London and Philadelphia, 1974), p. 199.

[18] Hence the rule: *Abstrahentium non est mendacium.*

[19] *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*[2] III, 1182.

[20] See B. Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea*, p. 91.

ERIC VOEGELIN'S ALTERNATIVE

Even though it is granted that Nicea, rightly understood, is quite compatible with a biblical mode of apprehension, nonetheless Nicea does superpose upon the biblical mode a quite distinct doctrinal mode and, down the centuries, that doctrinal mode has come to dominate not only theological but to a great extent even religious thought.

It remains that this doctrinal mode cannot be combated coherently by setting up against it some anti-doctrinal doctrine. In deed, as Eric Voegelin has claimed, nothing can be achieved by pitting right doctrine against wrong doctrine,[21] for that only intensifies preoccupation with doctrine. What is needed, he urges, is the restoration of the search for the meaning of life, a search he would have us recognize no less in fourth-century Athens than in the Christian gospel.

A basic symbol for that search was phrased by Euripides when he exclaimed, "Who knows if to live is to be dead and to be dead to live?" The symbol was resumed by Plato in the *Gorgias* (492 E) and elaborated at the end of that dialogue in the Myth of the Judgment of the Dead. But its most effective setting occurs at the end of the *Apology* when Socrates concludes, "But now the time has come to go. I go to die, and you to live; but who goes to the better lot is unknown to anyone but God."[22]

Obviously what Voegelin is raising is a question not just for philosophers but for everyman. So there is no occasion for surprise when the same symbol comes from the lips of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, "For whoever would save his life [*psychēn*] will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What then will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world but has to suffer the destruction of his life" (Mt 16:25f.). Or again one may read in Paul, "If you live according to the flesh, you are bound to die; but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Rom 8:15).[23]

Variants can be multiplied but Voegelin finds particular satisfaction in the twelfth chapter of St. John's Gospel when it is Greeks that ask to see Jesus and their request evokes the reply, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. In truth, in very truth I

[21] Eric Voegelin, "The Gospel and Culture," in *Jesus and Man's Hope*, ed. by D. G. Miller and D. Y. Hadidian (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971), p. 66.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

tell you, a grain of wheat remains a solitary grain unless it falls into the ground and dies; but if it dies, it bears a rich harvest. The man who loves himself is lost, but he who hates himself in this world will be kept safe for eternal life" (Jn 12:23ff.).[24]

I have been speaking of the double meaning of life and death as a symbol, and Voegelin would stress the point. For from the symbol one can either go backward to the engendering experience or forward to the doctrines Plato and Aristotle were later to formulate. The latter course obviously is contrary to Voegelin's intent, and so he directs our attention to the Parable of the Cave.

> There Plato lets the man who is fettered with his face to the wall be dragged up (*helkein*) by force to the light (Rep 515). The accent lies on the violence suffered by the man in the Cave, on his passivity and even resistance to being turned round (*periagein*) so that the ascent to the light is less an action of seeking than a fate inflicted.[25]

In brief there are opposite principles at work, and to them Plato adverts. On the one hand, opinion may lead through reason (*logos*) to the best (*ariston*), and its power is called self-restraint (*sōphrosyne*); on the other hand, desire may drag us (*helkein*) towards pleasures and its rule is called excess (*hybris*).[26] Or as Voegelin illustrates the matter, a young man may be drawn to philosophy but by social pressure be diverted to a life of pleasure or to seeking success in politics. But if he follows the second pull, the meaning of his life is not settled for him. The first pull remains and is still experienced as part of his living. Following the second pull does not transform his being into a question-free fact, but into a recognizably questionable course. He will sense that the life he leads is not his "own and true life" (495 C).[27]

In brief there is a pull or attraction that, if followed, puts an end to questioning; and there are counter-pulls that, when followed, leave questions unanswered and conscience ill at ease. The former alternative is what Voegelin means by a movement luminous with truth, or again by existing in the truth, or again by the truth of existence. The latter alternative is existence in untruth. As he contends, this luminosity of existence with the truth of reason precedes all opinions and decisions about the pull to be followed. Moreover, it remains alive as the judgment of truth in existence whatever opinions about it we may actually form.[28] In other

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[26] *Phaedrus* 238 A.
[27] Voegelin, "Gospel and Culture," p. 71.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 72-6.

words, there is an inner light that runs before the formulation of doctrines and that survives even despite opposing doctrines. To follow that inner light is life, even though to worldly eyes it is to die. To reject that inner light is to die, even though the world envies one's attainments and achievements.

For Voegelin, then, the classic experience of reason[29] in fourth-century Athens was something poles apart from the reason cultivated in late medieval metaphysics and theology,[30] from the reason of Descartes and the rationalists, from the reason of the French enlightenment and the German absolute idealists. It took its stand not on logic but on inner experience. Its conflicts were not public disputations but inner trials. Its victory was the saving of one's life, keeping one's soul undefiled, holding ever to the upward way, pursuing righteousness with wisdom, so that we may be dear to ourselves and to the gods (Rep 621 BC).[31] This, of course, is Plato. But the sobriety of the *Nicomachean Ethics* does not imply that Aristotle holds a different view.

> If reason is divine in comparison with man then the life according to reason is divine in comparison with human life. But we must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and, being mortal, to think of mortal things, but we must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything.[32]
>
> If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be the best thing in us. Whether it be reason [*nous*] or something else that is this element which is thought to be our natural ruler and guide and to take thought of things noble and divine, whether it be itself also divine or only the most divine element in us,[33] the activity of this in accordance with its proper virtue will be perfect happiness. That this activity is contemplation we have already said.[34]

It is not only classic philosophy but also the gospel that symbolizes existence as a field of pulls and counter-pulls. Like Plato, the Gospel of John uses the word, draw, drag (*helkein*). Jesus on the eve of his passion can say, "And I shall draw all men to myself, when I am lifted up" (Jn 12:32). But the power of the

[29]Eric Voegelin, "Reason: The Classic Experience," *The Southern Review* 10 (1974), 237-64.

[30]Cf. "Gospel and Culture," p. 66.

[31]*Ibid.*, p. 67.

[32]*Nicomachean Ethics* X, 7, 1177^{b} 30ff. The Oxford translation ed. by Richard McKeon.

