

- E.E. Evans-Pritchard 1937 *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* Clarendon Press.
- do.— 1940 *The Nuer* Clarendon Press.
- do.— 1951 *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer*. Clarendon Press.
- do.— 1956 *Nuer Religion* Clarendon Press.
- I. Hamnett 1973 'Sociology of religion and sociology of error' *Religion* 3, pp. 1—12.
- M. Hollis 1982 'The social destruction of reality' in Hollis and Lukes 1982.
- M. Hollis & S. Lukes (ed.s) 1982 *Rationality and Relativism* Blackwell.
- R. Horton 1982 'Tradition and modernity revisited' in Hollis and Lukes 1982.
- H.S. Hughes 1958 *Consciousness and Society* Alfred A Knopf 1958.
- C. Lévi-Strauss 1962 *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui* Paris: P.U.F.
- D. Lyon 1983 *Sociology and the Human Image* Inter-Varsity Press.
- K.R. Popper 1963 *Conjectures and Refutations* Routledge.
- L. Trilling 1972 *Sincerity and Authenticity* Oxford.
- J.A. Walter 1979 *A Long Way from Home* Paternoster Press.
- do.— 1982 *The Human Home* Lion 1982.
- P. Winch 1958 *The Idea of a Social Science* Routledge.

* This article was first given as a paper to the BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group, London School of Economics, in September 1984; a slightly different version was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in September 1985. The present text is based on both of these.

Lonergan and Systematic Spiritual Theology

Daniel A. Helminiak

Popular enthusiasm for spirituality has mushroomed in the past two decades. The analyses of the human sciences and the impact of secular self-help programs have challenged the religious basis of spiritual pursuit. The influence of gurus from the East has transformed the problematic. The need for a systematic spirituality that can sort out the issues and relate them insightfully grows more urgent. In different ways, the thought of Bernard Lonergan, summarized in *Method in Theology*,¹ speaks to the present need. Here I shall suggest some of those ways.

Introduction: The Need for Theory

Spirituality is a broad field. It entails many practical issues. These include: prayer and how one does it, from vocal prayer and *lectio divina*

to discursive meditation and contemplation and mysticism; the possible physiological correlates of religious experience: postures, breathing, fasting, sensory and sleep deprivation, sexual abstinence, anatomical and neuro-chemical bases, and even drug ingestion; spiritual direction and questions of discernment of spirits; the social dimensions of public prayer and liturgies, group prayer, and group psychic and religious experience; prescriptions for 'holy' living; and study of the various traditions, both Western and Eastern, and of modern psychology. These all have to do with practice, and they are not to be minimized. If spirituality has any real significance, it must be in the practice. This field can less tolerate mere thinking and talking about the subject than can other fields of theology as currently conceived.

Nonetheless, there is more to the issue. We not only live. We are also aware of our living. We reflect on it; we want to understand and explain it. Spirituality is not something just to be done; it is also something to be thought about. As we can define theology as reflection on religion,² we can say that the broad field of spirituality also includes spiritual theology as reflection on spiritual practice and religious experience.

Reflection on life has become more important—painfully crucial—to our living in recent decades. In a changing world interests change, new concerns surface, heretofore unimagined questions arise. Our world, kicking and screaming, ineluctably undergoes a culture shift that is a historical novelty and global in scope. Historical-mindedness, a crisis of epistemology, technological and electronic progress, threat of nuclear annihilation—these are some hallmarks of that cultural shift. And the questions of today will not be satisfied with the answers of yesterday. In 325 C.E., the Council of Nicea determined that only the non-scriptural term *homoousios* could precisely answer the question phrased by Arius in a form that the Bible never conceived: the Son is 'consubstantial' with the Father. A new kind of question demanded a new kind of answer if the truth of the Gospel was to be preserved.³ In our own day some again insist that return to the Bible will provide the needed answers. But the questions of today will not be answered by repeating the New Testament's 'preaching to ancient Antioch, Corinth, or Rome'.⁴ Though the push to new answers in the face of new questions is not easy, no other approach can in the long run meet the present situation adequately. Thus, rather than becoming more popularly 'relevant', theology must become more technical and so without easy popular access, if on the rebound popularizers are to speak meaningfully, convincingly, and accurately to a new age and culture.⁵ By the same token, if spiritual theology is to be adequate to today's questions, it, too, must in some part be a systematic discipline. It must offer a precise account of spiritual practice and experience and of the criteria that govern them. There is need for a systematic spiritual theology.

