

DIONYSUS OR APOLLO: OBSERVATIONS ON THE NEED
FOR A REDEFINED PENTECOSTAL EPISTEMOLOGY

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It is said of the statues of Daedalus that they were so realistic in appearance they could appear to face one direction at one moment then the opposite direction the next moment.² Presently, Pentecostal theology appears to be in a position much similar to the statues of Daedalus. At one moment Pentecostal theologians are taking a very intellectual approach to their subject. One has only to leaf through a journal on Pentecostal theology to observe discussions of the role of language in Pentecostalism, meaning and the world mediated by meaning, glossolalia as sign and symbol, and discussions of the similarities of Pentecostal theology and Catholic theology. For simplicity, this approach will be termed the Apollonian approach, after Nietzsche's famous intellectual paradigm.³

¹ I wish to thank the grantors and trustees of the Pope Faculty Research and Enrichment Grant for the opportunity to attend the Toronto Lonergan Research Institute for the purpose of conducting research on intellectual conversion. I wish to thank Professor Ralph Del Colle for offering me the opportunity to work out some of these ideas in the context of this meeting. This is a work in progress.

² Daedalus, in Greek mythology, was a sculptor and architect. He is most famous for constructing two pairs of wings with which he and his son Icarus escaped the Labyrinth. Icarus, however, flew too close to the sun and died. See EDITH HAMILTON, MYTHOLOGY 139-140 (A Mentor Book 1969).

³ See generally FRIEDRICH WILHELM NIETZSCHE, THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY AND THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS (trans. Francis Golfing, Doubleday) (1956). See also FREDERICK COPLESTON, S.J., A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, VOL. VII (1985).

At the next moment, however, it appears that Pentecostal theologians are hunkering down in the bunkers of common sense and the world of the practical and concrete. One has only to leaf through a journal on Pentecostal theology to observe discussions that directly relate experience with knowing, articles that completely ignore the role of human knowing in Pentecostal experience, discussions that celebrate the emotive over the intellectual, and theological discussions operating solely in the immediate and the concrete. This approach will be termed the Dionysian approach, after Nietzsche's famous experiential and emotive paradigm.⁴

Like Daedalus' statues, it is not clear which way Pentecostal theology is going to turn, which paradigm it is going to follow. The confusion arising from the current mixed approach is quite real. Philosophy, however, may be able to offer some clarity and direction. A little philosophy may go a long way in relieving some of the confusion.

LONERGAN AND THE PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE: A QUESTION PRESENTED

An example of the clarity and direction that philosophy can give to Pentecostal theology can be illustrated through a discussion of the "Pentecostal experience." In answering the question "Does philosophy have anything to contribute to the understanding of the religious phenomenon that has come to be known as the

⁴ See generally FRIEDRICH WILHELM NIETZSCHE, *THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY AND THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS* (trans. Francis Golffing, Doubleday) (1956). See also FREDERICK COPLESTON, S.J., *A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY*, vol. VII (1985).

Pentecostal experience?” clearer insight will be had into the intelligibility that philosophy can give to all of Pentecostal theology.

This presented question, however, is in dire need of unpacking. The first and most obvious point of clarification regards the term “philosophy.” Philosophers are quite a contentious lot, agreeing on almost nothing. So, obviously it is not being suggested that all of philosophy has a coherent contribution to make to the understanding of the Pentecostal experience. But also just as obviously, which is made clear by the reality of my presenting this paper here today, is the fact that some philosophers think philosophy does have something to contribute to the understanding of the Pentecostal experience. Thus, my discussion will be limited to a particular branch of philosophy, a branch that is receiving much attention today - critical realism. Critical realism, through its major proponent, the transcendental Thomist Bernard Lonergan, has much to lend Pentecostal theology to aid in the clarification of the understanding of the Pentecostal experience. Even if it is determined that Lonergan is in error, much may still be learned from a discussion of Lonergan’s theory in relation to the Pentecostal experience.

It has been suggested that Lonergan can contribute to an understanding of the Pentecostal experience, but the next point of clarification must be what is meant by “Pentecostal experience.”⁵ The phrase “Pentecostal experience” is being used rather loosely, in a not quite professional or technical sense. The phrase refers to any interaction with the Divine which Pentecostal or charismatic Christians would contend are normative interactions, specifically with the Holy Spirit. These interactions are

⁵ At this point, I must confess some ignorance of Pentecostal theology. I am neither a theologian nor a biblical scholar, although I am a bit of a dabbler in both.

experiential in nature and result in a response on the part of the interacting human. The chief example is glossolalia, but other biblical examples are prophecy and divine healing. To this list may be added examples from contemporary culture such as being slain in the Spirit, words of knowledge, laughing, and even barking.