[33]The passage suggests that Aristotle did not take faculty psychology with the rigidity it acquired in Scholasticism.

[34]*Eth. Nic.* X, 7, 1177^{a} 12ff.

crucified to draw men to himself is conditioned by the prior drawing by the Father. "No man can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me" (Jn 6:44). And that prior drawing is a listening and learning: "Everyone who has listened to the Father and learned from him, comes to me" (Jn 6:45).[35]

On the basis of this drawing Voegelin distinguishes between revelation and information. To Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi Jesus answered: "Simon, son of Jonah, you are favored indeed! You did not learn that from mortal man; it was revealed to you by my heavenly father" (Mt 16:17). Voegelin comments:

> The Matthean Jesus thus agrees with the Johannine (Jn 6:44) that nobody can recognize the movement of the divine presence in the Son, unless he is prepared for such recognition by the presence of the divine Father in himself. The divine Sonship is not revealed through information tendered by Jesus, but through a man's response to the full presence in Jesus of the same Unknown God by whose presence he is inchoatively moved in his own existence. . . . In order to draw the distinction between revelation and information, as well as to avoid the derailment from one to the other, the episode closes with the charge of Jesus to the disciples "to tell no one that he is the Christ" (Mt 16:20).[36]

The distinction Voegelin finds in the revelation of Jesus as Christ to Peter, he also finds in the communication by the apostles to their converts. So Jesus prays: "O righteous Father . . . I know thee and these men know that thou didst send me. I made my name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love thou hadst for me may be in them, and I may be in them" (Jn 17:25f.). In similar fashion we also read: "But it is not for these alone that I pray, but for those also who through their words put their faith in me; may they all be one: as thou Father art in me and I in thee, so also may they be in us, that the world may believe that thou didst send me. The glory which thou gavest me I have given to them, that they may be one, as we are one; I in them and thou in me, may they be perfectly one. Then the world will learn that thou didst send me, that thou didst love them as thou didst me" (Jn 17:20-23).[37]

Let me conclude. Voegelin agrees with the estimate of Justin Martyr that the gospel, so far from being opposed to the classic philosophy of Athens, is that philosophy brought to the state of perfection.[38] Both are responses to the question set by the twofold

[35] "Gospel and Culture," p. 77.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

meaning of life and death. Both take the issue with the full seriousness of the death of Socrates or the fuller seriousness of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Both know of light and darkness, of pull and counter-pull, of the need of free choice to support the gentle pull of the golden cord, of the inner unrest that remains with those that turn aside.[39] But the followers of Socrates speak of conversion (*periagōgē*) and the followers of Jesus speak of repentance (*metanoia*).

THEOLOGY AS PRAXIS

I have drawn upon Bernhard Welte's question and Eric Voegelin's alternative because between them they raise a series of issues that continuously crop up in doing theology yet are resolved far less by objective rules than by existential decisions.

Welte suspects the Nicene decree to have been forgetful of being because it speaks of *ousia* and so must mean *das beständig Anwesende, das beständig Vorliegende*.[40] In these expressions I would distinguish two elements. There is a perceptual element, the presence (*Anwesenheit*) of what lies before one (*Vorliegende*). There is a static logical element (*Beständigkeit*). Though both tie in with the massive problem Plato expressed symbolically in his Parable of the Cave, they do so in different manners and I shall speak of them separately.

Fourteenth-century scholasticism discussed with considerable acumen the validity of an intuition of what exists and is present.[41] Now you may or may not hold that valid perception is what constitutes human knowledge as objective. But at least in all probability you did at one time take a perceptualism for granted. And if, by some lucky chance, you succeeded in freeing yourself

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

[40] Welte, "Die Lehrformel von Nikaia und die abendländische Metaphysik," p. 112: "Als das Ständige ist der Gegenstand oder das Seiende nun für das Denken der neuen Zeit in der Weise zeitlich, dass es, in der Zeit stehend, zugleich wie gar nicht von ihr berührt ist. So steht es dem Geschehen oder dem Ereignis als ein Statisches gegenüber. Es wird mit Vorzug Usia genannt. Diesen Ausdruck versteht Heidegger als das beständig Anwesende."

Further, p. 113: "Vielmehr entsteht jetzt die ganz anders gestimmte Frage als Leitfrage, was ist? Und diese Frage hat einen offensichtlich Sinn. Sie schliesst die andere, was geschehen ist and was geschieht, nicht aus, aber sie läuft in einer anderen Richtung. Sie frägt doch, was ist in Jesus das beständig Vorliegende."

[41] The extreme views of Nicholas of Autrecourt are listed in *DS* 1028-49. The distinction between divine power itself and divine power as ordered by divine wisdom opened the way to advancing that divine power itself could do anything that did not involve a contradiction. There followed questions of the type, Is there any contradiction in supposing that one can have an intuition of *X* as existing and present although *X* neither is present and does not even exist?

completely from that assumption, then your experience would have been quite similar to that of the prisoner who struggled might and main against his release from the darkness of Plato's cave.

Is then perceptualism the same as Heidegger's forgetfulness of being? The question supposes Heidegger's meaning to be well known. Let me say very simply that perceptualism is forgetfulness of the inner light, the light that raises questions and, when answers are insufficient, keeps raising further questions. It is the inner light of intelligence that asks what and why and how and what for and, until insight hits the bull's eye, keeps further questions popping up. It is the inner light of reasonableness that demands sufficient reason before assenting and, until sufficient reason is forthcoming, keeps in your mind the further questions of the doubter. It is the inner light of deliberation that brings you beyond the egoist's question—What's in it for me?—to the moralist's question—Is it really and truly worth while?—and if your living does not meet that standard, bathes you in the unrest of an uneasy conscience.

The ascent from the darkness of the cave to the light of day is a movement from a world of immediacy that is already out there now to a world mediated by the meaningfulness of intelligent, reasonable, responsible answers to questions.[42]

Are the dogmas caught in the forgetfulness of being? I should say that it all depends on the theologian interpreting the dogmas. When the dogmas are interpreted by one who habitually dwells in the world of the perceptualist, there would be forgetfulness of the inner light and, as well, forgetfulness of being if by being is meant the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values. But if the dogmas are interpreted by one who habitually dwells in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values, there is forgetfulness of the world of perceptualists but not of the world of those who have not seen but have believed (Jn 20:29).