It is at this point that the work of Bernard Lonergan becomes particularly pertinent to spirituality. For among Lonergan's contributions, one is certainly to have provided the basis for a systematic theology. And when I say 'systematic', I mean this term, too, in a theoretically precise sense.

Systematic expression of meaning is the currency of pure theory. By 'theory' I mean not hypothesis or speculation about some issue but rather an explanatory account of the issue. Systematic expression is such that the terms are defined by their relations to one another, and the relations are defined by the terms, and both terms and relations are grounded by insight into the issue at hand.⁶ Thus, the terms and relations form an integral conceptual system that is an expression of pure understanding, apart from all imagery and metaphor. Within Euclid's system of geometry, the constant, Υ , in the formula for the circumference of a circle, $c = 2\Upsilon r$, provides a familiar and accurate example of a systematic term. The exact meaning of Υ is a pure intelligibility, namely, the constant relation of the radius to the circumference in the case of any circle whatever. Υ means precisely and no more than $c/2r$. In pure theory, terms and relations co-define one another.

Such precise terminology inherent in a comprehensive system resting on accurate insight into the issue is the need also in contemporary spirituality. Recognizing this need, some have attempted to provide a systematic spiritual theology.⁷ General opinion, however, holds that the project is foolhardy: it is difficult enough for the natural sciences to achieve explanation; human issues are too complex and subtle ever to be accurately understood! Nevertheless, it appears that Bernard Lonergan has made a significant breakthrough with regard to understanding the human in its dynamic unfolding.⁸ His works provide a new basis for constructing the human sciences, including theology and so also spirituality. One possible outline for such a theological endeavour is precisely my topic here.

Anyone who has tackled Lonergan's works is already aware that Lonergan's thought is not easy. He deals with what is absolutely fundamental. He analyses consciousness itself—the source of thought—and its structures and so arrives at a theory of knowledge and an epistemology.⁹ These represent an articulation, an objectification, of the intrinsic nature and criteria of all knowing. On this basis Lonergan constructs a transcendental method, that is, a method applicable to all cases of knowing precisely because it represents the very process of human knowing itself. One cannot understand Lonergan's analysis unless one comes to understand one's own consciousness and its structures—one's own self—and comes to identify in oneself the very terms and relations that formulate Lonergan's theory.¹⁰ And this is not

easy. In the present context it would be useful to note that this self-appropriation required to grasp Lonergan's thought is akin to meditative practice; it requires an exercise in heightening one's awareness until one becomes conscious of consciousness itself and of the intrinsic dynamism of consciousness toward ever fuller self-transcendence.¹¹

However, the point I wish to make is more pedestrian. On the one hand, it is impossible to summarize Lonergan's thought here with other than broad, sweeping strokes. On the other hand, it is impossible to appreciate my argument without some understanding of Lonergan's thought. The practical approach can only be to do the best possible under the circumstances. So I will continue to paint with broad strokes as I note three issues central to spiritual theology and the possible contribution of Lonergan's thought to each: (1) the distinction and definition of spiritual practice and spiritual theology, (2) the possibility of cross-cultural studies in spirituality, and (3) the demands of responsible interdisciplinary studies. Then I will tackle the issue of mystical union in more detail, indicating more extensively at least in one case the power of Lonergan's thought.

Spiritual Practice and Spiritual Theology

First, there is the issue of distinguishing spiritual practice from reflection on it. I have already raised this issue in calling for a renewed systematic spiritual theology. Beyond that, this distinction itself now calls for justification and precise definition.

Few would deny that reflection on life is a part of human living. If someone does question this assertion, the very questioning which arises in his or her mind is confirmation of the truth of what I say. Reflection is indeed a part of human living. But is it a valid part? To the extent that questioning and reflection are a spontaneous function of the human mind and to the extent that we accept what we spontaneously are as somehow normative for what we should be, reflection is also a valid part of human living. There may be some—especially among pseudo-spiritual practitioners, Fundamentalists, or those who have misunderstood the heritage of the East—who prefer to believe that thinking interferes with living and especially with spirituality, that objectivity consists in somehow attaining to human knowledge apart from the normal processes of the human mind. For these, reflection is not a valid part of human living; thinking is a bane to spirituality. But as these exclude themselves from the discussion and, indeed, cannot even raise an objection without belying their position by that very act of objecting, I presume the argument to be conclusive. In this way I justify the distinction between spiritual practice and spiritual theology and confirm the validity of the systematic spirituality enterprise.