The final clarification that must be made concerns the term “understanding.” This term will gain greater elucidation in the following discussion on Lonergan’s notion of the human being and human knowing. As a preliminary, however, the phrase is being used to refer to that supervening act of understanding by which human beings give meaning to the data of experience.

It is not only the data of experience that human beings understand. Human beings also seek to understand themselves, to understand their own experiencing-understanding-judging-valuing. Hence, the term understanding is also being used in a second sense to mean understanding of human understanding. This point will be further clarified in the section on intellectual conversion.

So, in light of the clarifications, the presented question may be restated as “Does Lonergan in his critical realist philosophy have anything to contribute to the human understanding of the experience of the religious phenomenon and the experience of self as an experiencer of the religious phenomenon that has come to be known in a popular sense as the Pentecostal experience?”

REFLECTIONS ON THE WRITINGS OF FRANK MACCHIA⁶

One of the areas in which Lonergan can contribute to the theology of the Pentecostal experience is in the area of human knowing, a discussion neglected by most Pentecostal theologians. In most journal articles, Pentecostal theologians overemphasize the Holy Spirit's activity in relation to the human being, or perhaps it is better said that the overemphasis on the activity of the Spirit has resulted in a de-emphasis on the human being and the role that the human being plays in the Pentecostal experience. When the human being is discussed, it is mainly in terms of the human being as experiencer, to the neglect of the human being as knower.

Further examination of the writings of a major Pentecostal theologian, Professor Frank Macchia, shows that there are three areas in which a fuller understanding of the human being in general, and human knowing in particular, could provide some amount of clarity to the discussion.

Clarifying "Experience"

First, there is some confusion regarding the role of experience in Pentecostal theology. At times "experience" is used to imply a direct knowledge of the Divine, and at other times "experience" is used to imply a stage in the knowing process.

⁶ I have played very fast and loose at times with the writings of Frank Macchia, often interpreting them in ways the writings could be interpreted, but not necessarily in ways that Frank Macchia himself would interpret them. My point is not to critique Professor Macchia's work, but to give plausible examples of ways in which his writings have been and could be interpreted.

Such a confusion can be illustrated from the writings of Professor Macchia. He states in his article “Discerning the Spirit In Life:”⁷

As the early Pentecostal appreciation for the special significance of tongues illustrates, *it is not the tongues themselves that matter as much as the Spirit’s work of which they testify.* [emphasis is mine]⁸

Although there is a certain prima facie intelligibility to the statement, when the statement is closely analyzed it betrays a certain epistemological ambiguity. Macchia’s statement could be interpreted as saying that it is the Pentecostal experience, in this case tongues, that gives rise to “knowledge” of the Spirit; that is, direct knowledge of the Spirit is found in the experience of the Spirit in tongues. This interpretation is a standard Dionysian interpretation. Under the Dionysian paradigm, experience can apply to knowledge and mean the same thing as knowledge.⁹ This approach can be illustrated in the statement “She is an experienced person.” Such a statement is equivalent to “She is knowledgeable.”

Under this interpretation knowledge is derived immediately from experience. Knowledge operates only in a world of immediacy, and comes from experience of what is out there to be seen, touched, smelled, heard, and tasted. Knowing God or the work of God comes to be equated simply with experiencing God.

On the other hand, Professor Macchia normally uses the term experience in a very Apollonian way. For example, he states in “Tongues As A Sign: Towards a Sacramental

⁷ Frank Macchia, *Discerning the Spirit in Life: A Review of God The Spirit By Michael Welker*, 10 JOURNAL OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY 3 (1997).

⁸ Frank Macchia, *Discerning the Spirit in Life: A Review of God The Spirit By Michael Welker*, 10 JOURNAL OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY 3, 24 (1997).

⁹ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time*, THIRD COLLECTION 55, 57 (1985).

Understanding of Pentecostal Experience”¹⁰ that “Speaking in tongues is integral to the *experience* of Spirit baptism for Pentecostals and is the audible medium for *realizing* the presence of God to empower and heal” [emphasis is mine].¹¹ Macchia hints at a technical meaning of the term experience in this quote when he separates the terms “experience” and “realizing” or understanding. In “Tongues As A Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience,”¹² experience can be understood as providing the data for understanding.