Besides presence, the Greek word *ousia* is thought to connote permanence, to forget the dynamic, and point to the static.[43] I have expressed the opinion that static thinking has its source, not in Greek or other metaphysics, but in any thought or doctrine that gives one-sided attention to logic. The logical ideal of clarity, coherence, and rigor can be pursued with excellent results, provided the pursuit is only part of a larger ongoing investigation that

[42] Again, it is a movement from the horizon of ocular vision to the horizon of being, where the horizon of being is the horizon that is enlarged when one discovers and follows up a significant question, and the horizon that is contracted when one brushes aside a significant question.

[43] See note 40 above.

has other resources and fuller goals than logic alone can attain. Admittedly there is to the *Posterior Analytics* a one-sidedness that concentrates on necessity and slights verifiable possibility; and it was by concentrating on verifiable possibility that modern science proved its superiority to Aristotelian logic. But that logic is so much less than the whole of Aristotle.

So, I should say, the same distinction is to be applied to metaphysics as was to dogma. For a metaphysics may be modelled on the dictates of the *Posterior Analytics* and then its doctrine will be static. But it may be conceived as the integration of the heuristic structures of such ongoing investigations as natural science, human studies, theology, and then it will be no more static than such ongoing investigations. Instead of being a dam that blocks the river's flow, it will be the bed within which the river does its flowing.[44]

If Welte and Voegelin hold contrasting views on the relevance of Greek philosophy to Christian truth, at least both insist upon events. Welte claims, rightly I believe, that by and large the Bible is a narrative of events. Voegelin also stresses events, but they are the inner events of pull and counter-pull (*helkein, anthelkein*) that invite to life and seduce to death.

There also is a further point on which, I think, their agreement may be discerned. For if I argued that Nicea can be taken in a properly biblical manner, I also granted that it has become down the ages the fountainhead of a proliferating doctrinal mode of thought. Now such a mode of thought, in a mind more inclined to logic than to understanding, is a real source of static thinking. Nor may one suppose such minds to be rare, for the easier course is the commoner, and it is far easier to draw conclusions from what one already holds than to deepen one's understanding of what one's convictions mean.

I believe, then, that Welte has a real point in so far as he associates doctrine with a grave risk of congealed minds. But Voegelin makes a similar point though in a quite different manner. He is aware of the self-transcending dynamism of truly human living, of its mythical and symbolic expression, of its philosophic expression, and of its expression in the prophets of the Old Testament and in the writers of the New.[45] He is aware that only through

[44] See the definition of metaphysics in Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 390-4.

[45] Voegelin's sweep is breath-taking: in his "The Gospel and Culture" he pulls together Myth, Philosophy, Prophecy, and Gospel.

Myth is not a primitive symbolic form, peculiar to early societies and progressively to be overcome by positive science, but the language in which the experi-

one's own experience of that dynamism can one advert to its working in others. By a brilliant extension he moves on to his distinction between revelation and information. Items of information are all about us: they are the stock in trade of the media. But revelation is not just one more item of information. In its essential moment it is a twofold pull: being drawn by the Father, listening to him, learning from him; and being drawn by the Son, crucified, dead, and risen. Again, it is a twofold grace: an inner operative grace that plucks out hearts of stone and replaces them with hearts of flesh; and the outer grace of the Christian tradition that brings the gospel to our ears.

Now I think Voegelin's criticism of doctrines and doctrinization to be exaggerated.[46] But everyone will expect this of me, so there is no point in my repeating here what I have already said rather abundantly. What I do believe to be important on the present occasion is to insist how right I consider Voegelin to be in what he does say. For what he does say is foundational. It is the kind of knowledge by which people live their lives. It is the kind of knowledge that scientists and scholars, philosophers and theologians, presuppose when they perform their specialized tasks. It is the knowledge of which Newman wrote in his *Grammar of Assent*, Polanyi wrote in his *Personal Knowledge*, Gadamer in his *Truth and Method*. It is the kind of knowledge thematized by ascetical and mystical writers when they speak of the discernment of spirits and set forth rules for distinguishing between pull and counter-pull, between being drawn by the Father to be drawn to the Son and, on the other hand, the myriad other attractions that distract the human spirit.[47]

ences of human-divine participation in the In-Between become articulate (p. 76).

The Amon Hymns (to the god above the gods and unknown by the gods) are the representative document of the movement at the stage where the splendor of the cosmological gods has become derivative, though the gods themselves have not yet become false. Seven hundred years later, in the Deutero-Isaianic equivalent to the Amon Hymns (Is 40:12-25), the gods have become man-made idols who no longer partake of divine reality, while the unknown god has acquired the monopoly of divinity (p. 85).

The noetic core, thus, is the same in both classic philosophy and the Gospel movement (p. 80).

In the historical drama of revelation, the unknown god ultimately becomes the God known through his presence in Christ (p. 88).

[46]His statements (e.g., pp. 74-6) seem to me to go well beyond a repudiation of a doctrinaire *carabiniere*.

[47]On this topic for a brief account, *Sacramentum mundi*, II, 89-91. For a fuller treatment, *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, articles on *Consolation spirituelle (II, 1617-34)*, *Démon* (III, 141-238), *Direction spirituelle* (III, 1002-211), *Discernement des esprits* (III, 1222-91).

Indeed it is in this long history of spiritual writing that one finds the confirmation of Voegelin's "In-Between" and his "Beyond." For being drawn by the Father is neither merely human nor strictly divine but "In-Between." As movement is from the mover but in what is moved, so the drawing is from the Father but in the suppliant. Again, because the drawing is from the Father, it bears the stamp of unworldliness; it is not just me but from the "Beyond." Finally, because there are not only pulls but also counter-pulls, because the first can dignify the second, and the second can distort the first, there is need for discernment and, no less, difficulty in attaining it.[48]

Now such thematization pertains to experiential or ascetical or mystical theology and Voegelin regrets its separation from school theology.[49] But separation is one thing and distinction is another. I believe a distinction is to be made between the spiritual life of a theologian and his professional activities: the former is religion in act; the latter is concerned with the interdependence of a religion and a culture.[50] But separation arises from the controvertialist's need to claim total detachment. It arises from criteria of objectivity such as necessity and self-evidence that seem to imply that our minds should work with an automatic infallibility. It arises from an unawareness that the interpretation of texts and the investigation of history are conditioned by the personal horizon of the interpreter or the historian.[51] It arises from an inadvertence to the dominant role of value judgments in much of theology as in much of human life. Finally, because I consider such grounds for a separation to be no longer tenable, I have assigned in my *Method in Theology* a key role to two functional specialties, *Dialectic* and *Foundations*. Now *Dialectic* stands to theology, as pull and counter-pull stand to the spiritual life. And *Foundations* stands to theology, as discernment stands to the spiritual life where it sorts out pull and counter-pull and does not permit counter-pull to distort the pull or pull to let seep some of its dignity and worth on to counter-pull.