What is the precise definition of these two phases in spirituality? In the case of religious experience, practice and reflection can be understood in terms of differentiations of consciousness.¹² Apart from unconscious states like dreamless sleep or coma, all human activity is conscious activity. By 'conscious' I do not intend a contrast with the human 'unconscious', of which Freud spoke. Rather I refer to that quality of human activity whereby one is aware of oneself even apart from any objectification of oneself and aware of all else because of one's immediate awareness of oneself. As conscious, the human subject is present to him- or herself precisely *as subject*. This understanding contrasts with the more common meaning of the term 'conscious', which refers to the subject's awareness of something—or even of self—*as object*.¹³ For humans, being aware is concomitant with being spiritual in nature. Consciousness can be another word for spirit.

Consciousness can focus and direct its capacities in different modes. Most fundamentally we use our consciousness for the everyday practical tasks of ordinary living; we want to get the job done. Here we have *commonsense* consciousness. But some pursue understanding for the sake of understanding alone, apart from possible practical usefulness; they pursue a pure and unrestricted desire to know and they develop a *theoretical* differentiation of consciousness. The mind of a research scientist is the most obvious example here. Now, contemplative or mystical experience is also conscious experience. It results in religiously differentiated consciousness. *Religious* differentiation of consciousness can be understood initially as the cultured ability to move readily into a state of immediate presence to one's own consciousness and its dynamism towards self-transcendence.¹⁴ The immediacy here involves a presence apart from concepts and images, apart from questioning, and apart from the exigencies of practical living or of theoretical understanding.

Religious differentiation of consciousness is of a unique kind since it operates in a *world of immediacy*.¹⁵ Most other differentiations of consciousness operate in the *world mediated by meaning*. The world mediated by meaning is the 'ordinary' world which we know and relate to by means of meanings expressed in concepts and words. For example, when you hear the word 'Paris', your world almost magically broadens to include that French capital, which, though physically far removed, is nonetheless now part of your present world by means of meanings shared with others and embodied in the word 'Paris'. And if you were to hear, 'Paris in the springtime', ah, then your present world broadens to something altogether different again! But the point is that we live ordinarily in a world mediated by meaning while the mystic moves back and forth between this world and another world, a world of immediacy.

Now once returned to this world mediated by meaning, the mystics,

too, reflect on what they have experienced and may attempt to express it. Though no one could ever understand fully, to the extent that they understood correctly and expressed themselves well, the mystics' articulation would be accurate statement. They would indeed say what they had experienced—but, be it noted, only insofar as they conceived and spoke according to the general exigencies and criteria of the world mediated by meaning! For though what they speak of is in the world of immediacy, when they speak, they have moved out of that world and into another where other exigencies and other criteria prevail. Though in the experience itself in a world of immediacy no distinctions are drawn, when one articulates the experience in the world mediated by meaning, the exigencies of questioning and the criteria of attentive experiencing, intelligent understanding, and reasonable judgment are likely to result in positing terms, distinctions, and relations. If these mystics are also at home in the world of theory, they might express their experience in terms of a world of immediacy and a world mediated by meaning and in terms of how these worlds relate to one another and to various possible differentiations of consciousness. Such statements would be a contribution to a systematic spiritual theology. But if, as would be more likely, these mystics were not systematicians but ordinary religious people, they would express their experience in images and metaphor and poetry, stretching language to its breaking point in some attempt to hint at the ineffable. They might say positively that they were consumed by a divine flame or that they were caught up in the love-power of a silent music. Or, because they knew themselves to have been taken beyond anything in this world, anything that can be known or named, they might say negatively that they encountered 'nothingness' and that they themselves were 'nothing'. But a systematician might understand them to mean, of course, 'nothing in this world', 'nothing in the world mediated, or able to be mediated, by meaning'. In this way, a systematic articulation could begin to reconcile the apparent contradictions between differing commonsense articulations of mystical experience.¹⁶ This discussion exemplifies the usefulness of a systematic spiritual theology and clarifies its distinctiveness vis-a-vis practical applied spirituality.