For Pentecostalism, a complete theory of epistemology would clearly delineate what is meant by the term “experience.” A discussion of the human being and human knowing would give clarity to the confusion surrounding the role of experience in the Pentecostal experience and the role of knowing in the Pentecostal experience.

Bridging the Gap Between Pentecostal Experience and Academic Theology

Second, a discussion of human knowing would also help “bridge the gap between Pentecostal experience and academic theology.”¹³ A theology of Pentecostal experiences such as glossolalia should entail two interrelated discussions: a discussion of the role of the Divine in the Pentecostal experience and a discussion of the role of the human being

¹⁰ Frank Macchia, *Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience*, 15:1 PNEUMA: THE JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF PENTECOSTAL STUDIES 61 (1993).

¹¹ Frank Macchia, *Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience*, 15:1 PNEUMA: THE JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF PENTECOSTAL STUDIES 61, 63 (1993).

¹² Frank Macchia, *Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience*, 15:1 PNEUMA: THE JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF PENTECOSTAL STUDIES 61 (1993).

¹³ See Frank Macchia, *Sighs Too Deep For Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia*, 1 JOURNAL OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY 47, 50 (1992).

in the Pentecostal experience. These two components should then be brought together in a scissors-like action, the top blade being the role of the Divine and the bottom blade being the role of the human being. A proper epistemology will lead to a proper method of doing theology, a method that will take into account both the role of the Divine in the Divine-Human interaction, and the role of the human in the Divine-Human interaction. It would give a fuller understanding of the human role in the Pentecostal theology.

Macchia offhandedly suggests such a method when he states:

Of importance to Pentecostals has not been tongues per se, but what tongues symbolizes for them, namely, a *theophanic encounter with God* that is spontaneous, free and wondrous.... This understanding of tongues among Pentecostals requires *critical theological reflection* if it is not to degenerate into a sensationalistic and uncritical quest for 'signs and wonders'. [emphasis is mine]¹⁴

We see the notion of the upper blade in the theophanic encounter with a God who freely acts, yet we see the lower blade in the critical reflection that brings understanding and meaning to the purely experiential encounter. A full-blown theory of knowing will give greater clarity to the work of the lower blade.

There is a sense, however, in which the gap between Pentecostal experience and academic theology is much more difficult to bridge. The gap between Pentecostal experience as understood in a common sense world and Pentecostal experience as understood in an intellectual world can only be bridged when individuals in the common sense world experience intellectual conversion. A full-blown theory of knowing will clarify what is meant by intellectual conversion and the role of intellectual conversion in helping bridge this apparent gap.

Bringing Unity To Disunity

Thirdly, a proper epistemology will provide unification to the divergent and seemingly contradictory discussions taking place in Pentecostal theology. For example, in Professor Macchia's writings there are divergent discussions of experience, meaning, tongues as a sign, the role of symbols, and the sacraments. There are also seemingly contradictory discussions. For example, he discusses mediated meaning when he states in his article "Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience:"

...Pentecostal spirituality *does not advocate an unmediated encounter* with God, nor a subjectivistic emotionalism unrelated to an objective means of grace. These stereotypical characterizations have been nourished by certain tendencies in Pentecostal worship. [emphasis is mine]¹⁵

Yet, he then discusses unmediated encounters with the Divine when he states in "The Toronto Blessing: No Laughing Matter"¹⁶ that "Ecstatic laughter can be a sign...that God can encounter us in ways truly overwhelming."¹⁷ The first quote seems to suggest that the Pentecostal experience is meaningful only in a mediated context. The second quote could be interpreted as suggesting that the Pentecostal experience is a purely experiential encounter with the Divine, devoid of meaningful mediation by human knowing. A

¹⁴ Frank Macchia, *Sighs Too Deep For Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia*, 1 JOURNAL OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY 47, 49 (1992).

¹⁵ Frank Macchia, *Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience*, 15:1 PNEUMA: THE JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF PENTECOSTAL STUDIES 61, 75 (1993).

¹⁶ Frank Macchia, *The 'Toronto Blessing': No Laughing Matter*, 8 JOURNAL OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY 3 (1996).

¹⁷ Frank Macchia, *The 'Toronto Blessing': No Laughing Matter*, 8 JOURNAL OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY 3, 4 (1996).

full-blown epistemology would provide a context for the unification of seemingly disparate theories.