So we arrive at a conception of theology as basically a praxis. In conclusion three points seem to be in order: (1) the structure of individual development, (2) the occurrence of identity crises in the

[48]On the key discriminant in the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*, consolation without a previous cause, a notable study recommended with a preface by Karl Rahner is: Harvey D. Egan, *The Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian Mystical Horizon* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1976).

[49]"Gospel and Culture," p. 88.

[50]Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. *xi*.

[51]*Ibid.*, p. 195.

Christian community, and (3) the necessity of a certain doctrinal pluralism.

The structure of individual development is twofold. The chronologically-prior phase is from above downwards. Children are born into a cradling environment of love. By a long and slow process of socialization, acculturation, education they are transferred from their initial world of immediacy into the local variety of the world mediated by meaning and mediated by values. Basically this process rests on trust and belief. But as it proceeds more and more there develops the capacity to raise questions and to be satisfied or dissatisfied with answers. Such is the spontaneous and fundamental process of teaching and learning common to all. It is at once intelligent and reasonable and responsible. But while it is consciously intelligent, consciously reasonable, consciously responsible, still these properties attain no more than a symbolic objectification and representation. Even when subjected to higher education, one does well to attain some clear and precise understanding of one's own activities in this or that field of specialization. Few indeed attempt the philosophic task of coming to grasp the similarities and the differences of the many ways in which basic operations are variously modified and variously combined to yield the appropriate procedures in different fields. And of the few that attempt this, even fewer succeed in mapping the interior of the "black box" in which the input is sensations and the output is talk.

What holds in general for self-understanding in our world mediated by meaning and motivated by values, also holds when that world is transfigured by God's self-revelation in Christ Jesus. The one revelation was made to many and thereby brought about a new type of community. For that community Christ prayed to his Father that they all be one, as thou Father in me and I in thee, that they all be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. It remains that a community is one not only by God's grace but also by a consequent union of minds and of hearts. Again, it remains that that consequent union can be troubled, disturbed, undergo an identity crisis; and then the solution to that crisis will be a common confession of faith. It is such confessions of faith that have been given the name dogmas. In the older liturgies they often were enshrined in various manners, but in the recently-devised Roman liturgy such confessions tend to be reduced to their scriptural basis.

So there emerges the question of doctrinal pluralism. Its real basis, I believe, is the multiple differentiation of consciousness possible at the present time and often needed to master issues in

theology. But the development that may be expected of a theologian is not to be required generally, nor is it easy to defend the mere repetition of formulas that are not understood. Personally I should urge that in each case one inquire whether the old issue still has a real import and, if it has, a suitable expression for that import be found. For example, at Nicea the real import was whether Christ, the mediator of our salvation, was a creature. Today many perhaps will be little moved by the question whether we have been saved by a creature or by God himself. But the issue may be put differently. One can ask whether God revealed his love for us by having a man die the death of scourging and crucifixion? Or was it his own Son, a divine person, who became flesh to suffer and die and thereby touch our hard hearts and lead us to eternal life?

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A RESPONSE (I) TO BERNARD LONERGAN

From the opening lines of his paper, Theology and Praxis, the reader has the initial impression that Professor Lonergan is going to bring his considerable acumen to bear upon the relationship between theology and the continued oppression of individuals because of race, sex or ethnicity. Having benefited from his work in the field of systematics and most of all from his pioneering efforts in methodology, the reader is hopeful of learning how Lonergan himself might relate, for example, the functional specialities of Dialectic and Communication or his protean notion of conversion to liberation theology and what criterion he would establish for evaluating this new and important literature. However, he quickly dispels that expectation by stating that liberation theologies are instances of praxis in the sense of practicality. In them theology has been converted into a tool for a praiseworthy end. And it is not that kind of praxis that he wishes to address.

Instead he wishes to retrieve a more ancient notion of the word praxis and to show its relationship to the growth of the theologian. Using praxis to mean the conduct and doing that results from free choices and the personal development of the theologian, he, on one hand, engages Bernhard Welte on the need for intellectual conversion if one is to grasp that the Nicene decree is dynamic and hence not static or an instance of Heidegger's forgetfulness of being, and, on the other hand, he gives a favorable account of Eric Voegelin's use of the question of the meaning of life and death as symbols that thrust one into the world of interiority.

In the course of the paper Lonergan asks rhetorically: are dogmas caught in the forgetfulness of being? and answers that that will depend on the theologian interpreting the dogmas. And he later notes that it is not easy to defend mere repetition of doctrinal formulas that are not understood. It is these comments that I would like to comment upon in the light of the writings of Ewert Cousins. But first please allow me a brief excursus.

1. EXCURSUS: PRACTICAL PRAXIS AND MORAL CONVERSION

While I find Lonergan's now familiar distinction between religion and theology to be generally helpful, I find the use of the word theology in the opening paragraph of his paper to be too narrowly applied to the speculative theology of the academy. And such a theology becomes praxis only when quite secondarily it is

