

PROJECTS OF FR. BOB DORAN

In these past months questions have been raised for me by e-mails about two sets of projects in Marquette University. I am not on the mailing list, so I suspect I am not up-to-date, but the two sets to which my attention have been drawn are (1) a set around generating a new systematic theology; (2) a set that surrounds plans for work in two areas: [1] the area of scripture scholarship associated with the names Ben Meyer and Tom Wright; [2] the work of Thomas Piketty. The questions posed to me by people in various parts of the globe can be summarily expressed in the single puzzling, “Where is this going?”

I write, as I pointed out clearly in *DQ* 1, in a context that invites the confrontations described in *The 1833 Overture*, even if attempted in in a shabby fashion: my answering is, if you like, a ramble round “the final objectification” (line 28, *Method* 250) where the work of the entire page is skipped or missed, missing. But one may ask, why is it not only missing but solidly dodged? I must leave you to read the blunt suggestions of Pat Brown.¹ Doran suggestions are in the old context, though with the odd skimpy bow to functional work.² The new systematics that seem to be emerging from his surrounds is a sad shrinkage of future theology into old bottles and battles. What of the projects of set (2)? If the work of Meyer and Wright is to weaved constructively into a new creative theology that hits the streets, it needs—analogueous to any scientific struggle with early data and theoretics—to climb out of myths of commonsense, though prayerful searching for the historical Jesus, and through a discomforting leap, or rather crawl, into a Standard Model reading of scripture.³ As in any

¹ The most available presentation of his viewpoint is in his essay, “Some Notes on the Development of Method Page 250,” available as [Lonergan Gatherings 10](#). For a broader perspective and critique see the Introduction by Patrick Brown and James Duffy to *Seeding Global Collaboration* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2016).

² I have challenged Doran in detail elsewhere. See [Questions and Answers 30](#): “The Trinity in History.” The third part of my website book, [Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations](#), focuses in the same area. [Lonergan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry](#), another website book, opposes mainly Roger Penrose and Robert Doran.

³ I have great respect for Wright, in his scholarly phases, his popular writings and lectures, but there is this deep flaw common to the entire so-called search for the historical Jesus. See [Lonergan](#)

science, such a standard model, with its qualifying heuristic, needs to be in control in the full cycle of work, from functional research to “final stage” where “theological reflection bears fruit,”⁴ and the eighth functional specialty generates quite a new population of what I call *C9 characters* and their expressions that meet the global aggregate of particular situations. As to the Piketty interest, apart from identifying in a loose undifferentiated fashion the rich getting richer, he really adds nothing significant to other critics of the unbalance flows of income. What then to say of these projects in my messy 1833 Overture way? I settle for the vague suggestion around the last lines of page 250. The counterpositions putter on, with little development. I could, of course, enlarge on this, pointing to the missing “broadened basis”⁵ about which Lonergan is brutally witty in lines 18-23 of page 287 of *Method in Theology*. But perhaps I have said enough to cause a shift from the silent ignoring of my suggestions? I add to my nudging this December of 2016 a series of essay—*DQs* 4, 5, 6, 7, 8—that hover round the problem of the search for the historical Jesus. The lead-in question of *DQ* 3, “If not Functional Collaboration, What?” may help some to pause and poise. What I would like to see is some feedback on this effort that would give us a fresh communal turn in the effort of *DQ* 9, “The Search for the Historical Jesus.”

[Gatherings 9](#), “N.T. Wright on Resurrection: the Problem of Initial Meanings,” and the references there. [Lonergan Gatherings 14](#), “Refining our Quest for the Historical Jesus” is a reflection on Jonathan Bernier’s paper, given in Regis College in 2015, “Ben Meyer and the Renewed Quest for the Historical Jesus.” Meyer’s work influenced Bernier’s doctorate work, *Aposynagogos and the Historical Jesus in John: Re-thinking the Historicity of the Johannine Expulsion Narrative*, Biblical Interpretation Series, Leiden: Brill.

⁴ *Method in Theology*, 355.

⁵ *Ibid*, 287. I recall, as I type, his comment to me as he paced his room in 1966, about the struggle to begin *Method*: “I can’t put all of *Insight* into chapter one!” He certainly gets a hunk of it into that discomforting paragraph.