LONERGAN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PENTECOSTAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Lonergeran presents us with a theory of human knowing that fits well with Pentecostal theology, and can be used to solve the three dilemmas presented above. Lonergan can be used to bring clarity to the discussion of the term “experience,” to bridge the gap between Pentecostal experience and academic theology, and to bring unity to the seemingly disparate discussions taking place in Pentecostal theology.

Lonergeran and the Structure of Cognition

Lonergeran presents us with a theory of human knowing based on knowing as a dynamic structure.¹⁸ “...human knowing involves many distinct and irreducible activities: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting, inquiring, imagining, understanding, conceiving, reflecting, weighing the evidence, judging [and valuing].”¹⁹ None of these acts by themselves constitute human knowing, but each act operates in an interlocking dynamic process which presents us with the human cognitional structure.

The senses, dreams, intuitions, and other experiential potencies present us with data for understanding.²⁰ For example, seeing presents us with data, yet this alone cannot

¹⁸ See BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitional Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 206-208 (1998).

¹⁹ BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitional Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 206 (1998).

²⁰ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitional Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 206-208 (1998).

be called human knowing.²¹ The data is the same as the data present to any animal with ocular capability.²² Yet, seeing is a part of the dynamic structure of human knowing.²³ As with seeing, any experiencing presents us with data; yet as with seeing, no experience can alone be called human knowing.²⁴ And the combinations of all sensible experience cannot be called human knowing.²⁵ Yet, while sensible experience cannot be called the whole of human knowing, it does constitute a part of the dynamic structure of knowing.²⁶

Experience presents us with data, but as humans we do not simply accept the data. Humans also toy with the data. The data is played around with in imaginative constructs.²⁷ Humans reformat, redesign, and in a sense recreate the data in new and varying images.²⁸

But humans are also more than just imaginative creatures. The data leads to questions.²⁹ Lonergan thinks human beings are primarily beings of the question. It is the question that begins the whole process of transforming experiences from merely data presented to human knowledge. Who, what, where, when, why, and how are familiar chants to grade school children as they learn to categorize their questions. But the questions have long been experienced by them prior to the ordering of questions into their taut ditties. Who can forget the persistent pestering of young children as they seek to

²¹ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitive Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 206-208 (1998).

²² See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitive Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 206-208 (1998).

²³ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitive Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 206-208 (1998).

²⁴ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitive Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 206-208 (1998).

²⁵ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitive Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 206-208 (1998).

²⁶ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitive Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 206-208 (1998).

²⁷ JOSEPH FLANAGAN, QUEST FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE: AN ESSAY IN LONERGAN'S PHILOSOPHY 18-23 (1997).

²⁸ JOSEPH FLANAGAN, QUEST FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE: AN ESSAY IN LONERGAN'S PHILOSOPHY 18-23 (1997).

²⁹ JOSEPH FLANAGAN, QUEST FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE: AN ESSAY IN LONERGAN'S PHILOSOPHY 18-23 (1997).

understand their experiences: Why are you doing that? What is that? What does that do?

All these questions resound in unending audiblations as children question the data of their experiences.

Questions, however, do not exist in isolation. Questions intend answers.

Lonergan calls these answers insights. Insights are supervening acts of understanding that go beyond what is given in experience to organize and give meaning to the data of experience.³⁰ While insights organize the data of a particular experience, insights also lead to concepts that provide organization on a universal or generalized scale.³¹

What there is to be understood leads to questions for understanding, and these in turn tend towards a supervening act of understanding. Experience and understanding, however, do not constitute the whole of human knowing. Understanding gives rise to questions of the adequacy of the insight:³² Is it so? Is this true? Lonergan terms these questions for reflection.³³ Such questions tend towards insights concerning the adequacy of the evidence for the veracity of the insight.³⁴ Once all the further pertinent questions have been answered, and all the evidence has been marshaled, a judgment may be made concerning the insight. Is it true? The judgment gives the answer - Yes it is. No it is not.³⁵

The three levels of human knowing can then be summed up in terms of their principal activities: experience, understanding, and judging.³⁶ These levels, however, do

³⁰ See BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* x (1978).

³¹ TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86 (1996).

³² TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86 (1996).

³³ See BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 279 (1978).

³⁴ See *generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 279-283 (1978).

³⁵ See *generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 279 (1978).

³⁶ See TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 87 (1996).

not operate independently of each other. Human knowing is a materially dynamic structure.³⁷ What is presented to experience is there to be questioned. The questions give rise to insights about the data presented, which organize and give meaning to the data. Insights in turn seek verification, which leads to judgments about the organized data of experience.