used as a tool to advance some worthwhile value. It would, in my opinion, be more helpful to remain aware of what David Tracy has termed the several conversation partners of theology: the academy, the ecclesial tradition, and the sociocultural movements of the day. The theologian in dialogue with the social context does not render his *theoria* into *praxis* by lending his prestige or symbols to humanitarian causes. Theology becomes praxis when the theologian himself is morally converted and he grasps the necessary move from words to deeds. Ricoeur's hermeneutic of suspicion may be employed to uncover failures in moral as well as intellectual conversion in the personal development of the theologian. In a resume of the four levels of consciousness in the existential subject, Lonergan uses the symbolic phrase "inner light." It is the inner light that keeps raising questions of what, why, how, what for, until insight occurs. It is the inner light that demands sufficient reason before consent. It is the deliberation prompted by the inner light that nudges one beyond the self-centered question "What's in it for me?" to the question of the morally-converted subject "Is it really and truly worthwhile?" What is more, the inner light bathes one in the unrest of an uneasy conscience if there is no consistency between one's knowing and doing. I suggest that the inner light or Lonergan's self-assembling structure of human consciousness is an obvious point of departure for theological praxis as practical. For just as the theologian *qua* theologian has need to examine the implications of and evidences for religious and intellectual conversion, so also he examines the implications and evidences for moral conversion, regardless of whether or not he or she is so converted. While Lonergan usually refers to moral conversion as an individual phenomenon, it is certainly hoped for on a collective and communal scale as well. Hence what James Cone, Gustavo Gutierrez and Mary Daly are saying about praxis is not unrelated to Lonergan's moral conversion. Because of its inescapable connection with moral conversion as Lonergan has eloquently described it, liberation theology, for example, becomes praxis both in the sense of one's consciously responsible conduct and in the sense of penetrating the intrinsic relationship between the Christian symbol system and the transformation of human society into a prefiguring of the kingdom.

2. DOCTRINE AND MODELS

Now let us return to the question of doctrine. Lonergan clearly does not wish dogmas to be caught in the forgetfulness of being. He suggests that if the theologian interpreting them is not a

perceptualist and habitually dwells in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values they will not be. Nor does he wish them to be repeated by rote with no real meaning. He states: "Personally I should urge that in each case one inquire whether the old issue still has a real import and, if it has, a suitable expression for that import be found." This suggestion, taken on face value, would seem to imply that doctrines defined in one context may indeed be old issues with no real import in a later context. I suspect that a great many theologians would agree with this general statement. The dispute would center on the question of which doctrines are obsolete.

One way of implementing Lonergan's suggestion would be the notion of models as worked out by Ewert Cousins. Cousins' understanding of model is very different from the somewhat formal and generic ideas of model or ideal type found in *Method in Theology*.[1] In the manner of Ian Ramsey, Cousins argues that in the present multi-dimensional context the introduction of the concept of model into theology will break the illusion that we are actually encompassing the infinite within the limited structures of our language. Hence theological concepts and symbols will not become idols and theology will be able to embrace variety and development in a manner not unlike science, which is often explicit in its use of models. I know that the mere mention of the term model can open up a pandora's box because the idea itself is open to multiple interpretations.

In my remaining remarks I mean only to explore Cousins' helpful distinction between "experiential" and "expressive" models and to show its relevance to Lonergan's comment about the need to find suitable contemporary expressions for old issues if indeed they are of present importance. In Cousins' view we must deal with two sets of models. The first often neglected set of models explores the structures and forms of originating religious experience with particular sensitivity to the complex subjective element and therefore the necessary variety of these models. These originating experiences are prior to images, symbols, words, narratives or conceptualizations. The second level of models are expressive models. They are the translation of the profound religious experience into words, concepts and symbols. These would include Biblical imagery, the creeds of the early councils as well as speculative theological systems. Cousins uses the word model for both the experiential and the expressive level in

[1] See B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), pp. 284-88.

order to call attention to the reality of pluriformity on both levels. It is not a matter of there having been one uniform religious experience in the encounter with Jesus and that variety has been introduced subsequently in the effort to give expression to the one experience. This idea calls into question Lonergan's recurrent suggestion that because of the diverse differentiation of consciousness the basic pluralism is not one of doctrine but of communication. It also makes it apparent that it is precisely when expressive models are elaborated in complete disengagement from their originating experience that there is the danger of roteness, static logic and the "forgetfulness of being."

On the whole I would suggest that further development of Cousins' basic idea would be most useful in the re-examination of the "old issues" and the translation of their vital worth into the present context. However, it would not result in a simple Tillichian methodology of correlation. For the investigation would surely yield that some of the classic expressive models of the Christian symbol system seem to enshrine responses to questions that are of no compelling urgency to contemporary humankind. This in turn opens the immense question that Lonergan touches on indirectly when he cites Voegelin's distinction between revelation and information. Was the originating religious experience (experiential model) the disclosure of some information (in a quasi-propositional sense) about ultimate reality that was not in the world prior to the Christ event? And is it this "information" that is enshrined in the "old issues?" And if so, must these interpretations (expressive models) of that foundational revelatory experience be announced anew in every context without regard to their existential meaningfulness because they mediate the broad lines of common meaning that constitutes the Christian community's self-concept? Obviously because of the very different life worlds of the bishops, the parish priests, the people in the pews, the university and the church theologians, this enormous question produces a range of responses that embraces all five of the models for theology (now used in another sense) set forth in Tracy's *Blessed Rage for Order*.

In the light of the above we can see a particular need for a more expanded reflection on theological praxis than Professor Lonergan has given us today. For the praxis that is needed for the present and the future is more than the transformation of theory into a useful tool for a praiseworthy end and more even than intellectual conversion. It will require religious, theistic, Christian, ecclesial and

moral conversion as well.[2] For the theologians who shape the Church to come may well be called upon to be somewhat saintly as well as wise and, as Rahner notes, in the present ferment their holiness will not be measured by orthodoxy but by orthopraxis.[3]

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[2]To Lonergan's religious, intellectual and moral conversion, I would add theistic conversion since religious conversion as I wish to understand it need not be explicitly theistic. I would further add Christian conversion, which explicates Jesus exalted as the Christ as the focal symbol, and ecclesial conversion which locates the community of common meaning.

[3]See K. Rahner, *The Shape of the Church to Come* (New York, Seabury Press), pp. 74-5.