Cross-Cultural Studies

Those considerations bring us to a second question where Lonergan's *Method* can make a contribution: the relationship of Western and Eastern traditions in spirituality. In view of what was already said about systematic expression of meaning, I shall deal with this issue only briefly. I have already noted that in the traditions of both East and West most insights of the enlightened ones come to us couched in imagery, poetry, metaphor, and paradoxical statement. This is so because religion is first of all a

practical affair; it is to be lived. Thus, in the first instance it employs the commonsense mode of expression and speaks insofar as the marvels it knows relate to us and our everyday living. But when the exigency is not for practice but for clear understanding and precise knowledge, metaphor and poetry are no longer sufficient. A good homily will not substitute for a good theology lecture. Is the Buddhist 'nothingness' the same as the Christian 'love of God poured into our hearts' (Rom. 5:5), the 'Holy Spirit', or is it something else? Something completely other or only partially other? Then to what extent and precisely how other? Only if the commonsense expressions of these two traditions are transposed into a single terminology, can an accurate comparison be made and these pressing questions be answered. There is, for example, no problem in communication between Chinese and Indian and Russian and American physicists; they have a theoretical language common to all. My insistence here is that the achievement of such a common theoretical language for theology is also a real possibility. This achievement will be no easy task, and we may not yet be fully capable of it. William Johnston, an expert in Western mystical tradition and well versed in Buddhism and Zen, himself confessed that he abandoned any attempt at such a systematic, comparative study.¹⁷ Still, with a theoretically formulated theology whose basic categories arise out of an analysis of consciousness, such cross-cultural studies are possible. Lonergan's *Method in Theology* meets this issue head on, treats it at length, and establishes the functional specialty, foundations, to deal with it.¹⁸

Interdisciplinary Studies

A third question deals again with comparative studies: how relate psychology, sociology, physiology, and theology? This question becomes particularly pressing in the field of spirituality, where practice is so crucial. One wonders, for example, how spiritual direction relates to psychological counselling or how the path to contemplative prayer relates to growth in psychological wholeness or to the presence of certain chemicals in the brain. An adequate systematic spirituality must entail a coherent, comprehensive account of all these issues.

The approach to the question of interdisciplinary studies is in principle the same as that to the question of cross-cultural studies: if a single comprehensive system of categories can express both the assertions of the various human sciences and religious beliefs, correlation will be relatively easy. Categories derived from an analysis of human consciousness would form just such a comprehensive system, applicable to any case of human knowing and in principle capable of uniting all human knowledge.

However, the issue with the sciences is more complicated. On the

one hand, it might be easily argued that all of the great religious traditions foster authentic self-transcendence—and in my understanding that would mean that they foster honesty and love, they believe in and encourage growth toward the true and the good. On the other hand, the human sciences as presently conceived do not judge whether the people and human creations they study are good or bad, helpful or destructive, honest or corrupt. Though they do, in fact, operate from particular chosen perspectives—which should be acknowledged!—the sciences' express goal is but to understand what is there to be understood.

In light of those differences, the human sciences, the great religious traditions, and Christianity can be understood as different points of view on one and the same human phenomenon. They can be related and distinguished as what Lonergan calls 'higher viewpoints'.¹⁹ Each successive viewpoint, subsuming²⁰ those before it, entails a particular set of presuppositions and so determines a particular horizon²¹ of concerns and delimits a particular range of competence. Thus, the 'positivist viewpoint' is concerned to know, and to know accurately, whatever happens to be the case in whatever it studies. The positivist viewpoint typically determines science today, as indicated in the paragraph above. The correlate of the positivist viewpoint is the multiple human possibilities. Beyond this, the 'philosophic viewpoint' is further concerned to know not only what happens to be the case but also whether or not what happens to be the case is in accord with reality, whether it is true and whether it is truly good. The philosophic viewpoint presumes that pursuit of the true and the good is intrinsic to the human and commits itself to that pursuit. This viewpoint acknowledges the spiritual nature of the human. The correlate of the philosophic viewpoint is the unique human possibility. It is a unique possibility because it builds on the true and the good, and the true, like the good, is but one. Again beyond this, the 'theist viewpoint' affirms an Ultimate Truth and Goodness, which grounds the human pursuit of the true and the good and accounts ultimately for the givenness of all that is. Beyond even this, the 'Christian viewpoint' envisages the full attainment of Truth and Goodness itself; that is, it sees the thrust of human becoming as moving to embrace divinity. The Christian viewpoint correlates with a divine-human possibility, of which the glorified Jesus Christ is the paradigmatic instance.²²