Human knowing is not only materially dynamic, it is formally dynamic:

It is self-assembling, self-constituting. It puts itself together, one part summoning forth the next, till the whole is reached. And this occurs, not with the blindness of natural process, but consciously, intelligently, rationally. Experience stimulates inquiry, and inquiry is intelligence bringing itself to act; it leads from experience through imagination to insight, and from insight to the concepts that combine in single objects both what has been grasped by insight and what in experience or imagination is relevant to the insight. In turn, concepts stimulate reflection, and reflection is the conscious exigence of rationality; it marshals the evidence and weighs it either to judge or else to doubt and so renew inquiry.³⁸

Human knowing is given action in judgments of value and decisions to act upon those judgments.³⁹ Thus, to the three levels of knowing - experiencing-understanding-judging - we can add a fourth: valuing. This fourth level implies a judgment that this is a reasonable thing to do and it should be accomplished. Action is then taken by the morally virtuous.⁴⁰

³⁷ See BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitive Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 207 (1998).

³⁸ BERNARD LONERGAN, *Cognitive Structure*, COLLECTION 205, 207 (1998).

³⁹ See generally JOSEPH FLANAGAN, QUEST FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE: AN ESSAY IN LONERGAN'S PHILOSOPHY 194-227 (1997).

⁴⁰ I wish to limit discussion of the fourth level. It opens doors which will lead away from the main point of this essay.

Loneragan and the Tension Between Common Sense and Intellectualism

This dynamic flow of human knowing does not occur in isolation. It occurs in a pattern or flow of intentionality.⁴¹ The pattern determines what sensations the individual will focus upon, what sensations will rise up demanding meaning, and what sensations will be ignored. The pattern determines what questions are asked concerning the experiences and what insights are sought concerning the experiences. Hence, imminent in experience is an organizing control that may be called an interest, attention, intention or pattern of experience.⁴²

Common sense operates to determine the flow of experience and accumulation of insights in the everyday world. It is not interested in the universals of science, for “[c]ommon sense...is a specialization of intelligence in the particular and the concrete.”⁴³ Common sense does not aspire to scientific method. “It clings to the immediate and the practical...”⁴⁴ Common sense remains in the world of things.⁴⁵

Common sense does not have a technical language by which it operates.⁴⁶ Its language is the language of the streets, the language of the home, the language used to operate in an everyday world. In an operative common sense mode one says what one means and means what one says.⁴⁷ Hence, “the only interpreter of common sense utterances is common sense.”⁴⁸

⁴¹ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* Chapter 7 (1978).

⁴² See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 182 (1978).

⁴³ BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 175 (1978).

⁴⁴ BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 179 (1978).

⁴⁵ See BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 179 (1978).

⁴⁶ See BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 177 (1978).

⁴⁷ BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 177 (1978).

⁴⁸ BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 177 (1978).

Common sense seeks not explanatory definitions of the things around it, but descriptive definitions.⁴⁹ It is not interested in how things relate to one another, but only in how such things relate to us.⁵⁰ It understands things in the world only in relation to the human experience of the thing. “It is hard, cold, loud, sweet, or rough.” are the claims of common sense. The experience is understood only in terms of “my experience” or “her experience.”

Hence, common sense limits discussion to things in the world for us:

Indeed, the supreme canon of common sense is the restriction of further questions to the realm of the concrete and the particular, the immediate and practical. To advance common sense is to restrain the omnivorous drive of inquiring intelligence and to brush aside as irrelevant, if not silly, any question whose answer would not make an immediate palpable difference.⁵¹

One is not restricted, however, to the world of immediacy. One can move to an intellectually governed pattern of experience in which the world of immediacy gives way to a world mediated by meaning.⁵² In this mediated world, experience gives way to questions about the experience, and understanding seeks answers to those questions. Judgment provides veracity to the understanding, and valuing leads to actions that contribute to an emerging human good.

In this intellectual pattern of experience, one seeks not merely to understand the world as it is related to self but to understand the world as related to other objects in the world.⁵³ Hence, descriptive definitions that provide explanation of objects in the world as

⁴⁹ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 37 (1978).

⁵⁰ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 37 (1978).

⁵¹ BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 178 (1978).

⁵² *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 185-186 (1978).

⁵³ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 37 (1978).

related to self give way to explanatory definitions. Explanatory definitions provide understanding of things in the world as they relate to other things in the world.⁵⁴ Through explanatory understanding, universals are properly understood and generalizations are properly made. Technical languages are developed to provide proper explanations.