A RESPONSE (II) TO BERNARD LONERGAN

In reading Bernard Lonergan's reflections on theology and praxis, a passage written 134 years ago came to mind. It is very apropos, not only of this essay, but of Lonergan's continuing spirit of inquiry:

> The reform of consciousness consists only in making the world knowingly aware of its own consciousness, in awakening it out of its dream about itself, in explaining to it the meaning of its own actions. Our whole object can only be . . . to give religious and philosophical questions the form corresponding to man's own emergent self-consciousness. . . . It will become evident that it is not a question of drawing a great mental dividing line between past and future, but of *realizing* the thoughts of the past. It will then ultimately be discovered that mankind does not set out about a new task, but realizes in a knowingly conscious way its age-old task.[1]

These words of Karl Marx, written in 1843, have a much deeper meaning when related to the work of Bernard Lonergan in 1977 than the young Marx himself intended. Too much has happened in the intervening years. We know now—in a way Marx or others could not know—the terrible ambiguities of waking mankind from its dreams, of embarking on an emancipatory "turn to the subject" in order to realize in a knowingly conscious way mankind's age-old task. Such a massive project of liberation is fraught with all the risks so vividly symbolized in the Greek and biblical narratives of pull and counter-pull. The ascent from the caverns of the psyche, from the immaturity of unknowing consciousness, can be half-hearted and truncated. Then, with all the hubris of a Prometheus unbound, a half-enlightened humankind can put the products (*poiēsis, technē*) of its new knowledge at the service of its old unconverted and unrepentant conduct (*praxis*). The nightmares of a truncated enlightenment can be terrifying indeed. Has any other seventy-seven year period in human history witnessed a more

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 144. The above is my own translation of the original in Marx/Engels, *Werke* (Berlin, 1956), vol. I, p. 346. To distinguish what Marx refers to as the "consciousness of consciousness" from immediate consciousness, I have translated the former as "knowingly conscious." In the above passage Marx follows Feuerbach in advocating a reform of consciousness that would reduce dogmas to a materialistic infrastructure. In the context of the present discussion, Marx is a transitional thinker between the second and third enlightenment. Similar to Freud, Marx tended to articulate his breakthrough into a new enlightenment in terms of a second enlightenment trust in technique: cf. D. Böhler, *Metakritik der Marxschen Ideologiekritik: Prolegomenon zu einer reflektierten Ideologiekritik und 'Theorie-Praxis-Vermittlung'* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971).

sweeping destruction of human life by human beings than that occurring in our "enlightened and modern" twentieth century?[2]

Faced with these ambiguities of life and death, more timid minds have recoiled from the exigencies of an enlightening turn toward the subject, retreating from its critical tasks back into the uneasy security of what Ricoeur calls first naiveté. The merit of Lonergan's work is its uncompromising dedication to thinking through enlightenment by elaborating criteria of meaning, value and action in terms of the praxis of human self-appropriation. Only a thorough turn to the subject enlightens those depths of human selfhood where mystery beckons us towards ultimate transcendence. In this context I should like briefly to discuss Lonergan's notion of theology as praxis, and then offer some comments on the final questions of his essay.

THEOLOGY AS PRAXIS

In order to situate the import of Lonergan's essay I have found it helpful to distinguish three reforms of consciousness or enlightenments which have successively given priority first to theory, then to technique, and finally to praxis. Omitting a detailed analysis of these three enlightenments, I shall sketch their different understandings of church doctrine.

1. The Classical Theoretic Enlightenment occurred in the Greek philosophical and Medieval theological shifts toward theory. The meaning and value of technical production (*poiēsis, technē*) and human conduct (*praxis*) were subordinated to theory. Lonergan mentions how Aristotle's notion of epistemic science influenced the Schoolmen's ideal of theory. Of at least equal importance was the patristic reception of Middle and Neoplatonic notions of a hierarchy of being attained preeminently through the *theoria* of contemplative wisdom.[3] This provided a paradigm theoretically projecting and reflecting the hierarchical order in the material universe, society, and the Church.[4] Theology as a

[2] An adequate answer to this question awaits large scale empirical and statistical research. Meanwhile, cf. G. Eliot, *Twentieth Century Book of the Dead* (New York: Scribner, 1972); M. Horkheimer and T. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972); and R. Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History: Mass Death and the American Future* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

[3] Cf. L.-B. Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Cerf, 1953); C. V. Heris, *Le Gouvernement divin* (Paris: Cerf, 1959); J. Friedrichs, *Die Theologie als spekulative und praktische Wissenschaft nach Bonaventura und Thomas v. Aquin* (Bonn: Ludwig, 1940).

[4] Cf. H. B. Parkes, *The Divine Order* (New York: Knopf, 1969); and J. H. Wright, *The Order of the Universe in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1957).

speculative and practical science, subaltern to the vision of God as First Truth, hierarchically ordered the multiplicity of nature and human conduct within the framework of a creative *exitus* and redemptive *reditus* to that Truth.

Church doctrines were understood as hierarchically revealed truths. Thus, for Aquinas, the central Trinitarian and Christological mysteries found in Scripture and church dogmas were known by all the major figures in pre-Judaic and Old Testament times, while they had to veil those mysteries in figurative language for the less wise people (*minores*) of the time.[5] Their superior knowledge was due to their hierarchical preeminence in the redemptive return of all things to God. Similarly with *prudentia* or the right order of human conduct; although as a virtue prudence was needed by every rational human being, since that rationality had hierarchical connotations, prudence was actively present in the prince as ruler and passively present in his subjects as ruled.[6]

As Lonergan has indicated, a static decadence set in once the perceptualism and logical pedantry of fourteenth-century scholasticism lost sight of the negative and heuristic elements in the medieval notion of ontological participation. Nominalism, the Reformation, and succeeding crises, set the stage for an authoritarian practice of the hierarchical magisterium scarcely attentive to the *sensus fidelium*. Catholic manual theology was, in the limit, to become subaltern more to papal pronouncements than to God as First Truth.[7]

2. *The Modern Technical Enlightenment* goes back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when revolutions in the methods of the natural sciences replaced the primacy of classical theory. Theory and human conduct increasingly came under the egis of technique as the methods of the natural sciences were extended into the human and historical sciences. This scientific revolution (along with a variety of political revolutions) were absorbed by an industrial revolution during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[8] Empirical methods of research immensely in-

[5]Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 2, 6-8.

[6]*Ibid.*, II-II, 47, 12.

[7]Cf. Max Seckler, "Die Theologie als kirchliche Wissenschaft nach Pius XII und Paul VI," in *Tübinger Theologische Quartalschrift* 149 (1969), 209-34. Also, T. Howland Sanks, *Authority in the Church: A Study in Changing Paradigms* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974) and Avery Dulles, "Presidential Address: The Theologian and the Magisterium," in *CTSA Proceedings* 31 (1976), 235-46.