This schema of successively higher viewpoints treats the issue that was traditionally called the relationship of the 'natural' and the 'supernatural'. It is clear that here the 'natural' is distinguished into three arenas, that of the positivist, the philosophic, and the theist viewpoints; for these deal with aspects of the human phenomenon which are proportionate to the human state as such. The 'supernatural' correlates with the Christian viewpoint. This viewpoint envisages what is

disproportionate to humanity as such, namely, human divinization, made possible through the incarnation, cross and resurrection of the Eternal Son and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Granted this overall conception of the issue, it is possible to spell out in one system of interlocking categories the scope of validity and limitation and the mutual relevance of the human sciences, religious and ethical traditions, and the beliefs of Christianity.²³

I have been speaking in broad statements about Lonergan's thought and what it would allow (1) in defining systematic spiritual theology in contrast to practical spirituality, (2) in enabling cross-cultural studies in religious traditions, and (3) in permitting responsible interdisciplinary research in spirituality. I now broach a final issue and deal with it in some detail so as to exemplify the approach I have been representing.

A Systematic Account of Mystical Union

If in mystical experience one attains a state of 'oneness with the All', does one still maintain a personal, individual identity or is one absorbed, dissolved, lost in the All-embracing? Eastern tradition might be more easily thought to insist on the latter alternative; the Christian tradition clearly insists on the former. In Christianity, apart from the paradigmatic case of the Trinity, where Three are believed to share a perfect unity without prejudice to their individual identities, there is also the case of the incarnate Son who, according to John's statement of the issue and still later reflection on the matter, is one with the Father though distinct from him; and there is the further case of Jesus' followers, who are themselves to become one with him and with one another as he is one with the Father. Are East and West speaking of basically different issues? How can we allow the Eastern and Christian emphases on union and still explain continued individuality? This question, central to spiritual concerns, stands here as a test case for a systematic spiritual theology.

As noted above, distinguishing the world of immediacy from the world mediated by meaning and further acknowledging various possible differentiations of consciousness already go a long way toward resolving the possible discrepancy between Eastern and Western accounts of the unitive experience. Further clarity would result from a precise statement of what the Christian belief, which clearly acknowledges both unity and continued individuality, could mean.²⁴

I begin by proposing the notion of the constitutive function of meaning.²⁵ Meaning functions not only cognitively to let us know something and not only effectively to have us do something and not only communicatively to let us share something but also constitutively to make us be something. For human realities not only have a meaning;

they are constituted by the meaning they have. Take away the meaning and the reality is gone; change the meaning and the reality is different.

Take the classroom as an example. A team of physicists and chemists with all their sophisticated gadgetry for measuring and weighing and analyzing could never conclude that that room is a classroom; but ask a student—even one who is flunking the course—and you will be told what that place is. For it is the meaning that makes the classroom be what it is, and scientific instruments do not grasp meaning; people do. Furthermore, change the meaning and you change what is there; it becomes, say, a meeting hall or a courtroom.

Now, not only human realities but humans themselves are constituted by meaning and (I add for completeness' sake) motivated by value. We are what we are according to the meanings and values that we embody. By freely appropriating new meanings and embracing new values, I can change what I am; I can be a 'new me'. For though we are embodiments, we are not mere bodies. It is not merely a body that we meet when we encounter each other. Rather, through our bodies we know one another also as spiritual realities constituted by the meanings and values which we embody to make ourselves be what we are.²⁶

However, 'what we are' can be understood in two different ways. *Concretely* what we are is determined by the particular meanings and values that we embrace, and this is peculiar to each individual. *Abstractly* what we are is defined by the classical definition, rational animal, and this is common to all humans. 'Rational animal' says little of what we are in the concrete; it merely enunciates the principle by which we become concretely whatever we will become. As rational animals—aware, intelligent, reasonable and responsible—we make ourselves whatever we will be. Note that the abstract and the concrete understandings are not in conflict. They complement one another. Over and above the classical understanding, the contemporary developmental understanding represents further insight into the human. Thus, our human nature, rational animality, is the principle by which we become historically the concrete beings we are, constituted by meanings and values.