Conversion and the Intellectual Imperatives

To properly understand human knowing it is not sufficient to merely comprehend the structure of knowing. One must know oneself as a participant in that structure, as a person who experiences, understands, judges, and values.⁵⁵ That is, to truly know oneself as a knower is to bring into play the dynamic structure of human knowing.⁵⁶ This bringing into play the dynamic structure of human knowing is a result of what Lonergan calls intellectual conversion.

Intellectual conversion is a radical clarification and, consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth concerning reality, objectivity, and human knowledge. The myth is that knowing is like looking, that objectivity is seeing what is there to be seen and not seeing what is not there, and that the real is what is out there now to be looked at. Now this myth overlooks the distinction between the world of immediacy, say, the world of the infant and, on the other had, the world mediated by meaning. The world of immediacy is the sum of what is seen, heard, touched, tasted, smelt, felt. It conforms well enough to the myth's view of reality, objectivity, knowledge. But it is but a tiny fragment of the world mediated by meaning. For the world mediated by meaning is a world not known by the sense experience of an individual but by the external and internal experience of a cultural community, and by the continuously checked and rechecked judgments of the community. Knowing, accordingly, is not just seeing; it is experiencing, understanding, judging, and believing. The criteria of objectivity are not just the criteria

⁵⁴ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 37 (1978).

⁵⁵ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* Chapter 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

⁵⁶ See generally BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* Chapter 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

of ocular vision; they are the compounded criteria of experiencing, of understanding, of judging, and of believing. The reality known is not just looked at; it is given in experience, organized and extrapolated by understanding, posited by judgment and belief.⁵⁷

Intellectual conversion is a turn towards the knower as knower. The individual in intellectual conversion comes to experience self as an experiencer, understander, judge, and valuer; comes to understand self as an experiencer, understander, judge, and valuer; comes to judge self as an experiencer, understander, judge, and valuer; and comes to value self as an experiencer, understander, judge, and valuer.

Intellectual conversion produces an understanding of experience as the first step along the path towards knowing. One turns from experience as the carrier of knowledge, and turns towards the world as mediated by knowing, a world understood through insight, judged and valued. In the fullness of the cognitional process the world is understood.

Intellectual conversion implies an intellectual morality, and the dynamic operations of human knowing give rise to the intellectual imperatives constituting this morality.⁵⁸ It is not enough to be a passive experiencer, to let life bring experience around. One must pay attention to those experiences. One must “Be Attentive” to the experiences.⁵⁹ We are familiar with the parental commands, either given to us by our parents or given by us to our children: “Pay attention to what you are doing.” “Watch out.” “Be careful.” These are all ways in which we express an intellectual morality connected to experience.

⁵⁷ BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* 238 (1971).

⁵⁸ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* Chapter 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

⁵⁹ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* Chapter 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

Besides attentiveness, Lonergan also expresses an intellectual imperative attached to understanding.⁶⁰ It is not enough to pay attention to experiences, one must understand those experiences.⁶¹ One must “Be Intelligent!”⁶² and move beyond experiences to the supervening act that organizes and gives meaning to the experiences.

It is not enough to have insights, however; for insights need verification. Hence, besides attentiveness and intelligence, Lonergan expresses a third intellectual imperative attached to the third level of knowing - judgment.⁶³ “Be Reasonable!”⁶⁴ Such reasonability requires an openness to questions for reflection, to further pertinent questions. Such reasonability leads to the veracity of insight.

Finally, it is not enough to be reasonable. Reasonability must be lived out in an emerging human good.⁶⁵ We must act on reasonability.⁶⁶ Hence, Lonergan suggests a fourth intellectual imperative - “Be Responsible!”⁶⁷ Act in such a way that our actions reflect reasonability and contribute to a developing human good.

Hence, the cognitional structure of the human being involves four materially and formally dynamic levels - experience, understanding, judging, and valuing. Each level

⁶⁰ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* Chapter 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

⁶¹ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* Chapter 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

⁶² *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* Chapter 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

⁶³ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* Chapter 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

⁶⁴ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* CHAPTER 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

⁶⁵ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *TOPICS IN EDUCATION* Chapters 2-4 (1993).