[8]Cf. J. Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Knopf, 1964); B. Barnes (ed.), *Sociology of Science* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1972); and D. F. Noble, *America by Design* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

creased our knowledge of the historical background and composition of biblical narratives and church doctrines.

But these methods were techniques that studied such narratives or doctrines as *products*, as complexes of information, that could be decoded irrespective of any religious stance of the interpreter. The gap between intelligence and religious assent widened as a succession of psychological, sociological, and historical-critical interpretations dissected church doctrines as merely human, culturally conditioned products, abstracted from any living relationship with converted religious conduct or praxis. To be sure, there wasn't much of the latter visible in theological or hierarchical circles, as spirituality retreated into a private pietism. Secularism spread and, coupled with the industrial revolution, has challenged a whole series of religious traditions besides Christianity. A beleaguered Catholicism condemned all this as modernism, even though its own trusted theologians were treating church doctrines as products (albeit divinely revealed products) applying to revelation the logical techniques of formal, virtual, explicit, and implicit predication or deduction.[9] Little by little the positive gains of the modern technical enlightenment are being assimilated into all aspects of Catholic thought and practice. Perhaps Vatican II is the outstanding example of how enriching that assimilation can be.[10]

3. The Contemporary Praxis Enlightenment has its origins in the nineteenth-century attempts to elaborate methods for the human sciences distinct from those of the natural sciences. These efforts criticized the value-free pretensions of the modern technical enlightenment. The ultimate arbiter amid conflicting theories and techniques can only be found in praxis as specifically human, conscious conduct. Far from belittling the empirical methods of the previous enlightenment, or the classical achievements of the first enlightenment, it attempts to ground them in the related and recurrent operations of social, intellectual, moral, and religious performance or praxis. It seeks to discern their positive and negative elements in terms of norms inherent in that praxis.

Church doctrines are not seen as only hierarchically revealed truths, nor simply as sociocultural products, but primarily as, in

[9]Cf. W. Schulz, *Dogmenentwicklung als Problem der Geschichtlichkeit der Wahrheitserkenntnis* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1969), pp. 71-124.

[10]On the limits of Vatican II and how it calls for a new praxis enlightenment, cf. Andrew Greeley, *The New Agenda* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), and Gregory Baum, "The Impact of Sociology on Catholic Theology," in *CTSA Proceedings* 30 (1975), 1-29.

Lonergan's words, expressing "the set of meanings and values that inform individual and collective Christian living."[11] Theology ceases being a queen in an ivory tower and becomes a critical co-worker with other sciences, scholarly disciplines, pastoral reflections, and spiritual ministries. Together they seek to disclose and transform the concrete personal, communal, social, political, and cultural life-forms within which Christians live out, or fail to live out, the meanings and values of their traditions. The objectivity of the truth of church doctrine is conditioned by the self-transcending response of genuine Christian praxis.[12]

Lonergan's essay is a masterful, if short, example of the dialectical and foundational significance of this contemporary theologizing. He takes up the somewhat divergent views on church doctrine, and specifically Nicea, held by Professors Welte and Voegelin. He indicates the similarities of their interests in the event languages of biblical narrative and classical Greek texts. These he interprets as dynamic descriptions of the praxis of conversion and repentance. Their criticisms of the supposedly static quality of doctrine, Lonergan sees as somewhat misplaced. Rather than treating Nicea as a product, Lonergan adverts to differentiations of consciousness, which are of central interest to Welte and Voegelin. Certainly the conduct of any council is not a static, but a dynamic event. Moreover, as Lonergan intimates, the liturgical and spiritual receptions of Nicea were often dynamically related to ongoing processes of religious and intellectual conversion. The static counterpositions Lonergan finds in the naive perceptualism and logicism of decadent scholasticism. As theologians, Lonergan reminds us, we cannot skirt the crucial issues of our own personal development or lack thereof.

My only criticism here is the compliment that I would have liked Lonergan to go on and relate that personal praxis to social and political praxis. Aristotle mentions how practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) not only should guide personal conduct (*praxis*), but also communal economy (*oikonomia*) and politics.[13] Lonergan's own analysis of the dynamic structure of the human good correlates social, communal, and personal development.[14] And in outlining the collaboration of theology with other sciences and disci-

[11] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), p. 311.

[12] On the notion of contingent predication where the truth of any statement is conditioned by historical events, cf. Lonergan, *De Constitutione Christi Ontologica et Psychologica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1961), pp. 61-6.

[13] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 8, 1142a.

[14] *Method in Theology*, pp. 27-55.

plines, Lonergan indicates how a method, paralleling the method of functional specialization, can be worked out. Corresponding to doctrines there is policy making, and to systematics, planning. The overall

> aim of such integration is to generate well-informed and continuously revised policies and plans for promoting good and undoing evil both in the church and in human society generally. Needless to say, such integrated studies will have to occur on many levels, local, regional, national, international.[15]

Such a vision intimates how the contemporary praxis enlightenment has scarcely begun.

But many theologians today are developing the implications and categories of this new enlightenment. Relevant to Lonergan's discussion of Nicea, there are Professor Peterson's studies on how the Trinitarian and Christological doctrines expressed a Christian spirituality at odds with the centralizing ambitions of Roman imperial political authority.[16] Much more work needs to be done. We have to know if, and how, church doctrines of the past brought Christian living critically to bear on the economic, social, and political conditions of their times. Unlike the historical analyses under the egis of second enlightenment techniques, such studies would not simply reduce those doctrines to the plausibility structures of their historical context. Instead they would indicate if, and how, the doctrines expressed and promoted a praxis critical of such structures in so far as these hindered human intellectual, moral, or religious development.

Regarding the present, there are numerous theologians and many institutes or research centers engaged in interdisciplinary collaboration with a wide spectrum of sciences and social movements. At the beginning of his essay, Lonergan referred to conspicuous examples of some of these developments in terms of Latin American, black, and feminine liberation theologies. Sexism, racism, and economic exploitation cannot be adequately counteracted within the Church and society at large by pious or indignant moralisms, nor by cleverly conceived techniques; they require profound conversions of personal, social, economic and political conduct. As the manifold dialectics within churches and societies continue, theologians would do well to collaborate in an

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 365ff.