Since we become concretely what we are as we embrace particular meanings and values, we are open to a myriad of possibilities—the multiple human possibilities noted above as the correlate of the positivist viewpoint. Within certain limits, we can become anything we want. But among all the human possibilities, there is a unique possibility defined by what is uniquely true and good. This unique possibility, when followed to its fullness, leads one to embrace all that is true and all that is good. Granted a classical understanding of the issue, it is readily obvious that embrace of full truth and goodness is in some sense embrace of divinity.

It is further obvious that to embrace divinity and so to be divinized

is an attainment disproportionate to humanity as such. Without considering the complications that this projected disproportionate attainment entails,²⁷ on the basis of Christian belief, let us nonetheless grant such a possibility. What we have, then, is the case of humans becoming what they are according to the meanings and values that they embrace and, by embracing all true meaning and full goodness, becoming full truth and goodness, that is, in some sense becoming divine. Here is an understanding of human union with divinity, human divinization.

However, we have been presuming something all along, and recognition of it will make a further distinction necessary. We have been presuming the *existence* of these humans, who can be divinized. Though this presupposition is obvious, acknowledgement of it is crucial. For in the human case, that one exists is not to be taken for granted. Human existence is contingent existence; it is not what must be so but what merely happens to be the case. So, beyond *nature* that says what one is abstractly and beyond *concrete being* that is determined by particular meanings and values and says what one is concretely, there is a third factor needed to account for a human being. This third factor indicates the actual existence of the nature actualizing itself as a concrete being. Granted this third factor, the reality in question is a *person*.²⁸

I use the term 'person' in its classical sense, according to Thomas Aquinas' definition, *subsistens distinctum in natura intellectuali*, an individual subsistent in a conscious nature. The operative term is 'subsistent'. 'Person' indicates the *actuality* of what we are considering, a human being. It indicates that this one in question really does exist. This subtle point requires more explanation.

To the question for understanding on Lonergan's second level of consciousness,²⁰ *What is it?* we would answer, Nature and concrete being: it is a rational animal constituting itself concretely according to the meanings and values that it embraces. This point was already made above. Now, to the further question for reflection on the third level of consciousness, *Is it? Does it exist?* we would answer, Person: yes, it exists. It is a real, not merely supposed, one of this kind. But since the one in question is special in relation to all other kinds of things, we do not simply call it a 'thing'. Rather, we use a special term and call this reality a 'person'. In its classical sense, 'person' denotes one that really exists as a conscious reality—a someone, not just something.

Now, in the case of human persons, nature and person are really distinct; the one is not simply the other. Because human essence and human existence are not one and the same thing, human existence is a contingency. Over and above human essence, human existence must be posited before there is an actual human being, a person. By contrast, the same is not true in the case of God, where divine essence is existence; so

the divine Persons are identical with the one divine essence and the one divine existence.³⁰ God is necessary being. In the human case there is a real distinction between *what* one is and that one *is*. Of course—apart from the case of Jesus Christ³¹—there is no human being that is not also a human person. The two are inseparable. Nonetheless, human nature and human person are really distinct. Given their contingency, intelligent understanding and reasonable judgment as pertain in the world mediated by meaning necessitate this conclusion.

Then, even if the thrust of human becoming were to attain the limit case, even if one were to embrace full truth and goodness and so be one with God, the distinction between *what* one is and *who* one is would still pertain. What one is: human nature and concrete being; and who one is: this person and not any other, as determined by a particular act of existence—these two would still be distinct. The human person is the expression of a contingent—let us say, created—existence; so even when this created principle of self-constitution comes to share in divinity, it does so in full dependency on divine creation, conservation, and concurrence. The result is a created participation in divinity. Thus, despite real union with divinity, the human person remains in real distinction to divinity and in real distinction to all others who may be similarly divinized. Person, as the expression of a created act of existence, is the locus of respective human identity and inviolable individuality within perfect unity.