⁶⁶ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* Chapter 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

⁶⁷ *See generally* BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* Chapter 1 (1971); TERRY TEKIPPE, *WHAT IS LONERGAN UP TO IN INSIGHT: A PRIMER* 86-90 (1996).

implies an intellectual morality. It is not enough to experience; individuals must Be Attentive to their experiences. It is not enough to pay attention; questions must be asked and understanding sought. One must Be Intelligent. Intelligence, however, requires certitude. Hence, one must Be Reasonable. But human beings do not live in the isolation of a Robinson Crusoe. Human beings live in a developing or declining human good. Thus, it is not enough to know the reasonable action. One must act. One must Be Responsible.⁶⁸

Lonergan And The Development of A Pentecostal Theology

The Lonerganian construct of human knowing can be developed into a delightful Pentecostal epistemology. First, one must meet the world of experience with an openness towards all experiences, including Pentecostal experiences. Such an openness is an openness to participate with the Divine as the Divine participates in the world of being.

Second, a Pentecostal epistemology is characterized by an openness towards the Pentecostal questions. One must have an openness willing to question the reality of experience as an ecstatic experience with God; but, one must also have an openness willing to question the reality of the experience as an experience of human ecstatic emotion. For example, experiences such as glossolalia are data that should raise requisite Pentecostal questions. A Pentecostal epistemology implies an openness towards the questions: Is glossolalia a work of God or the emotive groanings of emotive beings? Is

⁶⁸ It has been suggested that Lonergan has a fifth level of operation - loving. This is currently being debated, but it could be suggested that in addition to being responsible humans must be oriented towards love and Be Loving.

laughing a product of Divine interaction or a product of human misunderstanding? Is this prophecy a message from a participating Divinity or a biased member of the church.

Thirdly, a Pentecostal epistemology is characterized by an openness towards the supervening act of understanding that allows for the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Such insights flow only from an epistemology characterized by openness towards the work of the Spirit in the lives of those participating in the Divine, as characterized in The Acts of the Apostles.

Fourthly, a Pentecostal epistemology is characterized by an openness towards questions for reflection and judgments which take into account the work of the Divine on earth. Finally, a Pentecostal epistemology is characterized by an openness towards a valuing of the work of the ecstatic Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

Hence, a Pentecostal epistemology is more about human openness towards the Divine than about human experience. Experience is merely the data from which an openness on the part of the individual moves to understand, judge, and act upon the data. It is the Pentecostal questions which define the epistemology, not the Pentecostal experience.

Ultimately, this openness is not just an openness towards the Pentecostal experience. It is really an openness towards all questions and all answers to those questions: that is, all of Being. Such openness requires grand intellectual morality. If we really come to grips with intellectual morality, all questions become questions for understanding. There truly is no wrong question. This openness is hinted at in Frank

Macchia's article "Sighs Too Deep For Words: Toward A Theology of Glossolalia"⁶⁹ when he states, "If glossolalia symbolizes a divine action that is mysterious and free, it implies the same concerning human existence that is open to God."⁷⁰ Such an epistemology, however, requires a great deal of humility and courage. It requires an intellectual conversion that seeks to move beyond self and all the biases and scotomas that inhabit the self, and seeks ardently after truth.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE NEED FOR A REDEFINED PENTECOSTAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Lonergan's theory of knowing would help bring clarity to the three disputed issues discussed above. First, the above-suggested Pentecostal epistemology gives clarity to the use of the term "experience" in the discussion of Pentecostal experience. On the one hand, experience in the phrase "Pentecostal experience" is used to imply an immediate knowledge of the Divine. To have a Pentecostal experience is to, in some degree, have direct knowledge of the Divine. But this is a very common sense understanding, the understanding that takes place in a common sense world of Sunday church attendance and mid-week youth groups.

On the other hand, in an intellectual pattern, the term experience denotes only the first step in a dynamic structure of knowing. Experience provides the data for questioning, which in turn gives rise to understanding, judging, and valuing. In this

⁶⁹ Frank Macchia, *Sighs Too Deep For Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia*, 1 JOURNAL OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY 47 (1992).

⁷⁰ Frank Macchia, *Sighs Too Deep For Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia*, 1 JOURNAL OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY 47, 61 (1992).

pattern, if we truly come to grips with this understanding of the Pentecostal epistemology, we will understand that the experience portion in the Pentecostal experience as the least important part of being Pentecostal. The experience provides us only with data. That data is then given meaning in understanding and judging.

What this implies for Pentecostal experience is that such experiences are experiences with the Divine to the extent that human understanding gives meaning to the experiences as experiences with the Divine. To the extent that the Pentecostal questions are asked, that the experiences are understood, and that the understandings are judged as being experiences with the Divine, they are experiences with the Divine. It is the cognitional process of the human being that distinguishes such Divine encounters in experience from similarly situated, yet non-Divine originated, experiences.