[16] Cf. E. Peterson, "Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem," and "Christus als Imperator" in his *Theologische Traktate* (Munich: Kösel, 1951), pp. 45-147, 150-64; also F. Fiorenza, "Critical Social Theory and Christology," in *CTSA Proceedings* 30 (1975), 63-110.

interdisciplinary way to "generate well-informed and continuously revised policies and plans" to guide the transformative actions which will bring about the institutional and systemic changes such conversions demand. Theology as praxis, like creativity, is always more of a challenge than an achievement.

SALVATION AND LIBERATION

At the end of his essay, Lonergan asked if the Nicean affirmations that we are saved by God become man in Christ makes any difference to our praxis today. I would not presume to give an adequate answer in so short a time. Indeed, the real answer will be given by those profoundly living such mysteries in their transformative action in our world. In the context of the above distinctions between the second and third enlightenments, I would call your attention to Lonergan's own studies on the law of the Cross, and Johann B. Metz's study on redemption and emancipation.[17] If the first enlightenment interacted with hierarchically-structured sacral cultures, the second enlightenment has led to bureaucratically-structured secularist cultures. Any Christology or Soteriology today must *not* be elaborated in an uncritical conformity with either.

Ever since the second enlightenment removed the presence of God as *Deus Salvator* and placed the world squarely on the shoulders of humankind as *Homo Emancipator*, human identity has been built on the success stories of deeds well done, of economic expansion, of scientific and technological progress, of political victories. Human history became a success story—as it always becomes when religious repentance is absent or minimal. The success of mathematics and the natural sciences meant their methods became the canon of all exact knowledge for the human sciences—what could not be quantified somehow lacked meaning. The success of technology meant that the machine became the model of rational order and process—what could not be programmed somehow should not exist. Human sciences began to see humanity as made in the image of its own mechanized creations. Organic and psychic processes were no more than highly complex physico-mechanical events. The mind and consciousness were dismissed as illusory, sooner rather than later to be mapped out in

[17]Cf. W. Loewe, "Lonergan and the Law of the Cross," in *Anglican Theological Review* 59 (April, 1977), 162-74; also J. B. Metz, "Erlösung und Emanzipation," in L. Scheffczyk (ed.), *Erlösung und Emanzipation* (Freiburg: Herder, 1973), pp. 122-40.

cybernetic, bio-computer input-output schemata. Work was reduced to assembly line regulated productivity. Interpersonal relations became techniques of successful role playing. Neighborhood values took a back seat to the demands of mobility. The natural environment became a resource reservoir, and junk yard, for an expanding industrial megamachine. In short, success oriented human identity has increasingly demanded the absorption of human subjectivity into a mechanistic objectivity.

Yet, this modern secularist identity has had its dark side. The irrelevance of God for secularist autonomy meant that God was no longer around to blame for failure and suffering. The fragile identity of success had to be protected against negative forces such as finitude, illness, suffering, destruction, failure, guilt, and death. Humans alone were responsible for the world. They could no longer experience their identity in a gifted, redeeming love. So they set about unknowingly constructing elaborate defense mechanisms to exonorate themselves from the concrete history of suffering. Conservatives would try to atrophy past successful histories, immunizing the status quo against its critics by the judicious use of legal, economic, humanitarian, and armed force. Liberals would make "nature" the scapegoat for the history of suffering: human failures are ascribed to an unenlightened past, and will be absolved by the advance of science, technology, education, and therapy. Marxists would have no difficulty in attributing the history of suffering to those enemies of the proletariat who still have power, and so impede the successful march towards a party-planned utopia. Finally, such defense mechanisms find their apotheosis in those advocates of technocracy, who see in a mechanistic human identity an exonorating escape from human responsibility. Just as some second enlightenment theodicies found the final solution to the problem of God's existence in the face of human suffering by denying that God exists, so a contemporary "anthropodicy," faced with suffering, proclaims the "end of man" in the advent of a post-historic era beyond freedom and dignity. Technique, as Jacques Ellul argues, becomes supreme, only to be confronted with Walter Benjamen's question: "Is it progress when cannibals use knives and forks?"

A Christology or Soteriology, attentive to the exigencies of the third enlightenment, must not attempt a facile concordism between the second enlightenment's notion of emancipation and a theology of redemptive liberation in Christ. As suffering cannot be reduced to pain, nor to the concept of suffering, so human subjectivity cannot be reduced to objectivity, nor praxis to technique.

The defense mechanisms of modernity exemplify a sociocultural surd, a reign of sin that threatens to turn Nietzsche's *Requiem aeternam Deo* into a *Requiem aeternam homini*. Quite simply, we cannot justify ourselves. The pride that imagines we can, only underestimates the seductive counter-pull of evil. If the scales of human justice are *all* that we have, then the cycles of violence and reprisal will not be broken until there are no more eyes and teeth left.

As theologians we must collaborate with other human and social sciences in disclosing the transformative values of Christian praxis in offsetting the cycles of decline and in promoting really human progress. To discern one from the other, to collaborate "in removing the tumor of the flight from understanding without destroying the organs of intelligence," requires, in my opinion, an uncompromising turn to the subject, to human conduct or praxis in all its dimensions. This praxis is the infrastructure underlying all cultural matrices, including those of the first and second enlightenments. To become knowingly conscious of that infrastructure, as human sciences and theology are now becoming, provides critical norms for unmasking the alienations in "modernity" as a truncated enlightenment.[18] Only through a commitment to the praxis enlightenment can we discern, with Karl Rahner, how anthropocentrism is profoundly theocentric. Only then can we appreciate what Ricoeur calls a post-critical second naiveté, Metz the narrative structure of Christian memory, and Tracy the analogical imagination. Only then can we discern the far-reaching implications of Lonergan's appeals to intellectual, moral, and religious conversions. Only "then will it be ultimately discovered," in ways Marx could hardly dream of, "that mankind does not set about a new task, but realizes in a knowingly conscious way its age-old task."

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[18]Examples of how second enlightenment fascination with technique and bureaucracy "blinded" social scientists and theologians to perduring communal structures of human conduct (praxis) and their values are given in Andrew Greeley's paper in this present volume, *infra*, "Sociology and Theology: Some Methodological Questions." For a brilliant exposé of how second enlightenment techniques have wrought havoc on global food production, cf. F. Lappé and J. Collins, *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977).