A comparison with the union in the Trinity offers some clarification. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one in all that they are; as God, none has anything the others have not. All are fully and perfectly divine. Likewise, when humans attain to divinity by embracing and so concretely becoming full truth and goodness, they are one with God and with one another in all that they are. It is precisely in this, their concrete being, that the union consists. Yet there are differences. In God there is no real distinction between essence and existence; the divine persons necessarily exist and they exist by sharing one, perfect act of existence. They have everything in common, even their existence, and so are distinct only on the basis of how they have what they have. They are distinct by their relations to one another, the Son proceeding *from* the Father and the Spirit proceeding *from* the Father and the Son. In the human case there is a real distinction between what humans are and their existence. Though they may become divine in their concrete being and so become one with God and with one another, *who* they are, the persons, remain ever distinct because of their respective acts of created existence. Thus, divinized humans remain ever really distinct from the uncreated divine persons and from one another. The question about perduring individuality within mystical union is resolved by understanding divinization in terms of concrete being while distinguishing concrete being from person.

Conclusion

By applying and building on the thought of Bernard Lonergan, I have been able to account for a mystical unity, for individual identity and distinction within that unity, and for divine prerogative despite human divinization. These results stand as an example of what is possible also in the case of other questions. Some of these were noted above: precise distinction and definition of spiritual practice and spiritual theology, the possibility of cross-cultural studies in religious traditions, and responsible interdisciplinary study related to spirituality. The final product is a formulation that is no longer metaphorical, poetic, or paradoxical. On the contrary, it is dry, tedious, theoretical formulation. By the same token, it is precise, literal, and exact formulation—a result full of promise and most welcome in our day.

If the path to such systematic spiritual theology is not an easy one, the result is the possibility of answering questions that other approaches cannot. What is more, there is room here not only for promise and welcome but for enthusiasm and real excitement as well. For the Christian tradition, reappropriated through precise articulation, comes alive again—both to bring its saving meaning to those whose concern is but to live a Christ-like life and to bring its hope to those who would moreover effectually and responsibly answer pressing questions about spirituality and religion. It appears that to provide a methodical theology, open to comparative-religions, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary concerns, is an important contribution that Lonergan's thought can make to the broad field of spirituality.³²

- 1 Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972).
- 2 *Ibid.*, 170. 267. 331, 355.
- 3 Cf. Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976); John Courtney Murray, *The Problem of God: Yesterday and Today* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964, 33—60).
- 4 Lonergan, *Method*, 140.
- 5 I have in mind here especially Lonergan's seventh functional specialty, systematics, and his eight functional specialty, communications. Cf. *Method*.
- 6 Cf. Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., Ltd., 1958), 10—13 on 'implicit definition' and *Method*, 82—83 on the 'systematic exigence'.
- 7 Cf., e.g., Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1980); Auguste Poulain, *Des Graces d'Oraison* (Paris, 1901); Adolphe Tanquerey, *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclee and Co., 1930); Adrian van Kaam, *In Search of Spiritual Identity* (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1975).
- 8 Cf. Frederick E. Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise* (Cowley Publications, 1980); Robert M. Doran, *Subject and Psyche: Ricoeur, Jung, and the Search for Foundations* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1977) and *Psychic*