Second, the above suggested Pentecostal epistemology helps bridge the gap between Pentecostal experience and academic theology. In the first place, such an epistemology suggests a method for doing Pentecostal theology. It is not enough to try to understand the Pentecostal experience simply by understanding the role of the Divine in the experience. It is not enough to discuss how God interacts with human beings, the role of the Spirit in working in an emerging human good, and the role of Divine in the gifts of the Spirit. This is a top down approach. Such discussions are meaningless without a bottom up approach that provides understanding of the role of the human being in the Pentecostal experience. The bottom up approach gives clarity to the human role, helping us to understand what experience is and how religious meaning is given to this experience. Thus, Pentecostal theology needs a scissors-like approach. To fully develop the theology, we must understand the role of the divine in the Pentecostal experience and

the role of the human in the Pentecostal experience. In so doing, we will develop a full and mature understanding of the Pentecostal experience.

There is a sense, however, in which it is much more difficult to bridge the gap between Pentecostal experience and academic theology. If by Pentecostal experience is meant experience of the Divine as understood in a common sense pattern, then the questions asked and understandings sought about the experience are going to be different from those asked and sought by individuals operating in the academy. In the common sense pattern, what is sought is an understanding of the role of the Divine in relationship to the individual experiencing the Divine. What is sought is descriptive definitions of "Pentecostal experience." However, in the academy, what is sought is not the particulars of the concrete experience of a common sense experiencer but the universal understanding of the "Pentecostal experience." What is sought in the academy is the explanatory definition.

This gap can only be bridged to the extent that operators in the common sense pattern of experience overcome the general bias of common sense.⁷¹ Common sense and its operators have a legitimate concern for the concrete and the immediate.⁷² But common sense is not the only pattern of knowing. Common sense is one of many patterns of knowing. General bias occurs when common sense makes the mistake of thinking itself to be the primary pattern of knowing, and of thinking all other forms of human knowing to be useless and of dubious value.⁷³ General bias occurs when a

⁷¹ See BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 225-232 (1978).

⁷² See BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 225-232 (1978).

⁷³ See BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 225-232 (1978).

concern for the concrete and the practical leads to a “disregard of larger issues and indifference to long-term results.”⁷⁴ Hence, a general bias occurs when common sense sees itself as omniscient. This leads to a denial of the validity of theory and the work of the academy.

The gap between those operating in the common sense world of experience and those individuals working in the academy will only be bridged when common sense comes to understand its limitations and yields itself to the imperatives of an intellectual morality. This gap will be bridged only through intellectual conversion.

Third, the above stated Pentecostal epistemology brings unification to the disparate and seemingly contradictory topics currently being discussed in the writings of Pentecostal theologians such as Professor Macchia. It is the epistemology that is common to all the topics. As shown above, the epistemology explains the divergent notions of Pentecostal experience. It also helps explain the notion of signs and meanings. For example, tongues can be understood as a sign only if we understand the role of human knowing in giving meaning to signs. The epistemology provides understanding of the connection between human knowing and a sacramental understanding of glossolalia. Insight provides the nexus that brings together the act of glossolalia and the sacramental meaning. Thus, the epistemological structure that has been suggested can bring a unity to all these varied discussions.

⁷⁴ BERNARD LONERGAN, *INSIGHT* 226 (1978).

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

The above constitutes mere observations on the need for a Pentecostal epistemology. Philosophy in general does have something to contribute to the development of a greater, more complete Pentecostal theology. A dialogue needs to be opened between Pentecostal theologians and philosophers in order to further discuss these questions.

Whether Lonergan fits the Pentecostal theological construct must ultimately be decided by the experts in the field of Pentecostal theology. But Lonergan at least deserves a hearing on this issue.

Academics also need to begin discussing intellectual conversion. Much work regarding correct understandings of Pentecostal experiences still needs to be accomplished in our churches. Correct understandings will take place only when members of the churches become self-appropriating, intellectually converted knowers.

Finally, we have just touched the tip of an iceberg. There are multiple questions that still need to be addressed. For example, some of the issues that still need analysis are intentionality, horizontal and vertical finality, self-transcendence, and meaning. These are only examples, yet they illustrate the youthfulness of Pentecostal theology and the exciting future ahead.

So, is Pentecostal theology to remain stuck in the realia of a statue of Daedalus? No. Both the Dionysian and the Apollonian paradigms can be brought together. Both patterns are necessary. Both patterns, however, require a commitment to the intellectual imperatives.