- Conversion and Theological Foundations: Towards a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1981); David Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).
- 9 Cf. *Insight*.
- 10 *Method*, 6—7, 13—16, 95, 262, 265, *et passim*.
- 11 Daniel A. Helminiak, 'Meditation—Psychologically and Theologically Considered', *Pastoral Psychology*, 30 (1981) : 6—20; 'Consciousness as Subject Matter', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 14 (1984) : 211—230.
- 12 *Method*, 81—99, 257—262, 302—305.
- 13 Helminiak, 'Consciousness'.
- 14 Cf. *Ibid.*; 'Meditation'; and Daniel A. Helminiak, 'How is Meditation Prayer?' *Review for Religious*, 41 (1982) : 195—209.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 76—77; Bernard J.F. Lonergan, 'Dimensions of Meaning', in *Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967), 252—267.
- 16 Helminiak, 'Consciousness', 220—222.
- 17 William Johnston, *The Inner Eye of Love: Mysticism and Religion* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1978), 15—16 and note.
- 18 Lonergan, *Method*, 271—293. For two elaborate applications of Lonergan's thought on this question, cf. James Robertson Price (Georgia State University), 'Lonergan and Contemporary Spiritual Theology', (Paper delivered at the Lonergan Center, Regis College, Toronto, December 16, 1982), and 'Lonergan and the Foundations of a Contemporary Mystical Theology', *Lonergan Workshop 5*, ed. Frederick Lawrence (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 163—195.
- 19 Lonergan, *Insight*, 13—19. Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. J. Patout Burns (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 13—19, gives an historical account of how the medieval discovery of a higher viewpoint solved many problems about grace. This discovery is the source of the—now generally misunderstood—distinction between the natural and the supernatural.
- 20 Lonergan, *Method*, 241: 'I would use this notion (sublation) in Karl Rahner's sense rather than Hegel's to mean that what sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context'.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 235—237, *et passim*.
- 22 For a more elaborate and popular presentation of this system of viewpoints, cf. Daniel A. Helminiak, 'Where Do We Stand as Christians? The Challenge of Western Science and Oriental Religions', *Spiritual Life*, 28 (1982) : 195—209. For complete technical treatments, cf. Daniel A. Helminiak, 'One in Christ: An Exercise in Systematic Theology' (Ph. D. diss., Boston College and Andover Newton Theological School, 1979), 361—400, and 'Four Viewpoints on the Human: A Conceptual Schema for Interdisciplinary Studies' (to appear in *The Heythrop Journal* shortly).
- 23 For applications of this system to particular spiritual issues, cf. the papers by Helminiak cited above and Daniel A. Helminiak, 'Neurology, Psychology, and Extraordinary Religious Experiences', *Journal for Religion and Health*, 23 (1984) : 33—46; Patricia J. Dunn and Daniel A. Helminiak, 'Spiritual Practices for the Elderly', *Spirituality Today*, 33 (1981) : 122—136; Sylvia Chaviz-Garacia and Daniel A. Helminiak, 'Sexuality and Spirituality: Friends, Not Foes', *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 34 (1985) : 151—163.
- 24 For a full treatment of this issue, cf. Helminiak, 'One in Christ'.

- 25 Lonergan, *Method*, 76—81.
- 26 Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, tr. Peter Heath (Hamden, Connecticut: Shoe String Press, Inc., 1970), 8—12, 238—257.
- 27 Bernard J.F. Lonergan, 'The Natural Desire to See God', *Collection*, 84—95; Helminiak, 'One in Christ', 398—405.
- 28 Cf. Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *De Constitutione Christi Ontologica et Psychologica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1958); *De Deo Trino: II: Pars Systematica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964), 153—161; 'Christ as Subject: A Reply', *Collection*, 164—197.
- 29 Bernard J.F. Lonergan, 'Cognitional Structure', *Collection*, 221—239; *Method*, 9: '... different levels of consciousness ... have to be distinguished There is the *empirical* level on which we sense, perceive, imagine, feel, speak, move. There is an *intellectual* level on which we inquire, come to understand, express what we have understood, work out the presuppositions and implications of our expression. There is the *rational* level on which we reflect, marshal the evidence, pass judgment on the truth or falsity, certainty or probability, of a statement. There is the *responsible* level on which we are concerned with ourselves, our own operations, our goals, and so deliberate about possible courses of action, evaluate them, decide, and carry out our decisions'.
- 30 Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 161—171.
- 31 Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregoria University Press, 1964), 235—243.
- 32 For another explicit example of Lonergan's thought applied to spiritual theology, cf. James Robertson Price, 'Conversion and the Doctrine of Grace in Bernard Lonergan and John Climacus', *Anglican Theological Review*, 62 (1980) : 338—362.

Response

St Augustine and R.R.R. on women

Father Edmund Hill OP is quite right to take exception (in November 1985—*Response*) to the translation of the passage from Augustine's *De Trinitate* in my article 'The Liberation of Christology from Patriarchy' (July/August 1985, p. 326) since, due to a typographical error in my manuscript, the most important line in that text was left out. The text should read:

How then did the apostle tell us that the man is the image of God and therefore he is forbidden to cover his head, but that the woman is not so, and therefore she is commanded to cover hers? Unless forsooth according to that which I have said already, when I was treating of the nature of the human